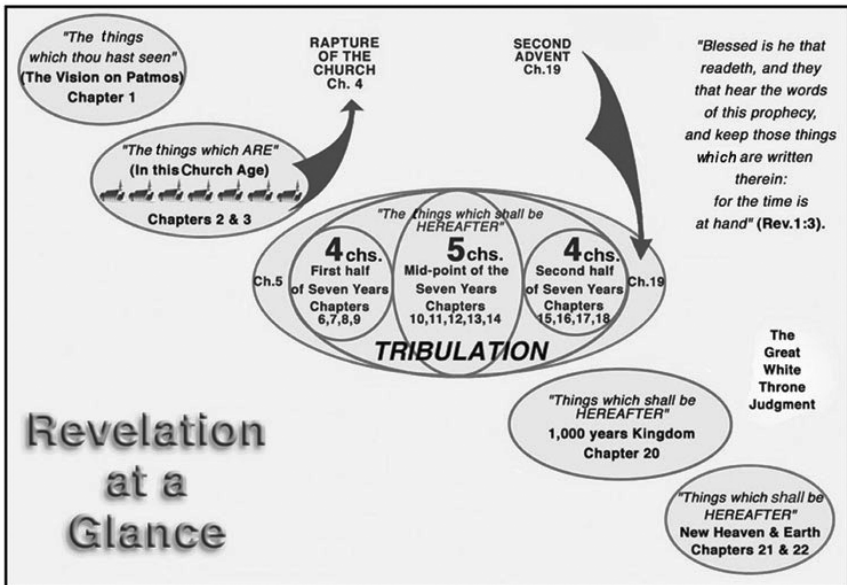
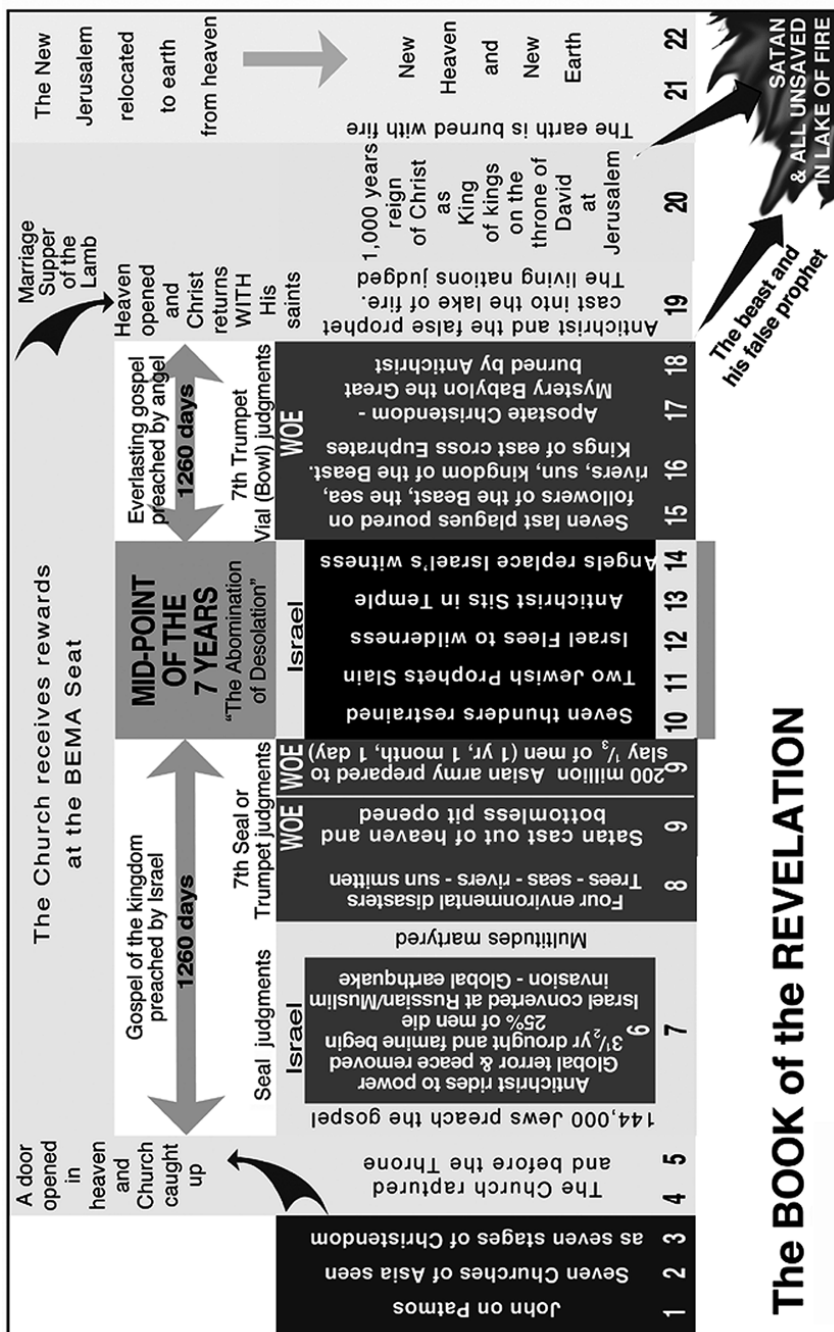


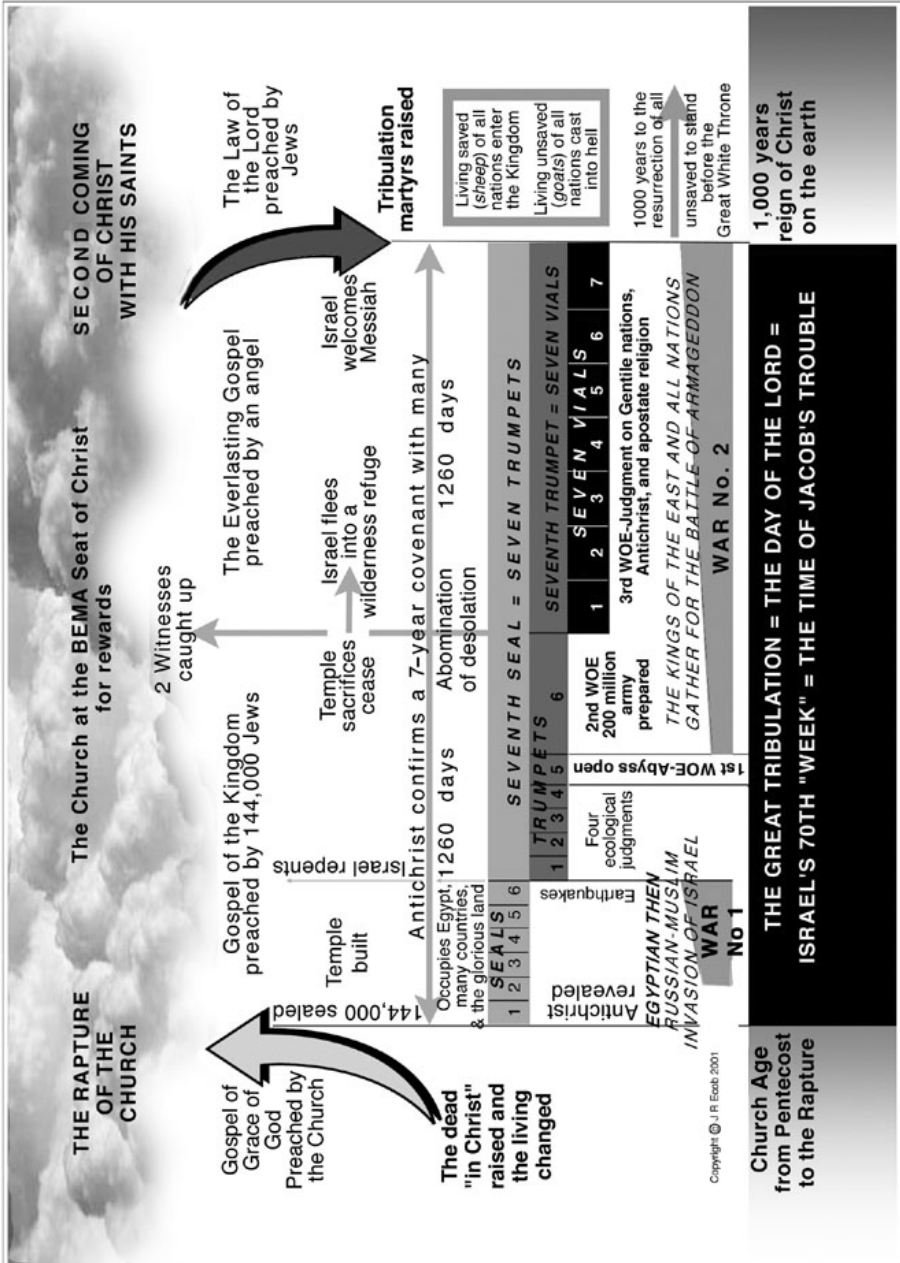
Section 6

Outline of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ



*"Write the things which thou hast **seen**, and the things which **are**, and the things which shall be **hereafter**" (Rev. 1:19).*





Introduction to the Book of the Revelation

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is not difficult to understand once we are aware of the God-given key to its interpretation. That key is found in Rev 1:19, and it divides the book into three parts. These parts identify past, present, and future events, spanning the period from the early Church to the new heaven and new earth.

