

What Other Parts of the Bible Say About Revelation Commentary Companion on Revelation

Purpose

Nothing explains the Bible better than other verses and patterns within the Bible itself. This work is intended as an aid to studying the book of Revelation by providing verses relating to similar circumstances in different parts of the Bible. It can be used as a scripture-check while studying commentaries and the book itself.

Hopefully, by sticking to concepts confirmed by multiple references within the Bible, this writing can assist in verifying or refuting the works of doctrines based upon dubious interpretations of one or two verses.

The entire text of Revelation is quoted here, so that the reader can weigh the comments I *do* make in full context.

Forward

The Bible is the straight edge by which all doctrines are to be judged. As Christianity has spread and become relevant to all the cultures and sub-cultures of this world, the Bible has remained as the unifying standard that has explained and defined relationship with God since ancient times.

These comments are interspersed with text as translated into the American Standard Version published in 1901. This is a faithfully rendered modern translation in public domain that can be freely quoted and published without copyright complications I highly recommend a download of this compact <8 megabytes of complete Bible.

Once in awhile, there will be repeats of comments I have made earlier within this text. This redundancy is for those who may choose to zero in on verses found later in this work

Chapter 1

1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw.

God delivered these final instructions to His church through John, the last survivor of the original twelve apostles.

Although most of this book relates to events near the end of human history, it also detailed the problems and immediate futures of seven churches in western Turkey that existed at that time – but this by no means makes this information obsolete. On the contrary, these seven letters address key issues that will plague churches for the millenniums to come. They also provide instructions, and specify rewards for those who overcome.

1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Three responses are necessary for this blessing. Reading takes a conscious effort; hearing is an attentive and humble posture essential to being taught, and then changing our lives accordingly expresses God's will into the world around us – Action, Attention, and Application.

1:4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne;

Later on, we will find that these seven spirits are also a single spirit – even as the seven stations of the tabernacle were one tabernacle, and the seven churches were one church.

1:5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood;

Between verses 4 and 5 we see that the letter introduced and transcribed by John, was from the Father, the Spirit, and from Jesus.

1:6 and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

As a kingdom, we are defined as a state – a culture apart from the rest of Earth’s cultures. As priests, the purpose of our lives has been defined as bringing others to the throne of God. In the broader sense it is a restoration of earth to the service to God, as alluded to in Rom.8:19-22. See also 2Cor.5:18-20

The word “Spirits” in verse 4 is the letter-for-letter identical word used as a singular form in reference to the Holy Spirit, and is indeed singular in most of its New Testament uses. Inasmuch as these seven Spirits are never referenced individually, it is apparent that this is a reference to a seven-fold singular personage. This would make sense in that these seven Spirits (or seven-fold Spirit) are here listed with God the Father and Jesus as coauthors of that which is to be written. Furthermore, at the end of each of the seven letters it refers to the Spirit (singular, same word – letter-for-letter) as having spoken to the churches.

We see the seven Spirits of God portrayed as lamps of fire in Rev.4:5, and we see seven eyes “...which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.”

1:7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen

There appears to be a logistic problem with this: How can everybody see Him? Secondly, as a single event, what about the billions of people who will already have died?

We know that there is to be a judgment day (a single event), so this would imply that there is a place (more likely two places) where those who have died are held until this time. It would also make sense that on that day every soul that has ever lived would be on hand;

1:8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

In verses 6 through 8 John is declaring things by the Spirit, which include prophecies. As believers we are all priests, in the sense that we communicate the will and desire of God to the world around us, and petition God on their behalf.

Alpha and Omega are the title of God the Father – the all-inclusive Absolute of the universe. In verse 17, Jesus describes Himself as the first and the last. These are positions between the beginning and the end, within which all creation is contained. Picture a line in which time exists, embedded within eternity. Within this line there is a first position and a last position between which all else limited to time is included.

Alpha and Omega are nouns meaning the beginning and the end, respectively, whereas first and last define positions between the beginning and the end.

The identity of Jesus quickly separates Christianity from all other religions. Jesus is absolutely unique. He is the firstborn of all creation (Col.1:15), and the beginning of the

creation of God in (Rev.3:14). He then became the agent of all other creation (Col.1:16, Heb.1:2, John 1:3). All false religions speak of a very different and inferior Jesus.

1:9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

John was writing this letter from an island off the west coast of Turkey. Due to his witnessing for Jesus, he had been sentenced to work in a coal mine there until his death.

As believers we share in tribulation as a part of the extra-worldly kingdom, and are empowered with the steadfastness required to fulfill it.

1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks;

God speaks to all his children at some level, and as a part of the body of Christ, there are things he reveals to us that we are to share with others.

When John turned to see the source of Jesus speaking to him, the first things he saw were the churches (represented by the candlesticks). Christ's voice is first heard through his people, and then more directly as we continue to focus.

1:13 and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

John had been in a state of communion with God when he suddenly heard a voice behind him instructing him to write a physical book and send it to physical churches existing at that time. These churches were scattered in the western third of Turkey. In verse 1:19 we will see that the scope of this writing includes that which John will have personally seen, and future events as well.

As the letters and subsequent chapters unfold, Jesus will be identified by the various features in the description given of Him in verses 13 through 18. Each aspect of Jesus will be appropriate to the letter it introduces.

The first thing John saw when he turned around to respond to the voice was the candlesticks, which we soon learn represent the churches. Then he saw Jesus in the midst of them. It is the churches that first reveal Jesus to the world around us. When John then zeroed in on Jesus he became overwhelmed with awe.

1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

As noted in verse 8, this title of Jesus (first and last) is distinct from that of the Father – the all encompassing beginning and end which would come before the first person in line and be after the last person in line.

In Colossians 1:15-18 Paul describes Jesus as the agent of creation and all it contains. He is the total expression of the invisible God. God is spirit, and spirits in themselves are

not seen. For further confirmation of this, consider John 1:1-3, where Jesus is defined as the total expression of God. This definition is also found in Hebrews 1:2-3.

This understanding of who Jesus is separates Christianity from Mormonism J.W., and multiple other deceptions. In 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul warns of people preaching a different Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel. In Galatians 1:8-9, Paul actually curses those who preach these different gospels. Perhaps the clearest indication of a false doctrine is when people attempt to redefine Jesus.

1:19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

The various details of the description of Jesus in the above verses are not random. As we study the seven letters to follow, we will see that Jesus introduces himself to each of the churches by using one or more of these details. We will also see that the details He chooses are relevant to the issues at hand in the respective churches.

John was instructed to write of insights to be revealed concerning the past, the present situations, and the resulting future events. This is something to keep in mind as we communicate with others.

The word “angel” in verse 20 literally means messenger. Since the article “the” is used, this messenger would doubtless be a reference to the pastor of the church, who is responsible to his congregation to hear from God and communicate His will. The fact that this messenger is noted as being held in the right hand of Jesus, would further confirm this.

These lampstands, representing the seven churches, are not necessarily permanent features. We will see that in the case of Ephesus in Rev.2:5, that a local church can be removed from service. Another feature clearly inferred here is that churches ordained by God may be represented by lampstands. The fact that the lampstands here related to only seven local churches, does not imply that there are only to be seven local churches throughout the world and its history. How often we see churches that were once vibrant and glorious testimonies to Jesus, become apathetic, saltless, and ultimately emblems of disgrace and vile behavior. Lampstands can be removed.

Chapter 2

This letter begins with individual messages to each of seven churches. God is a very personal God, and in addition to the local church level He speaks to us one-by-one as we tune in and await God’s revelation to us as individuals. Indeed, in chapter one He got very personal with John, who was tuned in and listening on the Lord’s Day (whichever day of the week or year that might have been).

In chapters two and three God speaks to individual churches at the community level, but in doing so he speaks to us all to (a) warn us of problems that will plague churches throughout remaining history in various cultures, (b) prescribe action items in how they are to be dealt with, and (c) assign rewards to those who overcome each of these situations on an individual basis.

One fascinating discovery I’ve made through multiple re-reads of these seven letters is how they track the seven stations of the Tabernacle. You might also recognize parallels with the seven feasts of Israel and stages of growth in a Christian life. I’ll point out a few of these as we go along.

The churches addressed were all within a circle of about 150 miles, and obviously didn’t represent all the nations and cultures of the world, so why were these particular

churches selected as examples for us all? I would suggest that although the towns did not represent a broad geographical sample, their problems did. Even in today's world of high mobility and instant communication the messages in these letters remain important everywhere.

In addition to the geographical areas, we see a progression in these letters that details the spiritual growth, challenges, and opportunities of every one of us.

2:1 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:

In Rev.1:20, the stars are referred to as "angels." This is the same word translated elsewhere in the New Testament as "messenger," or "pastor." These are seven physical letters entrusted to seven physical people, who are charged with disseminating the information to their respective regional churches.

In this same verse, the candlesticks are the individual churches. We are called to be the light of God as churches (as well as individuals per Matthew 5:14-16) in our local areas. The fact that Jesus is walking among them expresses his personal involvement with churches at the community level. This also ties in with 2 Corinthians 5:19, where God has commissioned us to reconcile the world to Him.

This letter hints at accountability of the pastor, and the validity of the assembly as containing God's presence. Otherwise, it is just another secular meeting prioritizing other issues.

Ephesus:

2:2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false;

Already there was competition for control of the church, but the leadership was on to it, and properly dealt with it. These judgments were not whimsical opinion; these people were actually tested.

2:3 and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary. 4 But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.

Works are important, and people can be blessed by them regardless of the hearts of those who are doing them. In Philippians 1:15-18 Paul rejoices that the gospel is being preached even by people of impure motives. In Matthew 7:22-23 Jesus speaks of people performing miracles in His name – a good thing; people are being blessed. But he also speaks of these same people doing so while they are in fact living hypocritical and worldly lives, and therefore forfeiting their rewards – a bad thing. Again, in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul speaks of multiple great and beneficial things, but when not motivated by love, the giver receives no reward.

It is so much easier to just do things – like send money, engage in acts of charity, etc. – than to enter into relationships. This is called zeal, which can be motivated by fear, obligation, hope of status, etcetera. The future apostle Paul (while he was still called Saul) had zeal and works, with no relationship. But God calls us to love, even as He loved. The greatest commandment next to loving God is to love our fellow man. We seem willing to do just about anything besides taking the risk allowing our heart to become involved and actually loving. We need to confront this in our hearts almost daily.

2:5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.

This is serious. A church that becomes nothing but a good works center may benefit the surrounding community well enough, but will cease to give the world what it needs the most; the light of God's love. Such a church will lose its spiritual status before God and become no more than a welfare business.

2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Overcoming in this case, is obviously a reference to returning to love. But for whatever the believers around us may do or become, we have opportunities and responsibilities as individuals to do things right. God will honor no excuses we may come up with based upon what other individuals or groups have done or said to us. This is serious: Our ongoing choice to love God and walk in the power of his forgiveness relates to our eternal destiny.

We generally consider love as something that comes naturally; It doesn't. Attraction comes naturally, and as wondrously powerful and all-consuming as attraction can be, to actually love – to prioritize the needs, interests, and desires of another above your own – is a choice. Now all of us need a little help to achieve this, and God is happy to oblige as we choose to get close to him. Personally, the way I knew that God was real was when I discovered that I suddenly had love for others that I didn't have the day before. God had worked a miracle in my soul that I had only unsuccessfully attempted to fake before.

This issue concerning love is how we begin our walk with God as we respond with awe and gratitude for what He paid for our salvation. This is the doorway representing the entrance to the Tabernacle of God. Apparently, not everyone in the church at Ephesus would enter in and be saved.

Smyrna:

The name relates to an aromatic herb commonly used in embalming.

2:8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again:

Once inside the gate of the Tabernacle, the first thing you would encounter was the bronze altar, upon which the carcass of the sacrifice slain outside the gate would be burned, but a portion representing the life (the blood) continues the journey. So here we have Jesus introducing himself as the one who had died, yet overcame death and continued on.

When we get saved many things in our previous lives get left behind. We often make new friends, get rid of old habits, and sometimes receive ridicule from those of our previous friendships. The carcass of our previous life begins to be replaced.

2:9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

The term Christian only occurs twice in the Bible, and in Romans, Paul repeatedly refers to believers as spiritual Israel. I have come to believe that this "synagogue of Satan," occurring here and in the church at Philadelphia, is a reference to fake Christians who oppose the leadership and try to take the church in a different direction.

2:10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

Whenever we take a step forward spiritually (be it salvation in the first place or any new step of growth), Satan will attempt to oppose it. In Matthew 13 in the parable of the sower he is pictured as a bird attempting to devour the seed before it can bear fruit. Spiritual growth is always tested by fire of some kind. Growth is dangerous, but don't fear or give up. The God who created you and enabled your growth will give you the strength to fulfill the opportunity for growth.

When we do the wrong thing we suffer meaninglessly. When we do the right thing we have God by our side to strengthen and protect us, and to see us through to the blessings resulting. When we do nothing at all, we are nothing at all.

2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

This verse is pretty stark: Add to it or take away from it if you dare.

Pergamum:

Rev.2:12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword:

Jesus exposes two false doctrines prevalent in the church at Pergamum. It is no coincidence that the word of the Lord (scripture) is likened to a two edged sword elsewhere in the Bible.

This church corresponds with the bronze laver – a huge wash basin – that immediately followed the bronze alter in the sequence of the tabernacle. In Ephesians 5:26 there is a reference to cleansing by means of “the washing of water with the word.”

A new believer – or an old one going deeper into faith – needs exposure to increased Biblical studies go get their bearings in their reoriented life.

2:13 I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner.

These were two doctrines that promoted sexual promiscuity and taught other religious practices that allowed them.

2:16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.

The church was called to deal with this issue apparently involving a portion of their congregation. If they didn't, Jesus himself would create a major division within the church.

So what effect would words have in warfare? Words that expressed the will of God created the universe.

2:17a He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna.

There were three types of lighting in the tabernacle: (a) The twelve hours of so of the natural light of day in the courtyard, (b) the light of the menorah that was fueled by olive oil (symbolic of Holy Spirit anointing) and provided light day and night in the holy place, and (c) the shekinah glory of God in the holy of holies. I believe these three forms of lighting represented spiritual knowledge as acquired by (a) diligently applying our minds

to the study of God's word, (rational natural scholarship) (b) the hidden things revealed by the Holy Spirit that our access to rational knowledge could not have shown us, (c) Those times of worship and fellowship with God in which we know as we are known, with knowledge that transcends rational comprehension, human expression, and intellect.

The first thing encountered in the holy place was the showbread (bread being another metaphor for the word of God), which was baked fresh daily. This was hidden from view from outside the holy place. Those who overcame at Pergamum would move on to the holy place, and to knowledge revealed only by the light of the oil (the Holy Spirit).

2:17b , and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

I love this: Only you and God will know your real name. People may be full of opinions about what you should be doing and how you should be ministering, but only you and God know how you are to fit as a living stone in the temple being built by God.

Thyatira:

2:18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass:

In the sequence of the tabernacle Thyatira would coincide with the first station within the holy place, which was not visible from the outside world. The lighting within this space was provided by the menorah – an oil fed lampstand. It is significant therefore that in this case Jesus introduces himself as the one who has eyes like a flame of fire. This also is a metaphor taken from the first chapter.

In this realm we are dealing with the spooky stuff; things not evident to human logic or knowledge represented by the cycles of natural light of day just outside. These are things revealed by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the anointing of oil in the indoor lighting of the menorah. This first station is the showbread – with bread being another symbol for the word of God. But even as human logic has competition from clever and appealing deceptions, so the spiritual realm is inhabited by winsome deceiving spirits. Just because something is spiritual, does not define it as something good.

2:19 I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first. 20 But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

During my early charismatic experiences I hung out with renegade house churches where people with spiritual gifts seemed to have some kind of special status. This tended to make us vulnerable to spiritual phenomenon from any quarter. Another issue was that when people who had been involved in occult activities converted to Christianity it was more natural for them to receive spiritual gifts in the Christian context – since they were already familiar with how things worked in the spiritual realm.

One of my housemates during this period had been a witch before, and she clearly understood the differences between her former life and the Spirit realm in which she now served. But in verse 20 (above) we see the church at Thyatira being infiltrated by a less repentant adherent.

2:21 And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. 22 Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works.

Even so, God is merciful and patient, and offered this individual an opportunity to choose life; even as she was corrupting others. But the opportunity to repent given by the God who created time in the first place does come with a date code.

2:24 But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. 25 Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come.

Being in a church with obvious and grievous problems does not mean that all who go there are a part of it. There will be problems at some level within any group of people – especially those engaged in spiritual activities. But in the above verses we see Jesus sorting out those willing to confront their issues and receive mercy from those who will not.

2:26 And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations:

Those who have chosen to resist the allure of charming sensuality in the guise of spiritual benefit have demonstrated a willingness to serve God, listen to his warnings, and obey him in the face of temptations. This demonstration of discernment and responsibility has qualified them for additional authority, even at international levels.

Although this letter is addressed to a church in western turkey over 2,000 years ago, the lessons in this message have long since reached the entire world. God’s authority transcends the universe and time itself, so it is no effort on His part to empower us to effectively pray for individuals and situations anywhere in the world. This concept was spoken clearly in the old testament in Psalms 2:8 “Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Although it has generally been assumed to apply only Jesus, here we see that this promise has also been made to those who have confronted the seductive powers of darkness and overcome them.

2:27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father:

Again, we see a parallel passage in Psalms 2:9 “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” We see Jesus recognizing this heritage that He received, but here we see an “also” in which the Father confers this calling upon those who overcome in the Thyatira situations.

When God gives authority, He expects it to be used. We are not called to wring our hands over situations we have no visible power to control in nearby or international regions. We are to wait on God and pray as He would direct us in all these cases. We have been given authority to do so.

2:28 and I will give him the morning star.

So what is this morning star? The the context precludes it being Jesus himself who is doing the giving. The best answer I see to this is found in “Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!”. In this passage (Rev.2:28), in Isaiah 14:12, and as we will see later in Revelation 12, we discover that God has given us authority over the devil himself! But this is extremely serious, and can be catastrophic if we are not walking in obedience and purity before God whenever we mess with this thing.

2:29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Chapter 3

Sardis:

3:1a And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars:

This is picture of power and guidance being expressed through the pastors – God’s messengers. In this case Jesus is saying “I have all that you need to solve your problem.”

3:1b I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.

First, we need to apply this to ourselves as individuals. Are we content with where we are, or are we continuing to pursue the ongoing adventure to which we have been called.

What does a church look like if is alive while it is yet dead? How about the Ephesian problem of works without love? Perhaps in this case these works are programs designed to attract people.

People may be impressed with a person or church, because they do not see what God sees. A great PR team; A dying church can be popular. A great program can be lifeless.

3:2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God.

Again: Are we as individuals procrastinating or not taking seriously things that God has called us to do?

3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

This thief-in-the-night verse parallels the one in Thessalonians far better than popular dogma to which it is often applied. Note the “upon thee” clause. This is a little more selective than the return of Christ in general.

3:4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

So having been cleansed and clothed with the righteous garments purchased by the blood of Jesus, this church appears to have sullied them with other concerns. All I can get from the context is that they had replaced obedience with giving attention to other things that were useless to the kingdom.

3:5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

We are not called to become Christians and then continue living our lives as if nothing had happened. Becoming a Christian involves subjecting our lives and goals to whatever redirection or repurposing may be needed.

3:6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Philadelphia

3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth:

Jesus controls our opportunities. These open and closed doors do not appear on just any path. The One who provides them is holy and true, and the path of meaning must be followed in like manner.

3:8 I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name.

God provides guidance and opportunity as we express what God has revealed to us into the natural realm, live in his word, and openly acknowledge Him.

The opportunities are conditional: “I know your deeds.” Waiting for doors is active,. It means being diligent within your current set of responsibilities and opportunities. God’s open doors cannot be controlled by the will or actions of any person or group. When God sets an open door before us, it is our open door, and no amount of opposition or danger can close it.

In their case they had exercised the power that that they had; they had kept God’s word, and they had not denied his name.

3:9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

The synagogue of Satan is within our midst. These are the tares that were sown among the wheat by the wicked one (Mt.13:24-30). They are posers and pretenders among the believers. They’ve professed to love Jesus, and some of them may have participated in spiritual gifts. (Mt.7:21-23).

The word translated as worship in this verse is actually “kiss,” as in an ingratiating manner.

3:10 Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The perseverance or steadfastness here presumably refers back to clinging to God’s word and name, along with the active exercise of power while so doing (verse 8). These warriors have already accepted testing, and have proven faithful.

Therefore, there is no need to test them further, although there is still a period of testing to come upon the world. This testing will consume the tares before the harvest (Mt.13:30). The form of this protection may well follow the Biblical pattern of protection while the world around them is in the midst of judgment. We see this during the plagues of Egypt, Noah during the flood, and the siege of Jerusalem during Hezekiah’s time (see also Psalms 91).

It is significant that this sixth church corresponds to the altar of incense. This is the last item before the veil in the temple. no power of man or darkness is able to close this door. Jesus ripped this veil from top to bottom, when He had purchased it with His very own blood. Jesus now owns it, and only allows access to those who choose to walk in His forgiveness.

3:11 I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. 12 He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Laodicea:

3:14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:

Faithful and true witness, the beginning (source, origin) of creation. Jesus is the source of creation. He is the witness, the visible expression (the word) of the invisible God, as our bodies visibly express our souls (Jn.1:1-3, Col.1:15-17, Heb.1:2,3, Rev.1:8)

3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked:

Jesus wastes no time here: It is our human nature to look for stability and controllable futures. Here are people who feel they have done everything they have been told to do.

3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.

Jesus is saying to come and buy. Give me those wretched little things that are so personal and precious to you, and let me replace them with my glory and wealth.

For whatever we might have achieved, we have fallen short if we do not allow His very heart to beat within us. The heart of God is the gold refined by fire, which does not relate to uncleanness or pride of any kind;

3:19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: 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.

Unlike the door before the church at Philadelphia, *this* door is one that *we* control.

They had entered the veil and come through the doorway opened by God, but they had not opened their own veils and doors of protection. They had not made all of their hearts, desires, and thoughts available to Jesus for His view and discussion. They had not yet offered everything to Jesus as Jesus had offered everything to them. There were things Jesus could not explain to them and give to them, because they had things they were not yet willing to discuss and give.

21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

“Let’s walk together – you and me. Let me show you where we get to sit!” This church too has a door, only in this case, it is up to each individual saint to open it.

The consistent theme of these letters has been the individual accountability and opportunity to overcome – no matter how the church and those you trust are failing. It is to call individual believers to deeper more intimate levels of love, purity, and obedience. Regardless of what the church or world around us is doing, we have the calling and opportunity to follow God as individuals. We are heirs to become one with the purpose, power, and love of God.

Chapter 4

This chapter is filled with worship. The throne room is described, the beings surrounding the throne are introduced, and they all break forth in worship.

When God is about to do something momentous, the first priority is worship. The first command given to Moses upon encountering the burning bush was worship. He was commanded to take off his shoes, because he was standing on holy ground (Exo.3:2-5).

When Joshua encountered God in the form of the warrior, he was commanded to take off his shoes, because he was standing on holy ground (Josh.5:13-15).

4:1. After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter.

Now John encounters a third door. The first door opened access through the veil of the temple to the overcomers at Philadelphia. The second door was opened by overcomers at Laodicea to invite Jesus into the deepest secrets of their hearts, and now we see a door taking us beyond the limits of earth and imaginations, into the very throne room of God.

4:2 Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne;

4:3 and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold.

When a single (the) throne in heaven is emphasized, I am certain that the occupant is God the Father.

I can't help but wonder if one of the twenty four elders was John – presumably unrecognized by himself at the time.

4:5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

4:6 and before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like a crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.

Not all spiritual visions can be rendered as graphic depictions in the natural realm. I have seen some pretty bizarre art that attempted this. On the other hand we can expect to find deep and powerful meanings within the typology depicted by these. From this verse we can at least learn that these four living creatures were cognizant of everything in every direction.

These creatures are labeled 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in the next verse, and in Rev.6:1-8 We will see that they are agents of judgment upon the earth. That sequence of labels will relate them to conquest, anarchy, famine, and disease, respectively. Inasmuch as these creatures are closely associated with the throne of God, so will be the judgments they bring. This is God Himself, as He begins to clean up the mess fallen man has made out of the earth.

4:7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

4:8 and the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.

4:9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever,

4:10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

4:11 Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

Verses 9 and 10 demonstrate that these living creatures also have a key role in leading worship. It is also significant that their number is neither seven nor three, but rather four – a number sometimes related to testing and judgment.