The **KEY** verse reads as follows:

*"Write the things **which thou hast seen**, and the things **which are**, and the things **which shall be hereafter**"*
(Rev.1:19).



The book is a revelation of *"things (events) which must shortly come to pass"*. In chapter one John sees a vision of the risen Lord. In chapters 2 and 3 he writes seven letters to *"the seven churches which are in Asia"* (Rev.1:4), communicating the Lord's commendation and concern for their spiritual state. From chapter 4 to chapter 22 we have a description of those events which are future to the Church Age, beginning with the words:

"Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter"(Rev.4:1).

The **past event** is the vision of the Lord which John saw on the Isle of Patmos.

The **present** describes the Churches of Asia existing in John's day, but could be typical of any individual Church throughout history. They are also a picture of the historical progress of the Church from Pentecost down to the Rapture, when the Church Age will be complete.

The **future events** are those which are future to the Church Age, and include the Rapture of the Church followed by the Great Tribulation, and then the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, the establishment of His millennial kingdom, the second resurrection, and the eternal new heaven and new earth.

Thus we have the key to the interpretation of the book. God has divided it in the following manner:

Things which thou hast seen Ch. 1	Things which are Chs. 2 & 3	Things which shall be hereafter Chs. 4 thro' 22
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Part 1 - The Things Which Thou Hast Seen
(Chapter 1)

The Revelation (αποκαλυψις) of Jesus Christ is the "unveiling" to John on the Isle of Patmos of *"things which must shortly (suddenly) come to pass"*. The Father revealed these **events** to Christ for *"his servants"*, and Christ communicated them to John by His angel.

The book begins with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in his full Deity as follows:

- a) He is the second person of the Godhead with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is equal and eternal, without beginning and without ending (vs.4-5).
- b) He is *"the faithful witness"* - perfect in His earthly testimony (v.5).
- c) He is *"the first begotten of the dead"* - nobody could rise in resurrection power before Him (v.5).
- d) He is *"the prince of the kings of the earth"* - He now reigns on the throne of heaven, and one day will come as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign over the earth (v.8).
- e) He is *"the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending"* - Creator and final Judge of all creation.
- f) He is the Eternal God, *"which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty"* (v.8) - there is none greater in heaven or earth.

The above description leaves us in no doubt about the absolute Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Any lesser description of Him would be *"another Jesus"* (2 Cor.11:4).

The ultimate triumph and climax of God's plan is the victory of Christ over all the forces of wickedness, be they human or demonic, and so John exclaims:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev.1:7).

At Christ's second coming every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father! (Phil.2:10-11). He will come visibly in the clouds of heaven, as declared by the angel (Acts 1:9-11), and as Jesus Himself said (Matt.24:30).

Israel, who pierced Him, will be repentant when Jesus comes again; they *"shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son"* (Zech.12: 10).

At that time one will ask, *"What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"* (Zech.13:6).

Behold, He is coming in clouds of the sky,
Every eye shall behold Him, exalted on high;
Israel who pierced Him will cry out aloud,
Remembering the cross, the grave, and the cloud.
The Alpha, Omega, beginning and end,
For His elect nation His angels will send,
And Gentiles, now bending before Him, will fall,
As Jesus, at last, is crowned LORD OF ALL!

The Lord's Day and the Day of the LORD

John says, *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day"*. This refers to the first day of the week when the early Christians met together for fellowship. We should remember that the Lord rose on the first day of the week at the feast of Firstfruits. He was the *"firstfruits of them that slept"* (1 Cor.15:20-23). The Church was born on the day of Pentecost, which was also the first day of the week. Christians do not keep the sabbath, which God said was *"a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever"* (Exod.31:15-17; Col.2:16).

The Day of the Lord is quite different from the Lord's Day. Throughout the Scriptures the Day of the LORD refers to that period of time at the end of the age when God's wrath will be poured out on the nations, during the 70th week (seven years) of Daniel's prophecy (Dan.9:24-27).

The Day of the LORD is called by Jesus *"a time of great tribulation"* (Matt.24:21-29); by Jeremiah, *"the time of Jacob's trouble"* (Jer.30:7); by Daniel, *"a time of trouble"* (Dan.12:1); and by Joel *"a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness..."* (Joel 2:1-2).

The Day of the LORD occurs **immediately before** the second coming of Christ to the earth (Matt.24:29-31), and **cannot begin until the Church Age is terminated** by the Rapture of the Church. Paul says, *"That day (the Day of the LORD) shall not come, except there come a falling away first (literally "the departure first"), and that man of sin be revealed"* (2Thess.2 :1-9). After the Church is removed, Antichrist will be revealed and the last 7 years of Israel's history will begin.

The Day of the LORD begins with the sound of the trumpet of God. (1Thess.4:16; 1 Cor.15:51-54). The trumpets were used in Israel to call an assembly of God's people, to sound an alarm of war, and for Israel to mobilize. When the trumpet of God sounds the Church will be assembled to the Lord in the air, an alarm will be sounded to the Gentile nations of the impending Tribulation, and Israel will be mobilized to become God's testimony during the Great Tribulation!

The Vision of the Risen Lord

The vision given to John needs no embellishment. John said,

"I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white his eyes were as a flame of fire; his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, his voice as the sound of many waters. He had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance (face) was as the sun shineth in his strength."



This is how the Lord appeared to John. It is what he saw, and constitutes the first section of the Book of the Revelation.

John fell at Jesus' feet as dead, but then was told: "*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*" (Rev.1:17-18).

It is at this point that John is told to "Write!" The key passage then follows:

1. *the things which THOU HAST SEEN*
2. *the things which ARE*
3. *the things which shall be HEREAFTER.*

The Number Seven

The number seven occurs 44 times in this book. It is the number of "fullness" or "completion", and the seven golden candlesticks signify seven Churches in Asia (Rev.1:20). They also describe the **complete** Church Age from Pentecost to the Rapture, and the book is therefore addressed to the whole Church. We shall see this in Chapters 2 & 3.

Angels in the Revelation

There are 76 references to angels in this book. No other book in the Bible reveals so much about the heavenly host, and the reason for this must surely be that the greater part (chs.4-22) concerns itself with what John saw AFTER he was caught up through the open door into heaven (Rev.4:1-2). From that point onward he sees the things which must be hereafter (Rev.4:1), ie after this present Church Age which closes with the sound of the trumpet and the Lord's call to "*Come up hither!*" (1Thess.4: 16; 1Cor.15:52; Rev.4:1).

Part 2 - The Things Which Are (Chapters 2 & 3)

The seven Churches of Asia are located on the western end of Turkey as we know it today. To each of these Churches Christ reveals Himself in a manner appropriate to the spiritual condition of that Church.

Just as Jesus predicted that tares would grow amongst the wheat, birds would lodge in the branches, and leaven would be mixed with meal (Matt.13:24-33), so the description of these seven Churches indicates that there are varying degrees of apostasy in local Churches.

The "overcomers" in each Church represent the "true Church" within the visible professing Church. This is how it has ever been, and it will continue so until the Lord takes the true Church out at the Rapture. Then all that will remain will be the final apostate Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth (Rev.17:5).

It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the true Church, the body of Christ, which restrains the full manifestation of apostasy.

*"The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hinders will hinder, until he be **taken out of the way**. And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed..."* (2Thess.2:7-8).

Each of the seven letters records:

- a) The Revelation of Christ to that Church
- b) The Commendation of Christ for that Church
- c) Condemnation by Christ of that Church (except Smyrna and Philadelphia)
- d) The Exhortation of Christ to that Church
- e) The Appreciation of Christ for the Overcomers (the saved remnant).



The seven Churches of Asia represent seven stages of Church history from the Apostolic Church to the last-days Church.

The overcomers are the saved remnant in all ages who will be raptured. The apostate Church will go into the Tribulation.

The Church at Ephesus-lit "Desired" (Rev.2:1-7)

Practical

To this Church the Lord is revealed walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, and He commends the Church for its patience, **faithfulness to the Word of God**, and hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes who sought to impose hierarchal authority over the believers. (nicolaitan means "victorious over the people")

Condemnation was expressed for the loss of first love for Christ, and the exhortation is to *"Remember...and repent!"* (Rev.2:5). Remember the joy of salvation, repent of formalism, and serve the Lord with a rejoicing, excited, loving heart.

They are warned that their candlestick of testimony will be removed unless they repent.