Chapter 5

The judgments that had begun with the house of the Lord in chapters 2 and 3, are now about to be applied to the rest of the world (1Pet.4:17). Again, God's judgments and other actions are preceded with worship, and are first declared in heaven before being expressed on earth (Matt 16:17-19 NASB).

After the judgments among the seven churches and the categories of problems they had, the book of Revelation now looks towards the future, and the first stage of this is a scene of worship in heaven. God is again about to move against evil on behalf of his people.

5:1- I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

Again, after worship followed by judgments in chapters 1-3, we see another written decree is about to go forth. Like the letters to the seven churches, this one also will proclaim judgments against evil, and rewards for those who are following close to God – only this time, the scale encompasses the rest of the human race.

The contents of this book had been decreed long before, but its authority had been withheld – until now. As each seal is opened, its respective edicts are then allowed to take place. Presumably, these things may have taken place earlier, but have been supernaturally restrained until this point. As we will see, this is a book of judgments and justice.

5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: 5 and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof.

Jesus was the only one qualified to open the book, because He was the only one who had overcome injustice – to include undeserved death itself.

6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

The seven spirits of God are shared by the Lamb. They are represented here as horns and eyes. These spirits are also sent forth into all the earth. This is because of Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit after He left (John 14:26). The holy Spirit first appeared on earth as flames of fire – yet another manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3, Rev.1:14, 2:3).

7 And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne.

This clearly defines the one on the throne as God the Father, as He hands the book to Jesus. This is consistent with John 5:22, where Jesus said "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (NASB).

8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Prayers are represented in heaven as incense here and in other verses.

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

Qualification: It would have been much easier to just obliterate the entire human race, but since Jesus had purchased some of them, selective judgments would be needed in order to clean up the world on their behalf. Those whom Christ had purchased with His own blood would see His retribution upon those who had persecuted them. They would then inherit the cleaned up earth.

5:10 and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.

A priest is an intermediary between God and man. The earth will be ruled by God through these believers. This was the original commission of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Note that this verse begins in the past tense. Today (present tense) as believers, when we wait upon God for His revelation, and speak His words into the natural realm, we rule the earth under His authority.

11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

14 And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Chapter 6

If the order in which the living creatures responded to the broken seals is the same as that given in Rev.4:7, there may be clues relating their appearance to the plagues they release – so consider: “... the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.”

In looking up the biblical usage of these words I found the following:

Lion is often a reference to conquest and mortal peril. Calf denotes anything young, tender. Sometimes used in reference to a sacrifice, a sprout of a plant or tree, of children, vulnerability in general.

Man refers to any human being regardless of gender or nationality.

Eagle most often refers to vulture in scriptural context.

This chapter covers a period of judgments resulting from human behavior. Since there is no reference to a time frame within this context – or to this point within the book of Revelation for that matter – it is likely before the final 3-1/2 years.

6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come. 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

In Rev.19:11-12 we see Jesus riding a white horse, but in that case the weapon was a sword coming from his mouth. Furthermore, Jesus is wearing many diadems instead of a

single crown. So obviously, the rider in 6:2 is not Jesus, and so apparently refers to an earthly ruler.

In Dan.2 King Nebuchadnezzar has seen a stature depicting himself as gold, plus a series of progressively inferior global empires. These are represented by a sequence of inferior metals: Silver, bronze, iron, and a mixture of iron and clay, respectively. It is noted in three of these verses, that the iron and clay do not mix well. It is a divided and unstable kingdom.

Three of these remaining four global empires have since been identified as the Medes and Persians, Alexander the great, and Rome. The rider on the white horse in Rev.6:2 will be the fourth one.

It is interesting that in the conquest of this first of four horses, no mention was made of bloodshed (not even arrows for the bow). Furthermore, a bow is a long-distance weapon, whereas a sword is up close and personal. Until I know more, I am suspecting that the initial conquest is achieved by seduction, and political intrigue, rather than by brute conquest.

6:3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The second horse speaks of great bloodshed, but no conquest. It would appear that this unstable kingdom fragments into widespread civil war, with various factions and warlords battling for turf.

6:5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

Famine is a consistently proven result of regions consumed with violence. It has also been historically used as a tool to wipe out entire populations in specified areas.

6:7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Widespread malnutrition naturally leads to weakness and disease. We have an example of the rise of wild beasts in the former Soviet Union. Nature and wildlife have taken over in the region devastated and abandoned by the Chernobyl accident. Although the above four plagues are achieved without cataclysmic natural disasters, mankind is quite capable of destroying itself in this manner. As we watch history unfold before us, we see that it is increasingly likely.

A full fourth of all mankind will have been killed. The statue seen by king Nebuchadnezzar has now been completely ground to powder and carried away by the wind. This marks the end of global empires established by God's authority. And yet, this does not claim to put an end to violence or division into countless lesser kingdoms and warlords competing for power and territory.

6:9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 and they cried

with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled *their course*.

The fifth seal reveals that these judgments are being carried out as a result of how earthly kingdoms have treated God's people. Even so, this persecution is still continuing.

An altar is mentioned here that was not included in the initial description of this heavenly place in chapter 4. God has not ignored the injustice done to His people, and what mankind has already done to itself does not qualify as complete retribution from God. Vengeance still awaits on behalf of those martyred. Since Rev. 12:17 indicates that believers will be persecuted during the final 3-1/2 years, the timing of this pending judgment would have to wait until the tribulation period was over for these to be included in the final tally. Since countless thousands who had persecuted Christians over the centuries were long deceased and not affected by tribulation disasters, the referenced judgment would have to be of a spiritual and eternal nature. These saints are given a measure of immediate comfort however, in that they are clothed in white to reassure them of their security, and told that their retribution will be soon.

6:12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood;

Note the words "whole moon." Other references to moon do not include the word "whole." The description in verse 12 would fit nicely with the phenomenon we call a "blood moon" that only takes place with a full moon. Lunar eclipses can only take place twice a year (near the spring and fall equinoxes), and even then they don't always happen. Of the lunar eclipses that do take place, less than a third of them are complete and could be classified as blood moons. Of these, only a fraction can be viewed from Israel.

Some may regard the above four seals as the natural events of human history, and indeed they would logically follow each other. Perhaps the real miracle is that they didn't happen until they were released by the breaking of the four seals. Either way, they are divinely controlled, and constitute the beginning of the end times judgments. But now the main event begins: A major earthquake is mentioned. Earthquakes in the Bible usually portend major spiritual events. (SHAKEN Is.13:13, 24:19, Jer.50,46, Mt.24:29, Mk.13:25, Lk.21:26, Ac.4:31, 16:26, plus a few others.)

6:13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Something leaves heaven and lands on earth. If stars were merely blotted out, the description here would be more like what happened to the sun and moon. In fact Rev.8:12 speaks of some stars being darkened. We understand the absurdity of physical stars as big as our sun leaving the sky and landing on earth, and to speculate that they are meteorites instead of real stars opens the door to anyone's speculations. So we had better head a little deeper into the Bible to find our clues.

As we examine applications of this word "heaven" in different parts of the Bible we see it occasionally as a reference to the physical sky, but most often it is a reference to the spiritual realm in general – a second level of heaven. We also find that there is a third level in this spiritual realm – the second one of which all spirits (both angelic and demonic) have access, with the third level being the throne room of God. We also see in Rev.12:4 that Satan casts a third of the stars from heaven to earth.

6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Suddenly every strata of man made status is eliminated. Master and slave are now on an equal plane as they struggle to survive. Human control of the earth has been terminated.

In reviewing the first six seals, we see that the first four allowed the natural consequences of human behavior to take place. Many of us have been astonished that such things have not happened on a global scale long before (although we have seen them happen in various limited regions quite often). Clearly, God has restrained the global scale until these seals are broken.

The fifth seal addresses the postponement of judgment owed to mankind for the murder of God's servants. The authority for this judgment is acknowledged, but it is explained that a few more must join them before it can all be released.

With the sixth seal it is finally time for this long-overdue judgment to fall. Let the end begin. Geologists have been holding their breath, as they study the patterns of historic catastrophic earthquakes. Some of these have been postponed by hundreds of years from their natural cycles. The sixth seal releases this supernatural restraint.

6:17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

Although not specifically written within these verses, I would hope that many would take an opportunity to get right with God during this period.

Chapter 7

Until the sixth seal was broken, some might attribute the judgments to human depravity and natural geological processes, but now reparations are being made for a second wave of judgments. These are more obviously from the hand of God.

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

Judgment is being paused to allow the bond-servants of God to receive a seal on their foreheads. Inasmuch as this is a spiritual ID, it is unlikely that it is a physical mark.

7:4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel: 5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand; 6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand; 7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand; 8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Later this chapter includes a countless number of believers from every tribe and nation, so the number of 144,000 is focused upon a special elite group called out of Israel alone. Since this latter great multitude included all nationalities, this 144,000 does not limit the total number of Jewish believers.

7:9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. 7:11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Although the timing related to this uncounted multitude spills over into the post-tribulation period, the context of the rest of this chapter appears to take place at the outset of the final 3-1/2 years. One clue that relates to this is the quote in verse 7:10 is repeated in Rev.12:10, which context reveals that it takes place at the beginning of the final 3-1/2 years.

The “great tribulation” mentioned in verse 14 would be the most severe judgments to come, and are to be within the period that Jesus describes in Mt.24:22 and Mk.13:20 where He says that if these days had not been shortened, no life would be saved.

7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

There is a lull in the judgments of God as a unique category of his people are identified. We then discover that millions more – both among Israel and the rest of the world have also been identified and protected. This might be construed by some as a rapture, but I am unaware of any scriptural pattern that would support this. But this *would* be consistent with the Exodus pattern in which after a series of plagues involving natural phenomenon that targeted the Egyptians, the households of the Israelites were marked by sacrificial blood upon the lintel and doorposts.

This practice would identify them and protect them from undeniably spiritual and yet more catastrophic judgments, and take place while they were still among the Egyptians. The Egyptians would recognize this, and give them whatever they desired that would get them out from among them and the plagues now clearly performed on their behalf. So God’s people were now being blessed by their former persecutors, as well as by God himself.

Chapter 8

The first four seals utilized the depravity of man. The fifth seal revealed the reason for God’s wrath, and then the sixth seal brings convulsions of the physical creation to bring awareness and awe that it is God himself who is bringing these judgments. But now, after believers have been identified while still among their captors, this seventh seal begins a new league of judgment.

As we will see shortly this series of judgments are more clearly of super natural origin, in that they are the result of the prayers of the saints.

8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

The first six seals dealt with things plausible in the natural realm, but the seventh seal hands judgment over to the supernatural realm. This may parallel a transition from the courtyard to the holy place.

8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Seven Spirits of God are mentioned in Rev.1:4, 3:1 where they are listed as coauthors of the letters to the seven churches. See also 3:1. In 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, and 3:22, where these seven Spirits authors are referred to in the singular as “the Spirit.” In 4:5, these seven Spirits are described as lamps of fire. In 5:6, we see the Lamb having seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.

We therefore have good reason to suspect that these seven angles holding seven trumpets, are also manifestations of the seven Spirits of God, AKA the Holy Spirit of God.

This begins the second of three waves of increasingly intense judgments. For my part, I have to consider that these three waves correspond to the three sections of the tabernacle. The first series in which man and nature were clearly involved could be somewhat understood by human intellect, and they decimated a fourth of the global population. This wave contains undeniably spiritual components, and will consume a third of what is left. This leaves humanity at one half of its original level. The third wave will totally eliminate the portion of this remaining half that have not found protection under the shelter of the most high.

I also consider it significant that the third series in the feasts of Israel begins with the Feast of Trumpets (something familiar here?), and immediately following the Day of Atonement it becomes the Feast of Booths. This final feast commemorates the Israelites being fed and protected in the wilderness, as the reign of Egypt is eliminated.

8:3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

All prayers are being considered. At times we may think we are being ignored as we complain to God about the rampant injustice in the world, and yet see it continue. These prayers are incense that will eventually be ignited along with the other prayers that have been accumulating. The prosecution collects all the complaints, and a verdict has been reached.

The golden altar of incense was in the second section of the tabernacle, just before the veil covering the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat (throne?)

8:5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

The judgment is delivered to earth. It is not clear whether the judgments to follow are spaced out over time, or are in rapid succession. Inasmuch as we appear to have a limited amount of time left at this point (see chapter 11), context would favor a rapid succession.