Prophetic

The Ephesian Church is a picture of the **early Apostolic Church** which spread the Gospel throughout the world (Col.1:6).

The Lord was in their midst, and they faithfully exposed and dealt with false apostles. The early Church stood against those who would introduce an ecclesiastical hierarchy - the Nicolaitanes. They hated their deeds as God does. It was the rise of this hierarchal class within the Church that became the channel for much traditionalism and later superstition.

The early Church was therefore fundamental in doctrine, but during the second generation began to lose its first love. Its faithful stand for the great doctrines of the Word was not warmed by a rich, loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Church at Smyrna- lit "Myrrh" (Rev.2:8-11)

Practical

Christ is revealed as the *"first and the last, which was dead, and is alive"* (Rev.2:8).

This Church is commended because it suffered for Christ. There is no word of condemnation.

The Lord is gentle with those who suffer, for He trod that path Himself.



Prophetic

The meaning of Smyrna is "myrrh", and this suggests suffering since it was used in the burial of loved ones. It was used by Nicodemus when he laid to rest the body of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 19:39).

Smyrna represents the second stage of Church history, which saw what Church historians have called the "Ten Pagan Persecutions".

Practical (cont.)

"Which was dead, and is alive!"
Death is not the end but the way to victory.

The exhortation is to be *"faithful unto death"*, and the reward is a *"crown of life"*.

"He that overcometh (is saved) shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev.2:11).



The second death (Rev.20:14-15), which is the lake of eternal fire, can never harm them. Some may be burned at the stake on earth, but that is nothing compared with the judgment of hell-fire which is the portion of all the unsaved.

Suffering on earth makes heaven all the sweeter, and we know that *"if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Tim.2:12).*



Prophetic (cont.)

Under pagan Rome, Christians suffered terribly.

Many died for the cause of Christ. These periods of persecution occurred during the reign of the following emperors:

1. Nero (AD54-68)
2. Domitian (AD81-96)
3. Trajan (AD98-117)
4. Marcus Aurelius (AD161-180)
5. Severus (AD193-211)
6. Maximian (AD235-238)
7. Decius (AD240-251)
8. Valerian (AD253-260)
9. Aurelian (AD270-275)
10. Diocletian (AD285-305)

Scripture says in Rev 2:10,
"Ye shall have tribulation ten DAYS: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Sometimes persecution was directed at the leaders of the Church, as Rome endeavoured to "cut down the tall poppies". The Scriptures were targeted, and those who refused to surrender their copies were put to death. However, the Church grew, and the "blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church."

The Church at Pergamos- lit "married" (Rev.2:12-17)

Practical

To this Church, Christ is revealed with *"the sharp sword with two edges"*. The Word of God is a sharp sword *"dividing asunder"* (Heb.4:12).

The Church is commended for holding fast the Lord's name and not denying the faith, even in persecution.

Condemnation comes for some who have compromised by holding the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Error was coming in.

We remember that the false prophet Balaam was forbidden to curse Israel, but taught Balak, the king of Moab, how to destroy Israel through introducing immorality and idolatry into their ranks (Numbers ch.25). The Church at Pergamos was to be separate from apostasy and the sins of the flesh. The Bible says, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1John 2:15).

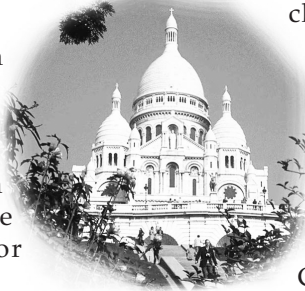
Unless repentance takes place, the Lord will fight against the apostates with the sword of His mouth to separate them from their unholy associations.



Prophetic

Pergamos describes the period of Church history from AD 313 to 600 when the Church was "married" to the State. After Emperor Diocletian there was a power struggle in the Roman Empire; Constantine emerged as the undisputed ruler. During the struggle for power he claimed to have seen a vision of a cross in the sky, and the words, "By this conquer".

He adopted this symbol, and aligned himself with the large number of persecuted Christians.



In AD313, Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration and Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, replacing the Roman mystery religions.

Thus Christianity became popular, and in AD325 Constantine presided over 318 bishops at the Council of Nicea which produced the Nicene Creed. The popularization of Christianity opened the door to a flood of superstition and error.

Monasticism, secularism, veneration of Mary, prayers to martyrs and saints all began in this period, and the clerical system flourished.

Practical (cont.)

To the overcomers who refuse to partake in pagan feasts God will give heavenly manna, a white stone of acquittal, and a new personal name indicating a close personal relationship with Christ. (In Roman courts, the members of the court would cast a white stone into a bowl to indicate innocence).

***The Church at Thyatira- lit"continual sacrifice"
(Rev.2:18-29)***

Practical

To Thyatira, the Lord is revealed as the

"Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

Christ is revealed in judgment to this Church. No other Church has descended to such depths of depravity, and no other Church has such awful judgment pronounced against it.



Prophetic

The doctrine of Balaam which taught tolerance to idolatry and immorality, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which elevated the clergy over the people, were certainly characteristic of the Pergamum period. The Byzantine State Church prepared the way for the Dark Ages under papal rule.

Thyatira aptly describes the fourth stage of Church history when the papacy began about AD600 with Gregory the Great (AD590-604). The continual sacrifice of the Mass became the central feature of the idolatrous Roman Catholic worship.

Thyatira was also characterized by a woman who taught idolatry and fornication. Idolatry in Scripture is called fornication (Ezek.16:20-41).

In addition, this church has the character of Jezebel, who slew the faithful prophets of the Lord. The same brutal character is seen in the Romish church which is

"drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"(Rev.17:6).

Romish worship also has a woman at the centre as Mary is set forth as "the Queen of Heaven". This pagan practice existed in Jeremiah's day and was condemned by the prophet (Jer. 45:15-27).



Practical (cont.)

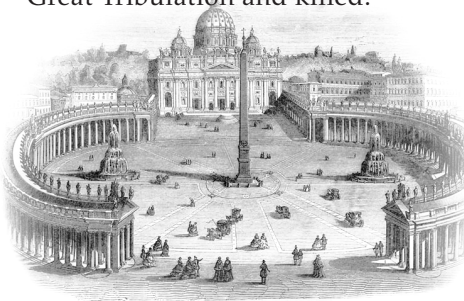
Its adherents have descended to *"the depths of Satan"*, and God will *"kill her children with death"*.

Commendation is given for works more than faith, but condemnation is expressed for awful idolatry and immorality introduced by a prophetess called Jezebel.

There is a clear parallel here with the Jezebel of Old Testament times. This woman was the wife of Ahab, king of Israel. She was also the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. She slew the prophets of the Lord (1Kings18:4,13), funded 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the groves (1Kings 18:19), and promoted idolatry and immorality in Israel. Spiritual apostasy is usually accompanied by moral depravity.

The only word of comfort is for those who *"have not known the depths of Satan"* (v.24). They are to *"hold fast till I come"* (v.25), and then will be rewarded. They will reign with Christ in His kingdom.

In contrast, the children of this apostate Church will be cast into Great Tribulation and killed.



Prophetic (cont.)

The Roman Church will continue into the Great Tribulation.

"Behold, I will cast her... and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation..." (Rev. 2:22).

During the Great Tribulation apostate Rome will be judged;

"I will kill her children with death" (Rev 2:23).

This is described in Revelation ch.17, where the harlot woman is clearly apostate Christendom headed up by Rome during the Tribulation (Rev.17:9,18). After Christendom rides the fourth beast to power (ie the Revived Roman Empire), Antichrist will turn against Christendom.

"The ten horns...shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Rev.17:16).

Christendom has craved political power throughout the Holy Roman Empire, and lately by its influence in the EU. However, only the saved will reign with Christ (Rev.2:26), and these will be given the *"morning star"* (ie they will be caught up at the Rapture). Christ's second coming is likened to the *"Sun of righteousness"* arising (Mal.4:2), but the *"morning star"* rises **first**; Christ will come to catch away the saved **before** the Tribulation.

The Church at Sardis- lit "escaping few" (Rev.3:1-6)

Practical

To Sardis, the Lord is revealed as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (seven angels).

"The seven Spirits of God" refers to the seven aspects of the Holy Spirit. He is the *"spirit of the Lord...the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might (power), the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"* (Isa.11:2).

Little commendation is offered. A few were not defiled (v4), but the Church had *"a name that thou livest, and art dead"* (v1).

They were to

"be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...remember...hold fast and repent"

The warning is given, *"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee"* (v3).

The remnant, the overcomers, will walk with the Lord in white, in the righteousness of the saints (Rev.19:8), a righteousness which is imputed by the Lord Jesus.



Prophetic

The Sardis Church is a picture of the Reformation Church which began in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg. He was protesting against the sale of indulgences sold in order to raise money for the repair of St Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

In 1516 Erasmus produced the first printed Greek Text, and when Luther translated this into German the superstition of Rome was exposed to the people. Instead of salvation by works, justification by faith was preached and multitudes entered into salvation. Thus we have the *"escaping few"* breaking free from the clutches of the papacy.