8:6 And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

8:7 And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8:8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

8:9 and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

In this case we see a reasonably clear reference to a meteor or asteroid, and it is not called a star as in the next verse.

8:10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

This sounds like global air pollution resulting from a massive meteor strike. Paleontologists attribute the demise of dinosaurs to air pollution resulting from a catastrophic meteor strike, that deprived the earth of sun for an extended period of time.

It will shortly become evident that these first four plagues (of this more intense category) each destroy one third of their respective targets: Earth, trees, and grass; the sea – along with the creatures and ships within it; fresh water; and light from sun, moon, and stars.

At least two of these plagues (if not three) originated from extraterrestrial objects. The fourth, even if not of extraterrestrial origin, affected earths benefit from the sun, moon, and stars.

8:13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

There are three general areas called heaven in the Bible: 1. That which we can see with our natural eyes that includes the stars and the stuff birds fly in. 2. The spirit realm in general. 3. The throne room of God. It appears here that this “mid heaven” is a reference to the spirit realm in general. It would not be possible for a physical object to be seen and heard by all on earth within any reasonable number of years, if it was constrained to the physical atmosphere.

The intensity of the judgments is about to be heightened once more (now to a fourth level). If people were beginning to get used to major natural-appearing disasters, God is about to fix that by intensifying the perils. The first four trumpets have been related to cosmic phenomenon, but the remaining three woes will have a decidedly spiritual flavor.

Chapter 9

9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit (abyss) was given to him.

Here again, we have the simile of a star falling from heaven to earth, but representing a spiritual personage. The word “fallen” is from a word meaning losing authority or ceasing to have force.

Notice the locations and the prepositions – from heaven, and to earth. This personage has lost authority in the spiritual realm, and is now limited to the earth realm. Once on earth this being is given a limited authority to release the contents of the abyss.

In other references to the abyss, we find that it is used exclusively for spiritual entities (Lk.8:31, for instance), and is never used in reference to humans. This abyss is apparently

the place where exorcised demons were cast. In this scenario, when this spiritual being is thrown out of heaven, he is allowed to release his hordes who had been imprisoned there.

9:2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads.

This judgment was very selective in that it applied only to those who had not repented by the opening of the 6th seal and receive the seal of God (Chapter 7).

9:5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man.

As conditions of their parole, these beings were not allowed to kill, and they were given only five months of freedom.

9:6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

This is the first instance in Revelation that an actual time frame is mentioned. The final clock has begun to tick.

9:11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name Apollyon.

These creatures are clearly spirit beings who have been given bodies and power in the natural realm, and they're under the authority of an angel called destruction (Apollyon).

9:12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woes hereafter.

9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates.

Notice another instance of the number 4 is again being associated with judgment.

9:15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men.

9:16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand (200,000,000): I heard the number of them.

At the time this prophecy was given, the population of the entire world was a little less than this 200,000,000. Interestingly, during the 60s, Chairman Mao of China boasted that he could field an army of 200,000,000 men, and the next verse prophesies their colors as being yellow and red – the flag color of communist China. Since this army must cross the Euphrates River, we also learn that this army is coming from the east.

9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone.

9:18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt.

Between the one fourth of the global population decimated by the first four plagues and one third of the remaining population being killed by this sixth trumpet, the global population is now down to one half of its pre-plague level.

9:20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Here we see that the opportunity for repentance will be extended throughout this period. There were two categories of offense – actually one, in that the second one was the result of the first one: The worship of false gods, and the resulting depravity among mankind.

The only solution to global problems – not to mention avoiding the wrath of God – is herein revealed as evangelism that results in changed hearts.

This is the end of armies fighting each other in Revelation. From now on only Satan will rule military forces, and God himself protects those of His people within the sanctuary, and stands against Satan in his own realm.

9:21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Chapter 10

10:1 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire;

This angel was not “fallen” from heaven to earth, but came down on a mission.

10:2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.

In the Greek, there is no definite article before “seven” above, so it is not likely a reference to any group of thunders observed before.

10:4 And when the seven thunders uttered *their voices*, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

There are times when God speaks clearly, but not to everyone. The parables were like that. He explained them to his disciples, but others who heard were left in darkness. In John 12:28,29 when God speaks from heaven, John records the words spoken, some perceived it as the language of some angel, and others heard only thunder. Thunder is sometimes used to deliver a message to selected ears.

10:5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer, 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached (the gospel) to His servants the prophets.

Dan.12:7 records a related or similar event.

Notice that days (plural) are involved for this seventh angel. These days of the voice of the seventh angel before (“when he is about to sound”) he actually sounds the trumpet, complete the tribulation period. Once the trumpet has sounded, any time frames containing plagues after that point will have to be repeats of earlier times. For instance: The 3-1/2 years mentioned in chapter 12 would be a repeat of the 3-1/2 year period described in chapter 11 where at its conclusion, the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. But in this case chapter 12 will bring out additional details of that period.

10:8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter.

If you are going to speak God's words, you need more than to merely hear and repeat them. You need to devour them until they become a part of you. They need to be inside you, and you will be troubled until you deliver them.

10:11 And they *said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”

The directive given to John in Rev.1:19 has apparently been fulfilled at this point, and John has already spoken of past, present, and future. The event of verse 11 is therefore an additional commission. An overlap of events and timing might be expected because of the keyword “again.”

Here we are entering a new era – the cleanup period of the final three and one half years. The rules are different in that we will soon see the authority over the earth itself has been restored to the saints, as it was originally with Adam.

Chapter 11

11:1-2 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple (literally sanctuary) of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 Leave out (literally throw out) the court which is outside the temple (sanctuary) and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

The fact that the altar (which was in the courtyard of the temple) was mentioned separately indicates that in this context, the temple will be a reference to the enclosed portion (the holy place and the holy of holies).

Believers are the temple of the holy spirit (1Cor.6:19), and here those who worship God are a part of this measuring. Only the altar and the sanctuary were to be measured, even though the courtyard also contained worshipers. The altar and the sanctuary within and the courtyard (and the worshipers they represent) will remain protected while the courtyard around them is being trampled for three and one half years.

This parallels the parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins who were invited to the marriage feast. The five foolish were on their way to buy oil to fuel the fire in their lamps when the door was shut, and they were denied access to the wedding feast.

The altar that was in the courtyard was included. This was the place where the carcass of the slain animal was burned. I offer a suggestion that the altar represents those in the courtyard who are slain during this forty two months. The only place left for the external worshipers to buy fire at this point, is the altar, upon which their physical lives might be

sacrificed. These to whom the dragon of chapter 12:17 will have access to are defined there as those who keep the commandments of God, and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

11:3 And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

The 1260-day period of the two prophesying witnesses will be 17-1/2 days shy of 3-1/2 years. This is the exact number of days that the woman will be protected in the wilderness in Rev.12:6, so we have a clear overlay of the timing in chapters 11 and 12.

Evangelism will continue during this period no matter what the devil or anyone else tries to do. These witnesses will continue prophesying unscathed in the very face of Satan, and everyone who tries to harm them will be instantly burned alive. So apparently, salvation remains available during this period.

The cost of repentance has suddenly become very expensive. Nonetheless, they are given opportunity testify concerning Jesus in one final act of worship.

11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

These witnesses had dual status of being in the spirit realm as well as the natural realm. In the natural realm they are limited to physical human beings. In the spirit realm they have at least two identities (olive trees and lampstands). As believers we have spiritual identities as well as our physical bodies (Eph.2:6, Rev.2:17, among others).

5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

Humanity will be aware of the supernatural origin of the plagues, and of those who bring them from the spirit realm into the natural realm. But they will be powerless to do anything about it.

11:6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

These are those who call forth the remaining plagues into the natural realm. Keep in mind that, like Elijah, these are good guys. Therefore the tribulation plagues they express into the natural realm are ultimately good things.

Some of the plagues associated with the two witnesses are the same as those mentioned elsewhere. This section may be covering different aspects of the same events.

11:7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

There is a point when work is done, our testimony is finished, and it's OK to die. Such was the privilege of John the Baptist when he had completed his testimony concerning Jesus. There is a time when our work is done in any ministry that God has called us to, and we need to learn how to let such ministries go.

This beast comes from a different place than either the dragon of chapter 12, or the beast from the sea in chapter 13. It is clear that this abyss opened in chapter 9 contained more than a swarm of locusts.

The altar receives one final sacrifice: Those who are martyred for their profession of Jesus.

11:8 And their dead bodies *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

The location of the ministry of these witnesses is given. Even locations have spiritual identities, and I would expect this to also be true of Mystery Babylon, when we encounter it in a few chapters.

11:9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do *men* look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

After this 3-1/2 days, 14 days will remain of the final 3-1/2 years (see comment on verse 3).

11:10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.

People are briefly allowed to believe that they have been victorious over God, and that they now own the world. In reality, they were merely given a reprieve in which to demonstrate their true feelings of non-repentance, before appearing before God's court.

11:11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them.

In other words: "Uh-oh."

11:12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

The 2nd woe involving the two witnesses was concluded by the earthquake.

11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded ("the last trump" at the conclusion of this 3-1/2 year period); and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

This quote appears similar to that spoken in Rev.12:10, but it is different in that Rev.12:10 speaks of the authority over earth returning to the saints. 11:15 speaks of the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of God.

This final woe upon the Satan-controlled nations is prophesied in Mt 24:30 where it says "... and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

11:16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17 saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign.

11:18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

This chapter begins to close with a brief history of the recent period of judgment.

11:19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Chapter 12

The word “heaven” used in this chapter, does not always refer to the throne room of God as described in chapters 4 and 5. Besides the scenery itself, there are other Bible references to “above the heavens” and “passing through the heavens” and other prepositions related to this word. To the best of my understanding, it refers to the spiritual realm in general. In 2 Cor.12:2. Paul refers to a “third” level of heaven.

12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

The sun covers the woman instead of exposing her. Believers are clothed with the righteousness of God.

The moon is revealed by the sun. This woman is standing upon that which is revealed by God. In Matthew 16:17-18 we see that the church is built upon the bedrock of revelation from the Father. (Yes, Jesus calls Simon a rock, but He uses a term for stone, or loose rock. He uses a different term meaning bedrock, for that upon which He promises to build His church.) In Ephesians 2:20, we see that Peter and Jesus Himself are part of the foundation. But the entire church – the foundation and cornerstone included – sits upon the bedrock of revelation from the father.

Stars are defined as messengers in Rev.1, and in that case applies this term to pastors. The stars in this context may be the leadership of the twelve special messengers Jesus called out (whom He also called apostles).

12:2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

Birth pangs are associated with end-times teaching in Mt. 24:8, and Mk. 13:8. The child within this woman has been growing for some time, and to this point has been indistinguishable from the woman herself. There is now a separation taking place in which this child will take on a unique and heretofore unseen identity.

Why this woman is not Mary:

1. The context is end times (birth pangs).
2. Mary was not chased by the dragon which was thrown out of heaven (vs 12:13)
3. Mary did not have the ground open to swallow the dragon's flood. (vs 12:16)
4. Mary was not moved to the wilderness to protect her from the dragon for 3-1/2 years. (vs 12:14)
5. Mary gave birth to Jesus, but not directly to Christians (vs 12:17)

The church is a better candidate:

1. In Mt.16:17-18 we see that the church is built on revelation from the Father. Here we see the woman standing on the moon, which is revealed by the sun.
2. We see that the woman has given birth to believers in verse 12:17 – in addition to the manchild of verse 5. (We'll see why this manchild was not Jesus in a few verses.)
3. Christians are referred to as the temple both individually and corporately in various parts of the New Testament. We see a similar three-part structure related to the woman as the manchild in verse 5, herself, and “the rest of her children” spoken of in verse 17.

Note that the woman cried out in the pain of childbirth. The stress in the church in this case is internal, rather than due to external persecution. This manchild is to be a category of believers that go beyond the norm in the intensity of their dedication. They are a challenge to the status quo. This correlates nicely with Rom.8:19-22 **“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that**

the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

The dragon is clearly identified as Satan in verse 9. This word “heaven” is the one used for the expanse of the sky – the air that birds fly in – as opposed to breath or wind. The context here and in a few other places applies it to the spiritual realm to distinguish it from the physical realm.

The dragon is seen in heaven in verse 3, and there is war in heaven involving the dragon in verse 7. But in verse 5 we see the man-child birthed of the woman in heaven, but then caught up to the throne of God – a location above the heaven in which he is born. The context makes it clear that the dragon has no power in this higher level of heaven.