In time Protestantism became formal, clung to infant baptism, a priestly hierarchal system, vestments, and union of Church and state. It had a name to live doctrinally, but was void of spiritual life. Protestantism generally, holds to the amillennial position and denies any future for Israel, the Rapture of the Church, and Christ's promised kingdom on earth. The Lord says, *"If therefore thou shalt not watch (for His coming), I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee"* (Rev.3:3).



The Church at Philadelphia -lit "brotherly love"
(Rev. 3:7-13)

Practical

The Lord reveals Himself as the One that is "holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." This is an obvious reference to Isa.22:22 which speaks of Christ who, as the rightful heir to the throne of David, would be "cut down", and the glory of His father's house (David's house) would be "cut off". Christ was "cut down " at Calvary in AD32, and the glory of his Father's house (Israel) was "cut off" in AD70 (v.25).

Only commendation and an open door are offered to this Church. Their enemies would know that God had loved them.

Because they have "kept the word", the Lord promises to keep them from "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" (v.10). They are to "hold that fast" in view of the Lord's return, and not let any man take their crown. Jesus said,

"Behold, I come quickly!"

Overcomers will be forever with the Lord, will "go no more out", will bear God's name and the name of new Jerusalem, which is reserved for the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev.21:2,9-10).



Prophetic

The Church at Philadelphia wonderfully depicts the great evangelical awakening which occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries.

At the beginning of the 1700s the Reformation had broken the power of Rome in the north of Europe. Luther's German translation of the Scriptures was completed in 1522 and Tyndale's English translation in 1526. The 1611 King James English version of the Bible gained universal acceptance and the Word of God was spread across the world through missionary societies. Rome could do little to stop it. God opened a door to this Church which no man could shut! (Rev.3:8)

Men like the Wesleys, Whitfield, Hudson Taylor, Moody, Finney, William Booth, and CT Studd, and the Moravians, the Brethren Movement, and Faith Missions, all saw multitudes saved. The great doctrinal hymns, which Satan is trying his best to dispose of today, were born in this era.

The hope of the Lord's return was preached with fervency, and God's plan for Israel and the Church became clear through the preaching of faithful men of God.

The Lord's promise is to keep this Church from the Tribulation-"from THE HOUR of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev.3:10).



**The Letter to Laodicea- lit "the people rule"
(Rev.3:14-22)**

Practical

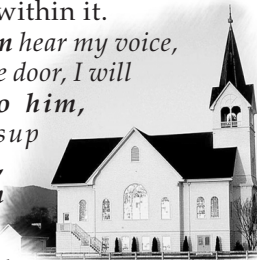
The Lord reveals Himself as *"the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God"* to this worldly Church.

No commendation is given. The Lord says, *"I will spue thee out of my mouth"*. This Church is neither cold nor hot. It is materialistic and occupied with earthly riches, but God finds it utterly bankrupt, naked and blind. The only solution is repentance, or chastening will follow.

To this Church, Christ is standing OUTSIDE the door. It does not need Christ to run its program. It is self-sufficient and has *"need of nothing"*. It is a popular Church and knows nothing of the purifying *"offence of the cross"* (Gal 5:11) which is characteristic of a godly Church.

The Lord's appeal is not to this Church as a whole, but to individuals within it.

*"If any man hear my voice,
and open the door, I will
come in to him,
and will sup
with him,
and he with
me."*



The Church had rejected Christ, and God has no choice but to reject the Church as a whole. He appeals to the individual. The godly remnant (overcomers) will reign with Him .



Prophetic

As the meaning of the name suggests, the Laodicean Church period of history has experienced a takeover by human intellect, and no longer does it bow to the Word of God as the final and only authority on matters of faith and conduct. In our day the Church Age is closing in much the same way that Israel finished the period of the Judges;

*"Every man did that which was
right in his own eyes"*
(Judges 21:25).

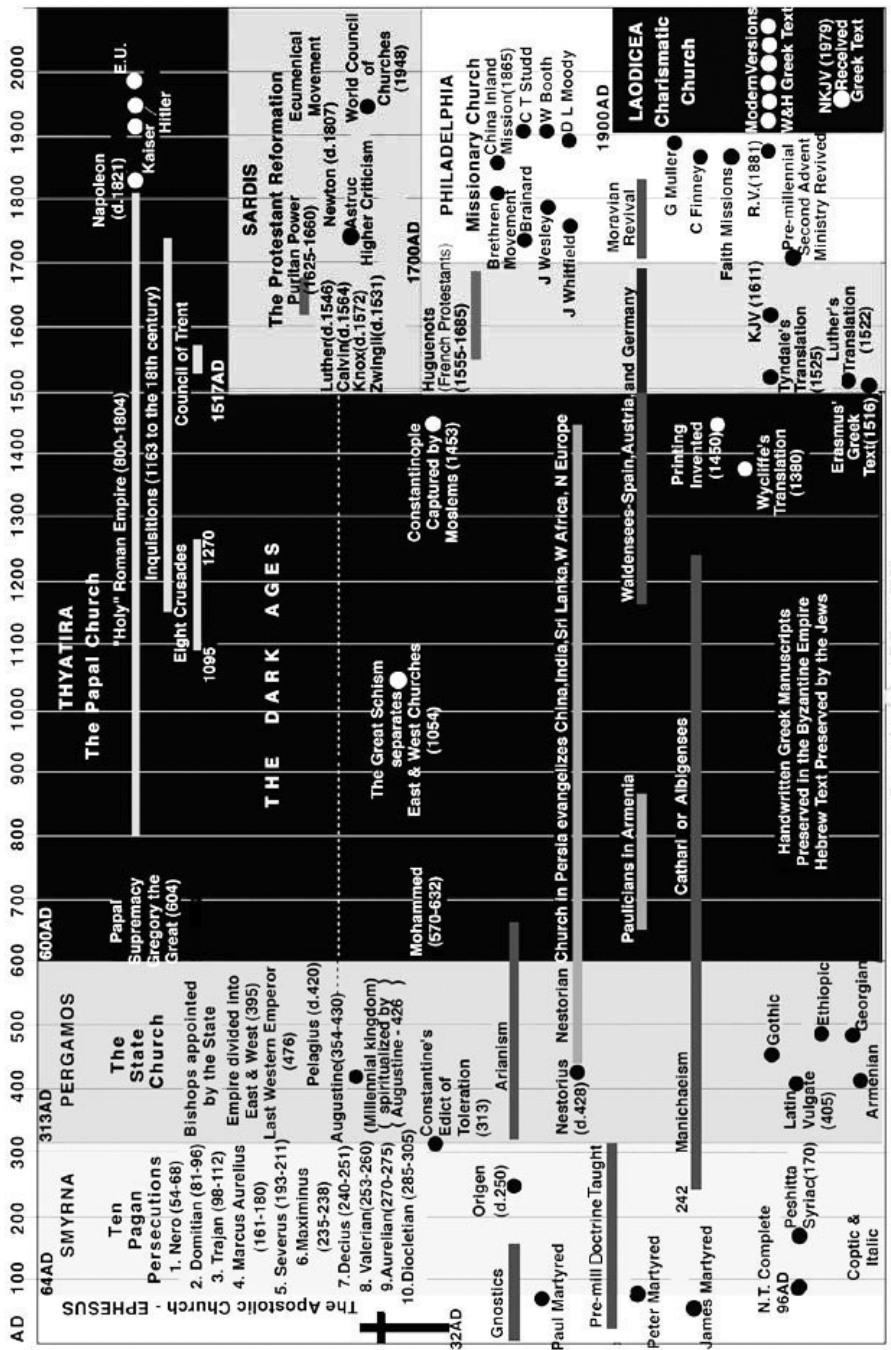
Christendom has accumulated enormous wealth and no longer can say like Peter, *"Silver and gold have I none"* (Acts 3:6).

Unscrupulous leaders have preached a wealth gospel and become exceedingly rich as they deceive people with phoney claims of healing miracles.

The proliferation of modern versions of the Scripture based on corrupt manuscripts, the acceptance of evolution, theistic and otherwise, the use of "gospel" rock music, the promotion of women in Church leadership, the tolerance of alternative life styles, together with ecumenical inclusivism, all bear testimony to the fact that within Christendom, "the people rule"!

The Lord is ready to spue this Church out of His mouth!

CHURCH HISTORY FORTOLD IN THE SEVEN CHURCHES



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Section 3 - The Things Which Shall be Hereafter (Chapters 4 to 22)

We now come to FUTURE EVENTS which follow this present Church Age and we will deal with this period as follows:

- i) The Rapture of the Church
- ii) The Great Tribulation on Earth
- iii) The Rise, Reign and Ruin of Antichrist
- iv) Israel's 70th "Week" - the Time of Jacob's Trouble
- v) Christ's Second Coming
- vi) Christ's Millennial Kingdom
- vii) The New Heaven and New Earth



i) The Rapture of the Church (Rev.4:1 to 5:14)

We know that we have reached the third section of the Revelation because John sees a door open in heaven and hears a voice saying, "*Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be **HEREAFTER***" (Rev.4:1).