Later we see Satan cast out of heaven, and limited to earth. So this “heaven” in verses 3 and 4 is the part of the spiritual realm within which the “prince and power of the air” (Satan) has been functioning to this point. But it is also evident that there is a different level within this spiritual realm, to which Satan has no access.

12:4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Initially I assumed that the stars were angels, but in 12:7 and 9 Satan’s angels are referred to as his angels. In verse 9, we see that Satan’s angels were thrown down with him, but here, I believe Satan’s assault on the stars in this case was intentional, rather than clumsy, and that these stars of heaven did not belong to him.

In Rev.1:20 the stars refer to the pastors of the seven churches. Yet in all fairness, we see Satan himself referred to as a star in Is.14:12.

Two actions concerning the stars here: The dragon “draweth” (pulling something in the direction you are going), and “did cast” (send something in a place you are not – but soon will be in the dragon’s case).

In Rev. 1:20 stars refer to angels to the seven churches to whom John is to write physical letters. This word “angel” simply means messenger – same word used for pastor in this context. So in that verse we see humans with spiritual identities (stars) and earthly identities (they are messengers). In the broader sense, all believers have dual citizenship in the heavenly and earthly realms, although some stars may shine brighter than others. Consider Eph. 2:5-6 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

Verse 12:4 applies to believers that Satan has conned out of their spiritual authority (as he did to Adam and Eve), this would not mean that they were not saved, it would simply mean they failed to exercise their spiritual authority. This parallels **Dan.11:35 And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.** Satan had succeeded in prying Adam and Eve and others out of the spirit realm, and now intends to deprive this man-child of spiritual authority as well. This interpretation is further bolstered by the specific reference to “the third part” – a possible reference to the courtyard believers who will be “trampled underfoot” for three and one half years in Rev. 11.

The fact that these stars are swept away before the war in heaven, and that Satan was the one who drew them out of heaven and cast them into the natural realm makes me believe that this is in fact a category of believer. Verse 9 tells us that Satan's angels (not called "stars") were cast down with him, and not by him. Very important: Satan does not have the power to pluck anyone from God's hands, but is proven capable of seducing them into abandoning supernatural gifts that operate from out of the spirit realm.

12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

Note that the woman, the dragon, and this birth are all seen in a spiritual realm (heaven), and at this point are not necessarily manifest on earth.

Why this manchild is not Jesus:

1. Jesus was not taken away to heaven to protect Him from the dragon. The nearest conceivable correlation was the flight to Egypt – an unlikely comparison. Otherwise, Satan was given full access to His earthly body, to destroy and crucify it.
2. The context is end times.
3. The mother is not Mary.
4. This birth takes place in the spirit realm (i.e. heaven), as described above, rather than on earth.
5. Verse 5 speaks of this manchild ruling the nations with a rod of iron, this phrase is applied to believers in Rev. 2:26-28 (and may have a parallel application to believers where it also occurs in Ps.2:8-9).

In fitting these pieces together we see this manchild as a category of believers that will arise from within the church. This is a particular threat to Satan in that it says of this manchild that he is to "to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" – something Satan has been doing since the fall.

It is also significant that the manchild remained protected while developing within the church. There appeared to be vulnerability however as this manchild surged forward in a greater level of spiritual authority. This higher level of authority placed this manchild out of the dragon's reach.

There is often a culturally acceptable level of Christianity, but we must choose to go beyond that. This accepted level is kind of a resting place where we are actively pursuing God – at least some of the time. The manchild in Rev. 12 is believers who have chosen to pull away from the accepted level of spirituality and surge forward in more committed moment-by-moment pursuit of God's heart. These would be the believers who chose to open the door presented to the church of Laodicea in Rev.3:20.

The woman of Revelation 12 is in agony as she begins to give birth. In birth there is a separation in the process of life. This is not the point at which life is created. This life has been in there for some time and quietly growing. To this point it has been indistinguishable from the woman.

But now birth. This life takes on an identity of its own as it surges forth from the woman in a stressful period of separation. In so doing it finds new means of acquiring nourishment and breath (spirit). It now breaths on its own. A son that has been growing hidden in the womb has now become manifest. The woman herself also is soon to become more evident as a unique and independent identity. She has to this point been connected to the global culture and infrastructure. She grew up there.

12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Now the world has become an actively hostile place that seeks to destroy her. God has made provision for her care that is separate and independent from the mainstream infrastructure. God has also provided a means for her to get there. But she must trust God enough to leave everything she has known behind, and flee to where He leads. Like the child to whom she has just given birth, she must acquire – she is given – alternative means of nourishment and breath. Consider Mt.6:33.

The desperation of this flight is softened by the fact that a safe and provisioned destination awaits. The word “place” also means opportunity, which may or may not apply here, but could broaden the definition of this “place” to an unlimited number of locations scattered throughout the earth.

Either way, both the manchild and the woman depart from cultural and infrastructural dependence upon the world's systems. There is no indication that “rest of her seed” of verse 17 have departed from these dependencies, so they remain vulnerable to those who control the global civilization, and are eligible to be “trampled underfoot.”

A little later in this chapter we will see Satan in pursuit of the woman in the physical realm, but the assault upon the manchild takes place in the spiritual realm. Certainly the political and cultural assaults and persecution against believers in the natural is a formidable challenge, and Satan's objective is to oppose this birth in the spirit realm by whatever means he can.

The manchild has a level of safety while still developing in the womb, but powerful forces of temptation and deception await those who would step forth as determined spirit warriors. They are on the cutting edge, and there are none ahead to mentor them and lead the way. It is a lonely place, an insecure place where God alone is their guide and comfort, and their very survival depends upon their determination to follow the heart of God. When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan, they lost their spiritual position of authority over the earth, and became beings that would be dominated by the one who now held this position of authority (Satan) in the spiritual realm.

On another thread, we see an significant parallel in chapter 11, where altar and sanctuary Christians are protected from the gentiles for 3-1/2 years. This should tell us that the woman consists of those who worship God. In Rev.12:6, we also see the woman being protected for 3-1/2 years. Who then, is this man child?

Although tens of thousands of Christians already existed by the time it was written, Rom.8:19-20 tells us that **“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope”** This would tell us that there was a category of believer that was yet to be revealed, and Rom.8: 21-22 tells us what will happen when they are. **“that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”**

In verse 12:5 This man child is one **“who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.”** Psalms 2:7-9 says **“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”** Some may construe this as prophetic of the birth of Jesus, and I won't attempt to debate that. More clearly, in that this “Today” was received hundreds of years before Christ, and that God had already ruled and destroyed nations with a rod of iron (not to mention an occasional grasshopper), this rod of iron was being granted to – and was historically fulfilled by –

David. For another scriptural tie-in, consider Rev.2:26-27, where the overcomers at Thyatira are granted this same privilege and tool.

So we are looking for a category of believer that will take spiritual warfare to a higher level. We are looking for saints like Daniel and his three friends who stood out from among their fellow exiles in their discipline, purity, and commitment; and the apostles, who stood toe-to-toe with government officials, physical ailments, and demonic forces. This level of zeal does not slow down and wait for company; they surge boldly forward – as individuals when necessary, but hopefully among other zealots. As such, they are likely to be intimidating and annoying to other believers and cause stresses in popular church structures.

As believers, we have dual citizenship in that we are in the world but not of it – indeed, Eph.2:6 declares that besides our temporary period on earth, we are concurrently seated in heavenly places. From such thrones we have the privilege of speaking God’s authority into the physical and spiritual realms around us as God would reveal it to us. In 2 Cor.5:17-20, it is clear that we are different, but remain here to express God’s will into the earth.

12:7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

This battle is being waged between God's angels and the dragon's (the devil's) angels. Heb 1:14 tells us a little more about the function of angels: **“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?”** We see from this that the battle was actually between the saints and the devil, with the angels being an army on behalf of the saints. The fact that there even *is* a war shows that the power of God's angels was not absolute. It therefore was dependent upon the diligence of the saints. The birth of the manchild however, has changed this balance of power. He was born to rule with a rod of iron.

12:8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The angel army of the saints is victorious and the devil and his army are thrown out of heaven (the spirit realm) and down to earth (the natural realm). At the very least the ability of Satan to exercise authority from the spiritual realm has been curtailed. He may no longer have authority in the spiritual realm, but as we will see, he is clearly in charge at the political and physical level of the nations he has ruled since the fall.

While Satan still maintained the seat of authority that had been established by God for the rulership of the earth, there was still some reason to respect governments that God had allowed (Paul told believers to respect the authority of Rome for instance). But now Satan has no legitimate authority of any kind, and there is no obligation to respect anything he controls.

I'm almost afraid to speculate on what Satan on earth might look like in the physical sense – but not entirely. I will go so far as to say that I would expect some physical form. (“The aliens have landed.” might be a reaction – I don't know.) In addition to any rational merit for this view, we see in Gen. 3:1 that Satan had a physical form before Adam and Eve gave him their spiritual authority by obeying him. He is described there as a serpent, and is compared as superior in craftiness to any (presumably other) beast of the field. It is significant that in the Revelation scene (vs 12:9) he is referred to as “the old serpent” –

indicating that we've seen this dragon before. In verse 12:3, he is even assigned a color (red)

Notice again that Satan's angels are not called "stars," and that Satan did not cast them out of heaven. They were cast down with Satan by the angel army.

12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Since Adam, the seat of authority for ruling earth that had been occupied by Satan. It has now been restored. During the kangaroo court in which Jesus was sentenced to death, Jesus had declared that "My kingdom is not of this world." Well now, the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ! (This word "salvation" actually means "safe," or "safety.")

12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.

This verse makes it even clearer that it was the actions of the saints that have driven Satan out of the position of authority over the earth which had been abdicated by Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God and obeyed Satan. Now these victorious saints have the authority and power over the earth that had once been held by the "prince and the power of the air." The world is now entirely under a new administration.

It should be noted that even before this event, saints have enjoyed the privilege of eroding Satan's territory. In Luke 10:17-18 (The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.) So apparently, this war has been going on for quite awhile.

When seventy of Jesus's disciples (not all His disciples were also called "apostles," – see Luke 6:13) returned from a foray into the villages He would also enter, they were excited about victories they had experienced in raiding Satan's camps. So even today we may participate in this warfare that will eventually culminate in Satan's expulsion from the spiritual realm.

As it turns out, nature itself has been longing for this moment. Consider a broader application of Rom 8:19-21: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

These verses do not stand by themselves. In Gen.3:17-19 we see where the earth was subjected to Satan's authority and cursed. Hosea 4:3 also relates the destruction of the ecology due to the corrupt behavior of people in the land.

Yet again, saints enjoy the privilege of bringing healing to this situation. As we stand in the authority Jesus has delegated to us, we see supernatural healings and other miracles take place that defy and repair the damage caused by Satan's rule.

It may seem odd that this victory is attributed to the saints, when it was the angels that did all the fighting. But Heb.1:14 sorts it out for us by saying of angels "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?"

Satan is having a bad day. First, he wanted to devour the male child, but it was whisked away to safety. Next thing he knew the woman had left town. And now, he was dethroned

from his position in the spiritual realm of authority over the earth, that had been abdicated to him by Adam.

We do need to reconsider our subjection to governments at this point: Although Satan no longer has any authority, he still has power, and is about to raise up a replacement based upon power that is devoid of authority. Any obedience to *that* government aligns us with disobedience to God!

12:12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Rev. 9:1 told us: “Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.” With reference to Satan, Is.14:12 says “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!”

So we have reason to consider that the star that had fallen from heaven in this verse was in fact Satan. In that verse, he was given the key to his eternal home, and immediately releases the swarm of demons who had been cast into it during the previous millenniums of exorcisms. In the next two verses we see the clock beginning on the final 3-1/2 years – concurrent with the time of the gentiles trampling the courtyard underfoot in chapter 11.

Under the rule of Satan, the earth has become an extremely messy place, and a catastrophic level of cleanup is in order. This is further complicated by the fact that at this point Satan is running rampant in the natural realm, and is more furious and desperate than ever.

12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child.

Satan's first priority once limited to the physical realm is to go after the woman involved in his fall in the spirit realm. In verses 6 and 13 we see the woman as having dual citizenship in both the spiritual and natural realms. The word “persecuted” here means to chase – it does not necessarily mean to catch.