If John is given a preview of future events beyond this present Church Age, then he would have to foresee **his own Rapture** into the Lord's presence, and what he sees immediately after this would be what he, and every member of the Body of Christ will see as we gather around the throne of God.

The voice he hears is not that of an angel but the Lord Jesus, "*the Alpha and Omega*" (Rev.1:8). "*The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout*" (1Thess.4:16). The Greek word for "shout" is "κελευσματος", and signifies "a commanding shout, a shout of incitement". The Lord will issue the command, "*Come up hither!*" The same command is given to two Jewish prophets who are martyred during the Great Tribulation, and we read:

*"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And **they ascended up to heaven in a cloud...**" (Rev.11:12).*

The Rapture is described elsewhere as follows:

*"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds** to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1Thess.4:16-17); and "**We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor.15:51-52).*

The Rapture is described before the beginning of the Great Tribulation which commences in Chapter 6. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the scene in heaven as the Church gathers around the Lord at the throne of grace.

All attention is focused on the One who sits upon the throne. He is likened to a jasper and sardine stone - the last and first stones on the high priest's breastplate. Peter says ,

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (1Pet.2:7)

Ezekiel saw the same throne:

"As the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it... it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain" (Ezek.1:26-28).

The rainbow which circles the throne is the token of God's covenant of mercy to Noah (Gen.9:13), and indicates that the Church does not come before a throne of judgment as in Rev.20:11, but to a throne of grace! Before the throne is the crystal sea, and around the throne are four angelic beings, each with six wings, which proclaim the eternal holiness of God. Before the throne are *"seven lamps of fire...which are the seven Spirits of God"* (Rev.4:5), and *"in the midst of the throne...stood a Lamb as it had been slain"* (Rev.5:6).

On twenty-four seats round about the throne are seated elders with crowns on their heads. These elders are representative of the Church for they are from *"every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"* (Rev.5:9). They no doubt will exercise a role in the orderly worship of the saints in heaven, just as there were twenty-four courses of priests appointed to lead the worship of Israel (1Chron.24:7-19; Luke 1:9,23).

Crowns are rewards for service, and there are many crowns promised to believers. There is the crown of life for martyrs (Rev.2:10; Jas 1:12), a crown of glory for faithful elders (1Pet 5:4), a crown of rejoicing for soul-winners (1Thess 2:19; Phil 4:1), and a crown of righteousness for all who love His appearing (2Tim.4:8).

These are incorruptible crowns (1 Cor.9:25) given at the judgment seat (bema seat) of Christ to those who labour for Him. Jesus says, *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."* (Rev.3:11).

The elders *"cast their crowns before the throne"* (Rev.4:10). Our labour is for His glory!

ii) The Great Tribulation on Earth (Rev.6:1 to 18:24)

John saw a book sealed with seven seals, in the right hand of God, and he wept because no one was found worthy to open and read the book, or even to look on it. Then one of the 24 elders spoke:

"Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev.5:5).

When John looked he saw *"a Lamb as it had been slain"*, who came and took the book. Instantly all heaven broke into song, praising the Lamb and proclaiming Him *"worthy...to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"* (Rev.5:12). The Lion of Juda, the Root of David, is the Lamb who bore the wrath of God for all human sin. He alone can administer judgment. Jesus said,

"The Father...hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27).

Daniel had *"sealed"* these judgments (Dan.12:4,9) till the *"time of the end"*, and now the Lamb opens each of the seven seals of the Tribulation.

The First Seal: A rider on a white horse goes forth conquering and to conquer (6:1-2). He has a bow but no arrows, and a crown is given to him. Other



Scriptures indicate that as soon as the Church is raptured, the *"man of sin"* will be revealed (2Thess.2:3-9). This conquest is peaceable and an imitation of Christ's appearance (Rev.19:11). Paul wrote of the Day of the Lord,

"When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..." (1Thess.5:3).

It is written of the great antetype of Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, that he would *"by peace...destroy many"* (Dan.8:25). The Tribulation will begin with a great peace movement which will include a seven-year covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27), but he will break the covenant halfway through the seven years. (See Section 2).

The Second Seal: A rider on a red horse appears and takes peace from the earth. A state of anarchy prevails and men kill one another (Rev.6:3-4).



The Third Seal: A rider on a black horse appears with a pair of balances to measure basic foods; this speaks of famine (Rev.6:5-6).



The fourth Seal: A rider on a pale horse appears with power to kill one quarter of the world's population. If total world population was 6 billion, then this would involve the death of 1½ billion! (Rev.6:7-8).



The Fifth Seal: The souls of martyrs are seen in heaven praying for vengeance. They are told to rest for *"a little season"*. The Great Tribulation will only be for a short time - seven years (Rev.6:9-11).

The Sixth Seal:

A great earthquake and meteorites strike the earth. The sun and moon are darkened and the islands are moved. Men hide in caves and cry for fear of the Day of the Lord, and the wrath of the Lamb (Rev.6:12-17).



The Seventh Seal: Seven more judgments are announced. These are the seven trumpet judgments and follow the seven seal judgments.

Some have suggested that these may simply be the same as the seal judgments in greater detail. However, this cannot be the case because the seventh seal incorporates all of the seven trumpet judgments, and we will see that the seventh trumpet announces yet other judgments - the seven vial (bowl) judgments. The seven seals are followed by the seven trumpets, which in turn are followed by the seven vials which are called "*the seven last plagues*". **Each of these judgments is therefore in sequence and becomes more intense as the Tribulation progresses** (Rev.8:1-6).

Seven angels are given trumpets to sound. Each trumpet is yet another judgment, and these judgments are in response to the prayers of the martyrs (Rev.8:3-5). Jesus said, *"Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him... I tell you that he will avenge them speedily"* (Luke 18:7-8).

After the Rapture, any who turn to Christ will suffer intense persecution.

Seven Trumpet Judgments

The following is a brief summary of the next phase of the Tribulation. The first four trumpets affect one third of the earth. Which third, we are not told. The fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets are described as three woes ("*Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earth*").

The last Woe is the seventh trumpet, which embraces the seven vials.



The First Trumpet

brings hail, fire and blood, and a third part of all trees and grass is burnt up. This will be a global bushfire of gigantic proportions (Rev.8:7).



The Second Trumpet

sounds and a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea. One third of the sea is turned to blood. Sea life and ships are destroyed (Rev.8:8).



The Third Trumpet

brings a great star, probably an asteroid, into collision with earth. The rivers and water-systems are contaminated and many men die (Rev.8:10).



The Fourth Trumpet

sounds and one third of the sun, moon and stars is smitten. This results in the light during the day and night being shortened by one third. Climatic changes will no doubt occur (Rev.8:12).

FIRST WOE



The Fifth Trumpet

sees an angel open the bottomless pit which has hitherto been kept locked up. Out of it come what appears like locusts, yet they are not locusts, but imprisoned demonic beings like those in Jude 6 & 2 Pet. 2:4. For a short time Satan will have his full complement of demons to fight against Christ, before being bound for 1,000 yrs at Christ's second coming (Rev.9:1-12).

SECOND WOE



The Sixth Trumpet

brings together the largest army ever assembled on earth. It numbers 200mill. and is responsible for the death of one third of mankind. This operation is demonically organized for a specific time. Yet men will not repent of idolatry and sin (9:13-21). **The first 3½ yrs is passed (Rev.11:3,14).**

THIRD WOE



The Seventh Trumpet

announces the kingdom of Christ. The time has come for God to destroy them that destroy the earth. The time to reap has come, and the kingdoms of earth will be compelled to submit to Christ. The seventh trumpet completes prophecy to the coming of the Lord, and releases the seven vials (Rev.10:7-11; 11:15-19; 15:1-8).

The Seven Vial Judgments

The vials are described as "*the seven last plagues*" (Rev.15:1; 21:9). They bring us to the **second 3½ years of the Tribulation.**



The First Vial

A grievous sore falls on all who have the mark of the beast or worship his image (Rev.16:2).



The Second Vial

The sea is turned to blood and every living soul in the sea dies (Rev.16:3).



The Third Vial

The rivers and drinking water are turned to blood as punishment for shedding the blood of saints (Rev.16:4-7).



The Fourth Vial

The sun is judged and men are scorched with great heat yet do not repent (Rev.16:8-9).



The Fifth Vial

The kingdom of the Beast is filled with darkness and disease yet they do not repent (Rev.16:10-11).



The Sixth Vial

Euphrates dries up for the armies of the kings of the east to come to Armageddon (Rev.16:12-16).



The Seventh Vial

A great earthquake flattens the cities of the nations and Mystery Babylon is judged (Rev.16:17-21; ch17 & ch18).



iii) The Rise, Reign, and Ruin of Antichrist (Rev.6:1-2; 13:1-18; 17:1-18; 19:19-20)

When the Rapture takes place and the Holy Spirit indwelling the true Church is removed, all hindrance to the "mystery of iniquity" (2Thess.2:7) will be gone. The apostate Church will remain and continue to support the Revived Roman Empire (the EU) as it is today.

Explanations will have to be provided for millions of missing persons whose clothes will be left exactly where they were, as a testimony, in the same manner as Jesus' clothes were left in the tomb.

The Middle East crisis will need resolution, and Israel will be under tremendous threat from rising Islamic fundamentalism linked to Russia.

The Rise of Antichrist (Rev.6:2)

Immediately after the Rapture, Antichrist will appear as the rider on the white horse having a bow (military capacity) but no arrow (peacably). His first peace initiative will confirm a "covenant with many for one week (seven years)" (Dan.9:27). (See Section2). As the great peacemaker he will appear to have the solution to many of the problems confronting the world. His covenant, or treaty, will involve Israel, because halfway through the 7 years the agreement is broken resulting in interference in Jewish Temple worship;

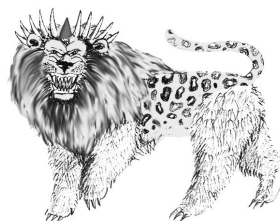
"he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation" (Dan.9:27).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Antichrist will come out of the Revived Roman Empire, for we read in Dan 9:26 that *"the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary"* (the Temple). It is a fact of history that the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD, and therefore the **Antichrist must be a Roman prince**.

Also the Antichrist is seen as the "little horn" on the head of the fourth beast in Daniel's vision recorded in Dan 7. This fourth beast represents the *"fourth kingdom on earth"* (Dan. 7:23): Babylon, Persia, Greece, and **Rome** continuing right down to the day when Christ comes, *"whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions (rulers) shall serve and obey him"* (Dan.7:27).

Antichrist will be the ruler over the final stage of the Roman Empire which we see coming together under the banner of the European Union (EU). Immediately after the Rapture he will appear and confirm the covenant with Israel for seven years (See Section 3)).



The Reign of Antichrist (Rev 13:1-18; 17:1-18).

Two beasts are seen rising on the world scene. The first comes out of the sea and is given *"his power, and his seat (throne) and great authority"* by the dragon, or Satan (See Rev.12:9). He is seen as a beast with seven heads and ten horns, having a mouth like a lion, feet like a bear, and a body like a leopard. Here we recognize the likeness of the four beasts in Daniel's vision (Dan 7).

The main difference with Daniel's beast is the seven heads, which are *"seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth"* (Rev.17:9). The woman, as we shall see, is apostate Christendom, which had not been revealed in Old Testament times but was a reality in John's day. (Rev.17:1-18; Eph.3:3-9; Rom.16:25-26; Col.1:24-27).

Antichrist will capture the worship of people all over the world by spectacular "miracles" which he and his **false prophet** will perform. *"He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven...in the sight of men"* (Rev.13:13). He will have military power, and people will say, *"Who is able to make war with him?"* (Rev.13:4). He will blaspheme God and the Temple, and turn against the saints, ie Israel and the Gentile believers (Rev.13:7).

Antichrist is a political head of state, but just as the Ceasars demanded worship and sacrifices, so *"the man of sin"* will exalt *"himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"* (2Thess.2:4). To administer

his new religion Antichrist will have his chief priest -**the false prophet (the second beast)**.

It will be halfway through the seven-year treaty with Israel that Antichrist will:

- 1) Turn on apostate Christendom which assisted him to power (the harlot woman Rev 17), and burn her with fire (Rev.17:16-18).
- 2) Break his covenant with the now-converted nation of Israel (See Section 4)), and persecute the nation mercilessly.
- 3) Move into the rebuilt Temple at Jerusalem and set up the "*abomination (idol) of desolation*" (Matt.24:15; Dan.9:27; 11:36-39).
- 4) Control all commercial activity. His mark 666 will have to be accepted in order to buy or sell (Rev.13:16-17).

This period of blasphemous rule will last for 42 months, 1260 days or three and one half years (Rev.13:5; 12:6,14), until Christ comes.

The Seven Heads (Rev.17:9-10)

The seven heads are also descriptive of seven kings (or kingdoms). Five had fallen in John's day, one was present in John's day, and one was yet to come, and there would be an eighth who would be the beast, Antichrist himself.

This beast comes out of the sea which is symbolic of the Gentile nations (Dan.7:2-3). He is the final Gentile world ruler and completes the "*times of the Gentiles*" (Lu.21:24). The seven heads therefore represent the following:

"Five are fallen" - Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Greece were past history.

"One is" - Rome existed in John's day and continued to 1804 as the Holy Roman Empire. Attempts to revive it under Napoleon, Kaiser and Hitler failed.

"One is not yet come" but continues for "*a short space*" - This is the Revived Roman Empire emerging as the EU in our present day.

Antichrist is the eighth and is "*of the seven*" and goes into perdition (ruin) at Christ's second coming as described in Rev.19:20. He is cast into "*a lake of fire*".

The Ten Horns (Rev.13:1; 17:3,12)

The ten horns refer to "*ten kings*" which make up Antichrist's kingdom.

"The ten horns... are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev.17:12).

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

The Revived Roman Empire is currently dissolving internal borders between member countries under the Schengen Agreement and discussion is going on about regionalizing the EU. When the population of the EU approaches 500 million with the inclusion of Eastern European countries, it will be necessary to divide the whole into manageable elements, and this may result in **division into ten states** answering to a central head - Antichrist.

The False Prophet (Rev.13:11-18)

Jesus warned of great deception in the last days. He spoke of "*false Christs*" Matt.24:5,24), and "*false prophets*"(Matt.24:11,24), and said these would "*shew great signs and wonders*". This would be at the same time as the "*abomination of desolation*" was set up in the holy place of the Temple, and all of this would occur during the Great Tribulation immediately prior to the return of the Lord to the earth.

The modern-day false prophets are following the same pattern. They engage in signs, healings, miracles, "slaying in the spirit", "holy laughter", talking in tongues, casting out demons, making prophecies, etc etc. All of this is preparing the world for the ultimate "faith healer" and supernatural miracle worker, and his false prophet. So convincing will he be, that apart from Divine protection the elect nation of Israel would be deceived into thinking he was the promised Messiah.

Jesus said,

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"(Matt.7:22-23).

The Harlot Woman (Rev.17:1-18; 18:1-24; 19:1-3)

The beast with seven heads and ten horns is seen ridden by a harlot woman arrayed in "*gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations (idolatry) and filthiness of her fornication*"(Rev 17:4).

Identification of the woman is obvious from the following clues:

1) She is international. She sits "*upon many waters*" which are "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Rev.17:1,15).

2) She is political. "*With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication*" (Rev.17:2).



This graphic appeared in *Time* magazine 9 Dec. '91 in an article about the EU.

3) She is exceedingly wealthy. She is *"decked with gold and precious stones and pearls"* (Rev.17:4), and when destroyed, merchants will cry, *"so great riches is come to nought"* (Rev.18:17).

4) She is idolatrous. Her name is *"Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots"*. Babylon was where idolatry began, and the golden chalice in her hand is symbolic of her worst idolatry. The Roman Mass is a blasphemous, idolatrous sacrifice at the heart of the worship of apostate Christendom (Rev.17:4-5).

5) She is guilty of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. *"I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"* (Rev.17:6). The Church of Rome has slaughtered faithful believers for more than 1,000 years! Its history is written in blood.

6) She has her headquarters at Rome. Rome is the city of "seven hills" (Rev.17:9) and was *"that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth"* in John's day, AD96 (Rev.17:18).



The flag of the European Union bears the twelve stars of the Virgin Mary, and the EU has been described as "fortress Christendom". Turkey has been refused entry to the EU because it is a Muslim nation and therefore not acceptable to Europe's "Christian Club". The Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew, stated: "Preserving the unity of Europe is the foremost duty of all Churches today".

After the Rapture there will be nothing to hinder the formation of one World Church and Rome will be its leader. Ultimately, however, Antichrist will not tolerate its political activity or religious competition, and will burn her with fire (Rev.17:16-17). The horrific judgment that falls on her is described in Revelation chapter 18.

The Ruin of Antichrist (Rev.19:20)

At Christ's coming, *"the beast was taken and with him the false prophet...These both were cast alive into a lake of fire"*.

Other Scriptures describing the judgment of Antichrist are discussed on page 70.

The Tribulation is Distinctly Jewish

Israel takes the centre stage as God's witness during the Great Tribulation:

1) There is no mention of the Church on earth from chapter 6 to chapter 18, ie during the Tribulation.

2) Israel, the Temple, Jerusalem, and Jewish prophets are referred to in these chapters (ie chs. 7; 11; 12; and 14).