12:14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

As for eagle airlines (I don't think that Pontius the Pilate was involved), this had existed before. Ex.19:4 speaks of such equipment during the Exodus from Egypt, and I don't recall a single reference to feathers in that flight. So clearly we are in figurative speech here. I am expecting ground transportation at a far more economical and discrete level. I am also expecting this “place” to be locally distributed enclaves of safety and provision. Understand that these are theories based upon rationality as I see it, and are not directly derived from scriptures that I can recall. In verses 6 and 14 we see that this action had been anticipated (even as it has been prophesied here), and travel arrangements and reservations had already been made for a 3-1/2 year stay.

In any case, the church will face a radical change in lifestyle in which dependencies upon (and interactions with) the current world system and infrastructures are completely severed. She will be dependent upon God for her provision, as was Israel during the Exodus, and as were Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

I consider it significant that the final feast of Israel was the Feast of Booths – which immediately followed the Day of Atonement. In this feast, their trek through the wilderness following the Exodus was commemorated by “camping out” in shelters made

from natural materials. The primary command for this annual occasion was that it was to be celebrated with joy.

12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream.

Satan knows where these people are and sends armies to consume them. (Waters typically refer to peoples and nations in prophetic applications. See Rev.17:15)

12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Now we see what the earth does when it is ruled by the saints. The earth swallows this army. This is reminiscent of the plagues in Egypt leading up to the exodus of Israel, and highlights a very important and consistent pattern in the Bible: God's judgments bring protection and freedom to God's people.

To this point we have seen glimpses of saints overriding the natural realm from the spiritual realm, through the countless miracles of history – and also those experienced in our own lives.

Remember that mankind was in charge of the natural realm before it was abdicated to Satan. We have to consider that with the reinstatement of saints to this position of authority, that the environs of the bride may now be enjoying the pre-fall conditions of the garden of Eden.

Meanwhile, outside of the regions protected for the sake of the bride, the global cleanup begins in earnest.

12:17 And the dragon waxed wrath with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

It is very important to note that this “rest of her seed” are defined as believers, and the word “rest” indicates that there are more believers involved somewhere – the woman, being obvious to most of us.

Here we have the courtyard Christians being trampled underfoot by the gentiles, as described in chapter 11.

To this point we have accounted for the manchild and the woman, but some of the children are left outside. I see a parallel here with the five foolish virgins who didn't bring enough oil and got left outside the marriage feast. Enthusiasm for the things of God makes a difference. Some of the woman's children are within the dragon's reach.

These “courtyard” Christians had better hide well! But there is another factor to consider here: Opinion: I believe that Satan can no longer tempt people from the spiritual realm.

Sin is irrational, and we all understand this. How often have we all known better about something and yet done it anyway. Once again we kick ourselves, repent, and try again. We have been battered by strong spiritual forces that repeatedly managed to draw us into evil and irrational bondage.

But with Satan and his angels cast out, there are no such forces in the spiritual realm invading our psyche. Granted, there will still be powerful “incentive programs” that these people will have to deal with (such as “Do this or I will kill you”). But they will now be free to rationally choose between a brief physical death and an eternity in hell – no rational contest.

Chapter 12 of Daniel describes something similar in the final 3-1/2 years of human history. In verse 3 he speaks of believers living among non-believers. **Daniel 12:3 “And**

they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

So where did these believers come from, and why are they still in the world in the final 3-1/2 years? In closing this chapter, I quote **Dan.11:35: “And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.”**

Additional comments related to Revelation 12:

Although scriptures will be referenced among these comments, please forgive and challenge if I stray into opinion.

By this time the world needs a thorough cleaning, after thousands of years under the thumb of Satan. The end-times disasters spoken of in other parts of Revelation are clean-up activities specified by God, and taking place through the delegated authority granted to the new management. Justice will at last be served to those who have so cruelly oppressed God's people.

As there are three sections in the temple there appear to be three general levels of believer. The parable of the talents illustrates these levels in Mt.25:14-28. Each servant received money to engage in commerce while the ruler went away on business. Upon returning, one had simply hidden his talent so he wouldn't risk losing it (this might be the “fire insurance” Christians). Another had been given two talents which he had parleyed into four. A third had received five talents, and through aggressive management now had ten talents to present to his master upon his return. The first servant was reprimanded and cast out, and the other two were commended and promoted.

Many have become persuaded that they are sinners and received salvation. They have confronted destructive habits, lost old friends and gained new ones within church communities. Many of these press on to become involved in Bible studies, regular attendance at church, and tossing coins into the plate to support local churches. It's a different life, a better one than they had, and we are proud of them.

Some take another step and allow God's compassion to lead them into sharing the gospel with others. This level of engagement is sometimes accompanied by supernatural gifts and insights. Additional gifts such as healing, prophecy and other phenomenon may also arise as special needs develop. God- appointments where precise timing is needed to encounter people and situations unplanned by any besides the Holy Spirit may occur. We seek to reclaim souls lost among the dust of the fall. This is beautiful and good, and honorable before God.

A third category respond to the call to go beyond the compassion of evangelism, and become warriors assaulting the gates of hell that bar us from retaking the authority over the earth in the spiritual realm. They walk in an intense level of engagement – sharing, loving, and constantly involved in spiritual things. Some are called to catch the arson, rather than just putting out fires. Fires still need to be dealt with, but we need to go beyond enjoying moments of peace, and deal with the one who keeps starting fires. We need to retake the spiritual territory from which we and others are being harassed. Our minds are useless as weapons in spiritual warfare, in fact they are often the battlefield (2Cor.10:5) We need to wait on God to show us the targets, to prepare us for dealing with them, and for executing them when He shows us that the time is right. In a word, we need to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. A generation of the Spirit will come, an army will arise, a manchild shall be birthed from the church that will conquer this heavenly territory.

Yet again: In 1Cor. 3:12 Paul speaks figuratively of building upon the foundation with three different categories of material: Flammable materials such as wood and straw,

precious metals, and precious stones. These represent different levels of spirituality. It is significant that precious stones are not displayed by themselves, but only in settings of precious metals. Whereas the woman (precious metal in this analogy) consisted of people called out of the world's culture, the manchild did not become manifest until the woman was mature, and then was called out of the woman. Mounting precious stones requires settings of precious metals.

Chapter 13

Chapter 11 foretold 3-1/2 years without rain, accompanied by many-but-unspecified plagues. During this period, some of the Christians would be protected while some – the “courtyard Christians” – would not.

In the Chapter 12 replay, we are given a few more details about this period. We learned that it would begin with Satan being cast out of his seat of authority over earth that had been abdicated to him by Adam. We see the effects of this transition when the earth interdicts Satan’s attempt to destroy the sanctuary Christians, who are being fed and protected in the wilderness. Still, Satan is allowed access to persecute the less serious believers.

In the chapter 13 edition of this same time period we will see Satan’s version of authority on earth and his assault upon courtyard Christians – even as his kingdom is being devastated by plagues.

13:1 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

This beast having seven heads and ten horns is also mentioned in chapter 17. There we see the heads defined as a historical series of kings – five of which had fallen and the sixth was in power at the time of John’s writing. Chapter 17 also reveals the ten horns as kings that will all be given authority together for a brief time as a part of the kingdom of this seventh head. As restrained by God while operating in the seat of authority that God had ordained over creation, God had allowed a series of five global empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar. But Satan’s opinion of history, contains seven rulers who were obedient to him – none of whom were recognized under God’s authority.

13:2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

Obviously Satan will still have a great deal of power at this point, so he invests it in fabricating a version of his dream world – albeit devoid of Godly authority. In a word, this deposed usurper is now building his fantasy by dumpster diving for fragments left over from a period when even Jesus used to refer to him as “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31).

It has to be significant that this beast description uses three metaphors. It is a three part entity as is God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) and humans (spirit, soul, and body). The most obvious implication is that it purports to be a living thing.

At this point Satan still ruled the nations, but no longer by controlling them from the spiritual realm. Having no spiritual authority he transfers earthly authority to this beast, through which he is to express his will. Note that at this point Christians have no obligation to obey the authority of these governments, since this authority is totally opposed to God.

13:3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;

This leader who had overcome a clearly recognized death brings credibility and allegiance to the entire beast. We see in verse 12 that the beast becomes identified as this leader.

13:4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

Two cases of blasphemous false worship: The dragon is worshiped as the granter of authority to the beast, and the beast receives worship for its military power. The last two chapters of the book of Daniel give many (but cryptic) insights into this end times period. Dan.11:38 we find the phrase “ But instead he will honor a god of fortresses...”

13:5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

This chapter begins with just 42 months remaining in human history, and is clearly a time-reset to the point where Satan pursued the woman in the wilderness. The 3-1/2 years was given by God, and not Satan. Satan has no power to meddle with the clock of human history, and is himself constrained by it.

13:6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven.

The word “tabernacle” simply means dwelling place. This word and context do not imply the rebuilding of anything.

The saints now hold heavenly authority, so Satan mocks all things spiritual – since he no longer participates in them. Military might and earth-bound reasoning are the only tools he has left – other than what God chooses to grant for special purposes.

13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to over-come them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

This forty-two months would be another overlay of the 3-1/2 years in chapters 11 and 12, inasmuch as they are able to overcome those whom the gentiles would be allowed to trample underfoot in chapter 11, and “the rest of her seed” mentioned in Rev.12:17. These will not include those of the altar or the sanctuary, because they are protected.

Again, note the word “given.”

13:8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. 9 If any man hath an ear, let him hear.

The extent of this authority is limited to nonbelievers. Those who worship the beast will face a fate worse than death, in that they will not be saved.

13:10 If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

According to this verse Christians who kill to protect themselves from the beast will be killed. Concealment and other evasive actions may be reasonable, but armed confrontation would be useless. Saints who do not trust God for their protection will have no protection at all. The test of the saints in this case is to maintain their integrity no matter what situations they encounter.

Advice appropriate for this period may be found in **Is.26:20**

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

13:11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

What is the significance of a beast arising from the sea versus arising from the earth? Does it have to do with Jews and Gentiles?

13:12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed.

For whatever the meaning of this beast's origin, he does have a voice, and he is apparently the mouthpiece of the dragon, and his speech carries the authority that the dragon has given to the first beast. This is a satanic counterpart of a saint being backed up by the power of God as he speaks forth the words God has given him to speak.

This dragon and the two beasts constitute the unholy trinity who's rule is now limited to a part of the earthly realm.

13:13 And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men.

13:14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived.

Notice that this satanic prophet can only do these signs while in the presence of the first beast. Whether these signs are pure fraud, or the last sputters of supernatural manifestation, their range is very limited – unlike true spiritual gifts. I think I would call him a puppet.

13:15 And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image to the breast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

This worship-my-image thing was tried before; by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 2.

Again, the phrase “was given.” So if this image isn't a high-tech puppet of some kind, then God has loaned this trio the access to the supernatural realm they need to endue it with supernatural power. This can get extremely creepy in that it would be an extreme form of demonic haunting such as has been documented in many paranormal sites.

On the other hand, even in the eighties I interacted with a computer program that gave such human-like responses that it acquired a small cult following.

13:16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; 13:17 and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The technology to achieve this has not existed until the last couple of decades. Those without the mark who survive for awhile outside the system must do so with resources that do not depend upon this tightly-controlled global commerce.

13:18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six.

I plead total ignorance on this one, and history has revealed a few people who should have claimed ignorance but didn't.

Chapter 14

14:1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.

This is at the very least a spiritual ID in that was imprinted in the spiritual context, and clearly read in the spiritual realm. However: This does not rule out more physical and literal interpretations. This group was introduced in Rev.7:4

There is a mystery hidden somehow in this 12 X 12 number, because in Rev.21:17 we see that the height of the wall of the New Jerusalem is a hundred and forty four cubits high.

14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb.

For all their purity, they did not start out perfect, but had to be purchased by the blood of Jesus like everyone else.

5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

In defiance of Satan and his designs for earth, Jesus takes up a position at the very center of Christian focus.

14:6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7. and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

“Eternal good tidings” (Most other translations use “eternal gospel”) is an interesting term in that – being eternal – these actions would have been appropriate in both Old and New Testaments.

In verse 7 we see these defined as the essential actions that fulfill the proper response towards God: Fear God, give Him glory, and worship Him. These are the automatic results of those who have received forgiveness in the name of Jesus. Being redeemed by the blood of Jesus was achieved through animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, and by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament.

This is the last call. Christians can't evangelize more than once during this period, because they would be immediately killed. So it is achieved by an angel, instead of believers.