3) In Revelation ch.7, martyrs from all nations are described as those who "*came out of [the] great tribulation*" (Rev.7:14). The definite article "the" is present in the Greek. The events described from chapters 6 to 18 are the "*day of the Lord*", or Great Tribulation about which Jesus spoke in Matt.24; 21, 29.

4) The Olivet Discourse describes the Great Tribulation and is entirely Jewish, since the Church did not begin until 55 days later. It teaches that the period of Great Tribulation **immediately precedes** the second coming of Christ to the earth and reference is made to Jerusalem, Judaea, the holy place, and the sabbath day.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened...and THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...(Matt.24:29).

5) The return and deliverance of Israel in the last days is elsewhere connected with unprecedented judgments of the last days. Jeremiah says,

*"For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah...and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it...Alas! for that day is great, so that **none is like it**: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; **but he shall be saved out of it**" (Jer.30:3-7).*

6) Daniel also foretells the Great Tribulation and links that time with Israel's deliverance.

*"At that time...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and AT THAT TIME **thy people shall be delivered...**" (Dan.12:1).*

7) Other Scriptures speak of a **Jewish Temple** during the Day of the Lord (Great Tribulation) where Antichrist will set up his idol for worship:

*"That day shall not come (ie the Day of the Lord), except there be a falling away (lit "the departure") first, and that man of sin be revealed...who...exalteth himself...so that he as God sitteth **in the temple of God**, shewing himself that he is God (2Thess.2:3-4). See also*

Matt.24:15, where the "*abomination of desolation*" is set up in the Jewish Temple ("*the holy place*") during the Tribulation.

8) Antichrist will cause the "*sacrifice and oblation to cease*" halfway through the Tribulation (Dan.9:27). This implies that Israel must be re-established in the land and have recommenced Temple worship. Certainly the Church won't build the Temple and offer sacrifices. It must be Israel! For a full discussion on the "70 Weeks" prophecy see Section 2.

These Scriptures and many more connect Israel with the Great Tribulation period and with the coming of Christ to reign over the earth. It is not surprising therefore that considerable detail is found in Revelation about Israel as God's witness in that short period of time before Christ returns.

144,000 Jewish Witnesses

Revelation chapter 7 describes the sealing of 144,000 "*servants of God*" out of the 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 7:1-8). The Father's seal is placed in their forehead for protection from the judgments of God that are about to fall, which indicates that this Tribulation is not the same as the tribulation that Christians endure. Christians may be persecuted by the world, but the Great Tribulation is judgment **from God**.

A similar thing happened in Ezekiel's day, when he saw a vision of God's judgment which was about to fall on Jerusalem. A man with an inkhorn was told to put a mark on the forehead of all the men in Jerusalem who "*sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof*" (Ezek. 9:4). Then six men with swords passed through the city, and only those with the mark were spared!

Only the Jewish nation could carry out the task of preaching the Gospel of the coming kingdom across the world in such a short time. Jews are the most international race and the most multilingual people on the face of the earth. Jesus said,

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt.24:14).

The result of their preaching will be a great company of Gentile martyrs:

"Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne (in heaven)...And he said to me, These are they which came out of (the) great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev.7:9-17).

The Construction of the Temple (Rev.11:1-13)

Instructions are given in chapter 11 to measure and build the Temple at Jerusalem. John is told:

*"Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But **the court** which is outside the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."*

This suggests that the Temple will be built in the open space next to the Gentile mosques, where the foundations of Herod's Temple have already been located. The Jews plan to build the Temple and collection of the holy half shekel began in 1997 for this purpose. See Section 5.

The Two Jewish Prophets (Rev.11:3-13)

Two Jewish prophets (witnesses) are associated with the reconstruction of the Temple and the restoration of Temple worship. These are to testify for 1,260 days, or three and one half years, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, which indicates that they are calling Israel to repentance. We read concerning them:

*"These are the **two olive trees**, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth"(Rev.11:4).*

This is an obvious reference to "*two olive trees*" mentioned in Zechariah's prophecy chapter 4. Here the Temple was being rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity, and because of opposition from the Samaritans the work had ceased. The Samaritans had obtained **an international decree** from the Persian ruler Artaxerxes to stop the work (Ezra 4:21). God raised up two Spirit-filled prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, who urged the people to complete the Temple and defy the Persian edict. Finally the edict was reversed in the reign of Darius, and the Temple was completed in 516 BC, twenty years after its commencement.

These two olive trees provide olive oil to the candlestick, and we read:

*"These are the **two anointed ones**, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech.4:14).*

During the Tribulation there will be two similar witnesses (prophets) who will encourage Israel to proceed, in spite of international opposition, to rebuild the Temple. In 2005 Jews can't pray on the Temple Mount, but that situation will be reversed, as it was in Zechariah's day, to allow the Temple to be built.

Some have suggested that these two prophets would be Moses and Elijah because of similarities in miracles performed. It is more likely

that they will be two godly Jewish prophets out of the "144,000 servants of God"; most likely from the tribe of Levi.

It is interesting that the **national symbol of the nation of Israel** since 1948 has been the seven-lamp candlestick and two olive trees, as depicted in Zechariah 4.

The two prophets are finally killed by Antichrist and their bodies will lie for three and one half days in a street of Jerusalem. The earth will rejoice to celebrate the victory of Antichrist over God's servants, no doubt interpreted as demonstrating his greater powers, but then we read they are given resurrection bodies.

"They heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour there was a great earthquake... and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven"(Rev.11:12-13).

This cannot be spiritualized, for we read,

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city...where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev.11:8).

We know that Jesus Christ our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, and the events described **must therefore be taken literally!**

Israel's History from Beginning to End (Rev.12)

In Revelation 12 we have a panoramic view of the nation of Israel described in the figure of a woman, who is

"clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev.12:1).

The woman gives birth to a "man child" who is destined to "rule all nations with a rod of iron". At the time of the child's birth, the dragon, who is defined as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world", seeks to destroy the child "as soon as it was born". The man child, however, is "caught up unto God, and to his throne".

Israel is depicted as the woman through whom Jesus Christ came. Satan tried to kill Him as a child. He will one day "rule all nations with a rod of iron", as David said.

"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (Gentiles) for thine inheritance...Thou shalt break

Israel's National Emblem



Zech 4
Haggai & Zechariah
encourage the
Rebuilding of
the Second Temple

Rev 11
Two future Prophets
encourage the
Rebuilding of
the Third Temple

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps.2:7-9).

The nation of Israel is identified in Scripture with the sun, moon, and stars. In Genesis we read that Joseph had a dream and told his brothers,

*"Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the **sun and the moon and the eleven stars** made obeisance to me...his father rebuked him, and said unto him...Shall **I and thy mother and thy brethren** indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"*(Gen.37:9-10).

The **sun** represented Israel, the **moon** represented Joseph's mother, and the **twelve stars** represented the children of Israel. Only by comparing Scripture with Scripture in this way can we discern the meaning of the symbols in the Bible.

Paul wrote of Israel,

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom.9:5).

A Gap in Israel's History

Next we read that

"the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev.12:6)(1,260 days=42 months=3¹/₂ years).

This period of 1,260 days is clearly the second half of the 7 years of Tribulation, after Antichrist has *"caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease"* in the midst of the *"week"* (Dan 9:27).

Nothing is said about Israel from the ascension of Christ until this last seven years just prior to Christ's Second Advent! Why? Because that is the mystery Church Age. It was *"the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began"*(Rom.16:25).

Failure to recognize this gap renders understanding of Bible prophecy impossible.

Israel in Tribulation (Rev.12:6-17)

The second half of the Great Tribulation will be horrific for Israel. The nation at this stage is believing in Jesus Christ, and Satan has been cast into the earth. The faith of Israel in the face of this threatened holocaust is steadfast, and God declares from heaven:

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down...And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"(Rev.12:10-11).

Only a short time remains, and Satan has great wrath *"because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"* (Rev.12:12). He is enraged against the woman (Israel), and goes out to *"make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"* (Rev.12:17).

God will have special help for His persecuted people, a place of hiding in a wilderness (Rev.12:14). Some think this is the city of Petra or elsewhere in caves of the Judaeen wilderness. Antichrist's attempts to flush them out will fail (Rev.12:15-16), and as Jesus said, *"for the elect's sake (Israel's sake) those days shall be shortened"* (Matt.24:22).

If Satan could destroy Israel completely, then God's purposes to establish a kingdom on earth and to fulfil all His promises to Abraham and his seed would be defeated.

v) Christ's Second Coming Rev.19:1-21)

The Great Tribulation concludes with the appearance of Christ in the clouds of heaven and the *"Alleluia"* chorus is heard, the only time the word is used in the Bible.

Christ comes as *Lamb* and *Bridegroom* (vs.7,9), *Faithful and True* (v.11), *The Word of God* (v.13), and *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords* (v.16). The sword from His mouth smites the nations who are *"gathered together to make war against Him"* (v.19), and the beast and his false prophet are *"cast alive into a lake of fire"* (v.20). Christ's victory is complete.

Many Scriptures give vivid descriptions of the day of Christ's appearing, and these help us to understand the greatness of the occasion. No one passage of Scripture can describe all aspects of His triumph.

The event must be seen from the perspective of the Church fresh from receiving rewards for service at the bema seat. The Bride *"hath made herself ready"* (Rev.19:7), and she comes forth with her Bridegroom to the marriage supper of the Lamb. At this time He will come *"to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ...in that day"* (2 Thess.1:10). To contemplate the vast number of souls saved during this Church Age is difficult indeed, but the excitement of such a gathering is mind-boggling.

Can we grasp the mood of such a moment? The apostles, an army of martyrs, faithful missionaries, and ordinary Christians like you and me, will be displayed in all the perfection of Christ. *"We shall be like*

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him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). There in the heavens will be not only the **display of His glory**, but also the **evidence of His grace**. Millions of redeemed souls who have been lifted out of the pit of sin will give eternal testimony *"to the praise of the glory of his grace"*(Eph.1:6).

As A.T.Pierson put it:

*All these once were sinners defiled in His sight,
Now arrayed in pure garments, in praise they unite:
Unto Him who hath loved us and washed us from sin,
Unto Him be the glory, for ever. Amen.*

The spectators on that day will be countless angels. Michael, Gabriel, Seraphims and Cherubims, and ministering spirits who have watched over the heirs of salvation will fix their gaze on the Lord of Glory!

On earth, the scene will be quite different. The armies of the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem (Zech.14:2-3) displaying the rage of the kings of the earth. There two armies meet; the army of the King of Kings against the army of the kings of the earth (Rev.19:19). This will be the culmination of Antichrist's fury against Christ, *"against the Lord, and against his anointed"* (Ps.2:2), but the outcome is never in doubt.

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives..."(Zech.14:3-4). *"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"*(Rev.19:15).

Isaiah paints a vivid picture of this conflict:

*"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save...I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me...For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and **the year of my redeemed is come**"* (Isa.63:1-4).

Israel will be the Lord's redeemed people waiting for their Messiah. At first the nation will be plunged into mourning (Zech.12:10), as they reflect on how they nailed Him to a Roman cross. The nailprints will still be visible, and *"one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"*(Zech.13:6).

Then sorrow will be turned into joy, and the cry will go up:

*"Lo, **this is our God**; we have waited for him, and he will save us: **this is the LORD**; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa.25:9). "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" [lit. 'the rock of ages'] (Isa. 26:1-4).*

Many of the psalms will take on a new meaning after the Lord comes. Israel will be able to sing psalms like Ps 46.

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very **present help in trouble**. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the **mountains be carried into the midst of the sea**; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the **mountains shake** with the swelling thereof. Selah...**The heathen raged**, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted....Come, behold the works of the LORD, **what desolations he hath made in the earth**. He maketh **wars to cease** unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; **he burneth the chariot** in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among among the heathen (nations), I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps.46:1-11).*

The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matt.25:31-46)

During the Great Tribulation there will be three classes of people on earth.

1) The Jewish nation. (The Lord's "brethren" Matt.25:40) At first 144,000 will turn to the Lord and preach the Gospel of the kingdom. Later, during the first half of the Tribulation when the Russian/Muslim nations invade the land, the whole nation will turn to the Lord. *"So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward" (Ezek.39:22).* So when Christ comes, all of surviving Israel will be saved (Rom.11:26-27) and watching for their Lord to return.

Many Jewish believers will be killed for their faith in Christ, including the 144,000 servants of God who are seen in heaven singing a new song *"before the throne"* while the Tribulation is continuing (Rev.14:1-5).

2) The Saved Gentiles. These will be saved through the testimony of the Jewish remnant. During the Tribulation these

Gentiles will support the persecuted Jewish witnesses with food and clothing. They will visit them when sick or cast into prison. These Gentiles will refuse to worship the idol of Antichrist and will not take his mark on their hand or forehead.

A great number of saved Gentiles will die as martyrs for Christ, and we see them *"before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes"* (Rev.7:9-10). These are raised as part of the first resurrection at the end of the Great Tribulation. We read about these in Revelation ch. 20.

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ 1,000 years" (Rev.20:4).

3) The Unsavd Gentiles. These will be those who follow the Antichrist, receive his mark, and worship his idol image.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark...the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"(Rev 14:9-11).

The Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will stand before the Lord at the *"throne of his glory"* (Matt.25:31), where He will separate the **sheep** from the **goats** after He has gathered together *"his elect"* nation Israel (Matt.24:31). The evidence of salvation in **the sheep** will be that they stood with the Lord's brethren.

*"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdomInasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of **these my brethren**, ye have done it unto me" (Matt.25:34-40).*

The **goats** go into *"everlasting fire"* because they did not stand with either Jewish believers or Gentile believers.

*"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of **the least of these**, (sheep) ye did it not to me" (Matt.25:45).*

vi) Christ's Millennial Kingdom (1,000 Years of Peace - Rev.20)

Millions have prayed it for nearly 2,000 years; the Lord's Prayer will finally be answered. *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"*(Matt.6:10).

The duration of this kingdom will be 1,000 years. Six times the period is specifically mentioned in Rev.20:2 to 7 as follows:

- 1) Satan will be bound for 1,000 years (v.2)
- 2) Satan will be sealed in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (v.3)
- 3) Thrones are established and the Tribulation saints, living and dead, will reign with Christ for 1,000 years (v.4)
- 4) The rest of the dead, the unsaved, will await the **second resurrection** at the end of 1,000 years (v.5)
- 5) The **first resurrection** includes only the saved, who will be priests of God and of Christ and reign with Him 1,000 years (v.6)
- 6) At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will be released from his prison for a "*little season*" (Rev.20:3) and will deceive the nations once more. He will stir up Gog and Magog to surround the "*camp of the saints*" and "*the beloved city*" (Rev.20:9), Jerusalem, where the Millennial Temple and the glory of God will be present. This final rebellion will be judged with fire from heaven, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet will have already been for 1,000 years (Rev.20:7-10).

(The previous invasion of Israel by Gog was destroyed "*on the mountains of Israel*" during the Tribulation (Ezek.38&39) **before Israel repented** and could be called "saints". The details of each attack are quite different.)

vii) The New Heaven and New Earth- Revelation Chapters 21 and 22

At the conclusion of the millennial kingdom, the earth will be destroyed with fire and the eternal order will ensue. All of the saved from the Kingdom Age must receive a resurrection body and therefore the final stage of the first resurrection will occur at the end of the 1,000 years.

The Resurrections of the Just and the Unjust (John 5:29)

The first resurrection has been likened to a harvest which is gathered in three stages; there is the firstfruits, the main harvest, and the gleanings.

When Christ rose, He led Old Testament saints from paradise into heaven. Christ was "*the firstfruits of them that slept*" (1 Cor.15:20; Matt.27:52-53).

The great **harvest** occurs at the Rapture of the Church (1Thess.4:13-18) with **gleanings** at the end of the Tribulation (Rev.20:6) and again at the end of the millennial kingdom. The first resurrection is for the saved.

The **second resurrection** occurs as one event at the end of the millenium when all the unsaved from the beginning of time will stand before the great white throne, not to determine their eternal destiny, but to receive degrees of punishment in the lake of fire according to their works (Rev.20:11-15).

The New Jerusalem and the New Earth

A detailed description of the new Jerusalem is given in chapter 21. It is undoubtedly the place that Jesus has gone to prepare (John14:1-3). Its magnificence defies our imagination. Its streets, walls, gates, light, and materials will have to be seen to be appreciated.

It seems that the new Jerusalem is associated with the Church, for when the angel said to John, *"Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife"*, John says, *"he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God"* (Rev.21:9-10). The names of the twelve apostles are on its foundations (Rev.21:14), and the Church is *"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"* (Eph.2:20).

The nations from other ages will *"walk in the light"* of that city and *"bring their glory and honour into it"* (Rev.21:24), but the city will be the abode of the Bride of the Lamb!

Finally, the curse will be removed from creation and there will be no more sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, but the throne of God will be there. Everyone will have a sinless resurrection body.

We conclude with one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible:

*"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And **they shall see his face**; and his name shall be in their foreheads"* (Rev.22:3-4).

The Final Appeal

As we conclude our studies in the Book of the Revelation, we stand on the shores of eternity. The opportunity to trust Christ for salvation has forever passed. Destinies are eternally sealed. If souls are eternally lost, it will only be because they refused to come and take the free gift of eternal life. Three times we hear the cry, *"Come, Come, Come."*

It is not surprising that in the final chapter we read God's gracious invitation.

*"The Spirit and the bride (the Church) say , **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"* (Rev.22:17).