14:8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Apparently there was something about the mystery Babylon organization that was able to survive the mayhem of the seals.

This would not be a reference to the rulership of the beast, but rather to the city or culture who's rulership it replaces. Otherwise there would not be ongoing references to the beast and the consequences of following it. It is more likely by way of declaring an end of the previous culture, as it yields to the crushing dominion of the beast. This is even

more evident in that it speaks of Babylon's history, at a time when the beast as yet had no history.

We will see clearly that the demise of Babylon occurs near the time of the beast manifestation. This places these three angels near the outset of the final three and one-half years.

14:9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.

Salvation is made available by the second angel in verse 8, and incentive is provided by the third angel in verses 9-11. This is fire and brimstone preaching at its finest!

14:12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

This third angel warns the populace to have nothing to do with the dragon regime and its beast. This angel also speaks to every individual on the planet, so everyone is accountable to heed his warning.

Obedience to the earthly global government during this period brings eternal damnation. There have been times in history where obedience to certain laws has meant disobedience to God. When Nebuchadnezzar required people to bow down to a golden image, God honored those who would not. There are horrific laws supporting the murder of unborn children in America today that are a sin to obey.

12:13. And I heard the voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

Physical life itself is put into perspective here: It is not the most important thing. It is hard to imagine this blessing that is greater than life itself.

14:14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

14:17 Another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

14:19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress are trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

In Mt.13:27-30, 37-43 we see two harvests taking place. The first one is for the tares that have been allowed to grow among wheat. The second harvest is for the wheat that is to be gathered into the barn. The sequence there is different than in this case, but clearly,

the fire, wrath, and blood associated with this second harvest has nothing to do with the wheat.

Verses 6 through 18 contain a sequence of seven angels, none of whom bring plagues per se. The first one preaches the gospel, and urges people to worship the God who is about to judge all others. The second angel announces the fall of a corrupting world influence that persecuted Christians. The third angel warns against accepting the mark of the beast. The last four angels come in two pairs, to harvest that which has been growing on earth. I am only assuming that the first pair relates to the protection of believers. The second pair more clearly relates to that on earth which has been adding to the anger of God.

Chapter 15

15:1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

This sequence of plagues is the grand finale of the earthly phase of God's judgments. As we will see, their scope is total – as opposed to a fourth of this and a third of what remained.

15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

Although John is recording events in the sequence in which he saw them, verses 2-4 give us a glimpse into a post-apocalyptic worship party.

This song of Moses was sung after the enslaving regime of Egypt had been destroyed while pursuing Israel – just as the world system will be destroyed as it continues to persecute Christians.

The vision then returns to the task of judgment at hand.

15:5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious' stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles.

In 8:2 we met the seven angles that stand before God, who are equipped with trumpets. These angels are seen coming out from the temple might be the same group.

15:7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple (sanctuary), till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

Again we see one of the four living creatures delegating the exercise of judgments from God to others.

Moses was unable to enter the temple in Exodus 40:35, upon the completion of the tabernacle. In 1Kings 8:11, upon the completion and dedication of Solomon's temple, the cloud of the glory of the Lord filled it so that the priests could not stay to minister. Now for only the third time in history, we see this very somber phenomenon.

Chapter 16

16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

This begins phase three of God's judgments upon the evil that has accumulated on earth throughout human history.

It has finally dawned on me that there is a pattern in which one being will hold the actions to take place on Earth, and another calls them forth. This principle is expressed in Mt.16:16-19 involving revelation from God that Peter declares into the natural realm. Jesus then explains that when we express what is revealed in heaven into the natural realm, it shall take place. In the book of John, Jesus declares that he only speaks what he hears in heaven, and only does what he sees in heaven. Those who walk in this pattern, express the authority that once said "Let there be light" into the earthly realm.

In a personal example, after a year and a half of homelessness, I felt I was to ask God for an opportunity to buy another home. This was absolutely ridiculous in the natural realm. Nonetheless, I actually spoke the words out loud and called forth what I believed God had revealed to me, into the natural realm. A year and a half later we moved into the house and had it paid for free and clear in less than five years (without the help of government money).

16:2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshiped his image.

Notice that these plagues are selective.

16:3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea.

Previous plagues only destroyed a fraction of their target – the sea, for instance. But this is the final cleanup from which nothing and no one that is not dedicated to God escapes. This is the final earthly phase of judgment.

16:4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6. for they poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7. And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

God is not being cruel or unjust. He has in fact been extremely patient and merciful to this point, and those now under judgment had been granted very adequate warning.

16:8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched men with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory. 10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

Amazingly, verse 11 would imply that repentance was still available

16:12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from

the sunrising. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

This plague is also different from an earlier edition of plagues (the eastern army described in Rev.9:13 for instance). This begins with the drying up of the Euphrates River – and it may have helped that by this time the world had been devoid of rain for up to three years (see chapter 11). Also, this is not a unilateral slaughter by a powerful army, but the ultimate global war in which mankind without morals or mercy does what it does best.

16:15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walked naked, and they see his shame.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon.

Although no further repentance is taking place, those who had already repented are now challenged to maintain just a little longer.

16:17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty.

This earthquake is more severe than the one in Rev.11:13.

Again: Earthquakes in the Bible seem associated with spiritual events. Rev.17:9 shows us that mountains are world empires. In this case the removal of all islands and mountains coincides with the removal of all earthly governments.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

If people were pretending to not believe in God before, they obviously know better now. Sometimes we wonder why God allows evil men to “get away” with what they do. In the verses above, we see God’s response to that. Any questions?

Chapter 17

17:1 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters;

Since 17:15 defines these waters as nations, we find that this was an international whore loyal only to herself. This would be a time reset, in that we have seen and will see that the demise of the harlot coincides approximately with the rise of the beast.

17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication.

These rulers chose personal gain and favor over the interests of the people of their respective countries. They are unfaithful servants. Their focus upon personal benefit dulled their senses to all other duties Their actions could not be defined as “fornication” if a higher law to which kings are held accountable before God did not exist.

17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This beast out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads was also mentioned in chapter 13. Interestingly, the its color is mentioned here – the same color of the dragon.

17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication,

Her trade is in luxuries and sensual trivia. She has no product of intrinsic value. She was extremely wealthy, and she nourished herself on the filth and depravity of immorality.

17:5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Here we find a clue that the harlot originated in Babylon, and that her practices and control had their roots there.

In chapter 5 of Daniel, Belshazzar (the last king of of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty) was engaged in a blasphemous and hedonistic party at the time it was overrun by the Medes under the command of Darius. In this party, Belshazzar had brought out the sacred cups from the temple service in Jerusalem, to use as party props during this orgy of blasphemy. This was an intentional affront to God's people and a mockery of the God of Israel.

God responded with a miraculous message that even a fool like Belshazzar could not ignore. Ironically, when he summoned his wise guys to interpret this message, the only one qualified to do the job was a Jew named Daniel. Daniel revealed that Belshazzar was through, refused any rewards offered, and presumably fled the scene. Belshazzar himself was killed later that very night. His dereliction of duty in disregard for the concerns of the empire enabled its easy conquest.

This model gains further credibility in the account recorded in Daniel chapter 6. Darius recognized Daniel as having exceptional integrity and as a gifted administrator. So he appointed him a position equivalent to a prime minister.

Jealousy arose among other politicians, so they conspired a plot to have him deposed and killed. Since he was above reproach as far as his service was concerned, they focused their attack against his religion. Note that this plot had nothing to do with benefit to Darius or the empire, but only to their own pride and position. These guys were willing to be unfaithful to the best interests of Babylon, for the sake of their own desires and benefit. *This* is what defined them as prostitutes.

Here we have the basic description of this harlot: (a) She is a whore because she compromises her loyalty to the interests of her office in exchange for power and the wealth and pleasure it brings. (b) She conspires to attack on the basis or religious convictions, since those who walk before God are given divine guidance that makes them more desirable and loyal servants. (c) She has no moral boundaries, and seeks to kill anyone of the target demographic.

A few years later when the center of global power had moved to Susa, the book of Esther records how their baggage included this great Babylon-born harlot. An ambitious politician named Haman was miffed that a certain Jew refused to bow down when he passed. So he conned the the king (Ahasuerus) into signing a edict that all Jews should be killed on a certain date.

The news of this greatly disturbed the entire empire, and was in fact a horrific betrayal of the best interests of Haman's office. Beyond this, it was all about the wholesale

slaughter of God's people – just because he felt one of them insulted him. This politically ambitious whore typical of many whores, had zero conscience or concern for human life.

Ancient and current global politics record countless examples of this harlotry.

17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come.

The beast that carried the woman had existed previously, but did not exist at the time John was transcribing Revelation (John died in AD 98).

This beast that Satan created in his own image (see Rev. 13:1) had existed before in history, but has since been held in the abyss. This abyss seems to be a historic holding tank of spiritual powers that have been delivered there. "Perdition" is the place of eternal damnation, where this beast will eventually end. This abyss was opened in Rev.9:1-2 (see related notes for more on this subject), and was initially manifest as 5 months of torment upon unbelievers. This plague was not random however, in that it had a leader named Destruction.

As seen earlier, the physical manifestation of this beast arises from the kings of this world, whereas the spiritual life is from spirits released from the prison of the abyss.

17:9 Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth 10 and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while.

The heads are historical kings (or possibly kingdoms), and ruled one at a time. So at the time of this writing – according to verse 8 – the beast did not exist. But according to verse 10, one of the kings (or kingdoms) did exist at the time Revelation was written.

Since the seven mountains are defined as seven kings in verse 10, they are not geological formations.

These seven kings are not to be confused with the five global empires spoken of in Daniel, which were finally eliminated during the first four seals. But these kings apparently had been able to negotiate some sort of authority while serving these empires as they rose and fell. They were some form of conspiracy shadow government, religion, or secret society.

17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition.

So this beast is not one of the five global empires spoken of in Daniel, but a recycled version of one of those these seven who served them.

17:12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour.

The horns will all rule at once in the future for a brief period

Note that these *received* authority for a brief period. They do not have the power to take it. They are subservient to the beast.

These ten kings are not yet history (and will never have the chance to be), but will become a military power on behalf of the beast during the final hours. They are monarchies, not democracies.

There have been many speculations over the last two thousand years concerning the identity of these mountains, kings, and horns, and I am not declaring them to be in error. I believe the real purpose of this prophecy is to reassure the saints that God is in fact in control, when their identities become obvious enough for the rest of us to recognize them.

17:13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast.

17:14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.

The military power of the global empire becomes a toy, by which God's people are purified, and God is exalted in the eyes of both humanity, and the spirit realm – especially by those who hate Him.

This victory over the beast by Jesus is shared by those who are with him.

17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

The typology is important in translating the visual descriptions into spiritual insights. Here we define the waters beneath the harlot as containing the global spectrum of nationalities and cultures.

17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire.

The harlot who has succeeded in eliminating the morality and civilized sensitivities of the world was no longer needed after she had united the world in a common state of corruption. So now the dragon who had created the harlot in the first place no longer needed her, and consolidated all desire and attention upon himself.

17:17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished.

Notice that it is God Himself who is placing His will into the hearts of those who hate Him. As we sometimes wring our hands in worry over what the leaders of this world are doing, we need to remember that the absolute sovereignty of God is in play

17:18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

It would appear that there could be a centralized physical location that had consolidated the power of this harlotry. If so, we would be looking for the headquarters of an organization from which politicians could sell the best interests of their respective countries for some form of gain or benefits.

John died about eighteen years after Israel and the temple had been wiped off the map. Israel is described as a harlot in Hosea, and in Ezekiel 23 – wherein seven of her lovers are named as national entities.

Although the book of Acts reveals that Christians were highly respected by the populous in general, the initial persecution of Christians came from a clique of evil opportunists who corrupted the law given through Moses into a tool of power and status. It was they who stirred up the crowds to manipulate Pilate into crucifying Jesus – even while declaring him innocent. Herod was persuaded by this group to kill James – the first of the apostles to be martyred. To further curry their favor, Herod attempted to kill Peter as well. So we see the dregs of this faction continuing to manipulate oppressive governments throughout the world.

Later we see the apostle Paul, a refugee of this faction, being repeatedly harassed and persecuted by these same people. Paul would preach the gospel, people would give their hearts and lives to Jesus, and then the pharisees would exercise power in the local governments and garner protesters to try and abort the new life that is springing forth. This pattern was repeated many times during the ministry of Paul.

As for Israel – the Jews in general – God expresses his love, forgiveness, restoration, and care for those who are not a part of this corruption in Hosea chapter 14. Make no mistake: God loves the people of Israel!

Chapter 18

This chapter describes a city which it refers to as Babylon. The earliest mention of this city describes a project intended to unify all humanity. This event took the form of a huge building intended to reach to the heavens – the tower of Babel (Gen.11:1- 9). Humanity was planning to control their own destiny, independently of God. God broke their power and dispersed mankind's unified effort. The remains of a major tower were unearthed in this area in 1933.

Around 600 B.C. Babylon again ruled the world, connecting all the significant cultures of its time. This too came to an end when it publicly defied God.

In Rev.17:9-10 we learned that the Babylon (the harlot) referred to here resided in various nations, as the seat of global power changed hands throughout history. At the time Revelation was written, the world was ruled from Rome. But the physical destruction of the city described in this chapter will take place in the city that fits the accompanying description in the last days.

18:1 After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird.

This city has become demon-infested. The tense “is become” tells us that this was not always the case.

It would appear from verse 2 that this harlot had a home location. The birds considered unclean in ancient tradition were the scavengers and the birds of prey. We catch glimpses of such birds in the Bible as they pluck the flesh of corpses’. We also see birds stealing away the word that was sown in the parable of the sower (Mk.4:4,15).

18:3 For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness.

Her corrupting influence rotted powerful nations. World rulers betrayed the interests of their people for the sake of personal pleasure and gain.

The power vacuum resulting from failed nations filled the pockets of merchants who purchased the loyalty of the politicians they were able to corrupt. These were thus able to ignore ecology and political boundaries, and purchased whatever political power they desired.

The reason for the presence of the vile spirits and birds of verse 2 is given in verse 3 as immorality on a global scale. This also explains why the language in verse 1 is all-inclusive; “every” is used for both the spirits and birds. By participating in immorality and sensuality on a global scale, the demons associated with such things have come from all over the world to find a home in this city.

At the global level we have wealthy merchants bartering national resources, treaties and wars as they jockey for positions of power and wealth, at the expense of their own people. This is prostitution at the highest level.

18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

Here is an evacuation order given to God's people, that speaks of a cultural wickedness that we will all recognize. Worship of the golden statue set up by king Nebuchadnezzar, and the worship of government leaders are biblical historical examples of this.

But the warning in this verse goes beyond avoiding specific sins, and commands us to withdraw from the system that imposes them, lest we become somehow involved in their sins.

Some may interpret the call to "my people" to come out of her to mean spiritually, physically, or both. The reasons given for leaving make things a little more clear. Leaving in at least a spiritual sense would involve renouncing and forsaking any involvement in her sins. Within the context of chapter 18, the phrase "and receive of her plagues" may suggest a physical separation as well.

This directive given to God's people makes the assumption that the subject city and the timing of this directive will be evident to the generation to which it applies. Although the avoidance of the sins has been a standing order for thousands of years, the identity of the city and the timing of the physical exodus warrant further scrutiny.

Interestingly this command was also given concerning the ancient city of Babylon and for similar reasons while she existed (Is.52:11, Jer.50:8, 51:6, 9, 45). However, this passage in Rev. 18 was written about 500 years later – centuries after the destruction of ancient Babylon, and obviously applies to a time when a far more catastrophic destruction would be possible.

18:5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 18:8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her.

She will be destroyed in a single day – a rather extreme trick if her headquarters are still scattered among multiple nations. The effects upon the residents however will persist for some time – at least long enough for plagues, mourning, and famine.

18:9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Fire is involved in her destruction – again, implying a location.

She is in fact rendered impotent within a single hour. This is also echoed in verses 17, and 19.

18:11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil,

and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and men shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning;

This harlot was essential to international commerce especially luxuries.

18:16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in an hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any wither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.

These judgments came about as the result of the prophetic prayers of believers. These would be prayers that God had revealed to the saints to speak into the physical realm. God carried out the judgments of the saints upon Babylon.

This is a hard saying, but backed up by multiple references: It is God's people who call forth the tribulation upon the ungodly kingdoms of this world!

18:21 And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived.

Occult activity assisted the deception

18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

Remember that since the outset of this corruption in ancient Babylon, that God's people have been targeted for annihilation.

Chapter 19

19:1 After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah.

Worship in heaven over the death of the harlot.

19:5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth.

After this worship in heaven, a song leader from the throne now invites believers to also respond – only this time the reason is given as because the Lord God reigns. We know he always reigned in heaven, so now saints are worshiping him for reigning on earth.

19:7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

The joy now focuses upon the true lady of the universe, the bride of Christ. The joyful marriage feast of the Lamb takes place on the heels of the destruction of Babylon.

19:8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God.

This song continues, in that the marriage feast of the lamb has come, and they have been invited.

We know that our eternal status as saints hinges upon the purity purchased by the blood of Jesus, but in verse 8 we see the bride's wedding garment consists of the righteous acts of the saints. This is *not* what the foolish virgins want to hear.

It is a telling corollary that the final feast of Israel is the feast of booths, which is celebrated by camping out in commemoration of God's provision and protection in the wilderness during the exodus from Egypt. One of the instructions concerning this feast is that it is to be celebrated with joy.

19:10 And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

19:11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteous he doth judge and make war.

This is not Jesus coming in the clouds to collect His saints, but with judgment as a warrior. This is Jesus personally taking control of the final battle against Satan-ruled nations. This is not the first time Jesus has taken this role – although the most comprehensive. He also appeared to Joshua as a warrior, as he surveyed Jericho (Jos.5:13-15).

19:12 And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself.

“Eyes are a flame of fire” is part of the identity of Jesus in Rev.1:14.

19:13 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure.

Notice that only Jesus has blood on his garment. He is the only one who can actually engage the enemy directly. The rest are occupying forces. But these have already played a significant role: Recall that much of this was the result of the prayers of the saints and martyrs in earlier chapters, and that it was the angels supporting the saints (“by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto death”) in chapter 12 that drove Satan out of heaven.

There is a very practical application to our daily lives embodied in this principle. No matter how hard we may pray for some need, God waits until we are ready to handle that

part of the inheritance before He delivers it to us. When we want God to move on our behalf, there are two things we must do: Ask Him, and purify our hearts so we can properly handle what He desires to give us. This pattern was played out many times in the exodus of Israel from Egypt.

19:15 And out of his mouth proceedeth 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 of the wrath of God, the Almighty.

Jesus again is identified by an item of His description in Rev.1:16 – the sword of His mouth. This “nations ruled by a rod of iron” statement also applies to believers who overcome in Rev.2:26-27. This overcoming is achieved by believers in Rev.12:11, “because of the word of their testimony.”

We just learned in verse 19:10 that this testimony of Jesus expressed by believers is the spirit of prophecy – the word of the Lord spoken on earth in the face of potential death. We as overcoming believers are privileged to rule the nations with a rod of iron through wielding this sword that comes from the mouth of Jesus and is spoken prophetically through us, into the natural realm.

19:16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

In verses 11-16 this rider is given four different names: He is called Faithful and True. He has a written name that no one knows but himself. He is also called The Word of God, and on his garment and thigh is written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORD

19:17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

So while the marriage feast of the Lamb is taking place somewhere else, God has also provided a feast for the birds of prey, wherein they devour the earthly remains of the dragon and his armies.

19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army.

I cannot imagine what it would look like to physically go up against the army of God. The role left to the saints is only that of observers (re. Psalms 91).

19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone:

The final disposition of those who continue to oppose God is the lake of fire – however: As we shall see in the next chapter, there is a slight detour in which they do a little jail time (the abyss) on their way to hell. God is not through using them just yet.

19:21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Here is a war with 100% casualties on one side, and zero on the other.

The earthly remains are devoured as carrion, but the spiritual remains are disposed of elsewhere. These spiritual remains are the tares that are first gathered together (verse 19:19) and burned (verse 19:20), are also found in the parable of the tares in Mt.13:30.

Note that the sword came from Jesus' mouth, rather than being wielded by His hand. The voice that said "let there be light" can also say "let there be death." If you ever hear Jesus raise his voice, listen up.

The beast is dead, and now for its master:

Chapter 20

20:1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

The abyss is a special holding tank for the devil and other demonic entities. It is referenced in Lk.8:31 in reference to a place where demons would be cast. It was also referenced in Rev.9:1. At this point, the dragon is cast into it, and the lid will remain on it for a thousand years.

Note that it only took one angel this time. Satan will be thoroughly domesticated at this point, and is kept on a leash to serve only God's purposes (which has always been true effectively, but the leash has gotten shorter lately). The earth will now have a thousand-year opportunity to see what it would have been like without the devil on the loose.

20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This final millennial kingdom is ruled by Jesus, along with resurrected believers who had been martyred for their faith during the reign of the beast.

This group is first mentioned in Rev.7:14. Those who had endured extra extreme hardship to the point of death at the hands of a totally corrupt world government are given the special privilege of being in charge of the world for a thousand years. The rest who have died believing will not be resurrected until after the millennium. This becomes interesting to picture. Here we see resurrected believers completely restored beyond anything they have ever known before, who will be ruling a physical earth for a thousand years.

Paul boldly addresses this phenomenon in 1 Corinthians 15:35-49. As a side issue to what we are studying here, I will leave it to the reader to explore this Corinthian passage on his or her own. Certainly in this passage we are not scheduled for some zombie-looking horde of believers coming back to reign.

20:5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

These former martyrs of the 3-1/2 years of tribulation were the first to be resurrected.

20:7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Those born during the millennium will not have had to decide whether or not to follow God – until now.

20:8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

The first reference to Magog is found in Genesis chapter 10, where he is a grandson of Noah. The context of this chapter identifies his descendants as historical peoples who inhabited the northern regions. Ezekiel 38 provides additional prophecies concerning these people.

20:9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them.

The last non-battle. It took place around the “beloved city,” not Armageddon.

Here in Rev.20:8-9 we see another fulfillment of the parable of the tares in Mt.13:30, where the tares are gathered together out of humanity and burned. The word “breadth” is also translated as “broad plain.” Recall in Rev.16:18-20 that an earthquake had leveled every mountain.

The odds mean nothing when God is involved.

20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The final destination – for some. These pioneers of hell have already declared themselves as enemies of God. The abyss is no longer needed. Satan is now deprived of all status, and is cast to his final home with those he has deceived.

20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

The heaven mentioned here was not the throne room of God experienced by John while in the spirit in Rev.4:2. The heaven in which God dwells has and will remain forever undefiled. Creation on the other hand, is in need of a facelift. Ultimate purity: Nothing material can exist in the presence of God the Father. There is not enough detail here to determine whether this cleansing related only to the earth and its atmosphere, or whether to all of creation

20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

There are two levels of judgment mentioned here: One is works, and the other is the book of life. The book of life determines one's eternal category. In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 Paul makes it clear that the foundation of salvation is Jesus Christ. However, the works with which you build upon this foundation will apparently determine your status within this category.

Chapter 21

21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.

The second act of creation. The first heaven and earth were blown away by the presence of God the Father in Rev.20:11. This new earth is very different physically from the current earth.

21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven of God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

This verse puzzled me for awhile, in that I had believed that the bride in the wilderness was the setting for the marriage feast, but then I noticed the key word as a bride – using an indefinite article.

I won't try to build a doctrine out of a single short word, but there is no reference to a feast in this particular context.

Another possible interpretation is that this is indeed the same woman, but at a point in time after the marriage feast.

21:3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God:

God's original plan of fellowship is now realized. The dwelling place of God is among those who have freely chosen to follow Him. The existence of choice is a requirement for the true love to exist. The decision they made while under the stresses of life and persecution has now cast them for eternity.

They made and demonstrated their choices to serve God during a time when it cost everything to do so. A part of their reward is that they will never again have to face temptation. This verse may be the clearest fulfillment of God's desire for mankind.

21:4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

Those among whom God lives have experienced pain, and have had to make desperate choices, but will never experience pain again.

21:5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. 6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

The context of Alpha and Omega here, makes it a reference to God the Father. (see notes on Rev.1:5-8). The throne is generally – if not always – in reference to God the Father.

Specifying “the one who thirsts,” would suggest that not everyone desires this water of life.

21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

God the Father is speaking to John at this point. Those who inherit will be those who have chosen to overcome. Taken with verse 6, we see these benefits as available only to those who both desire and take action.

21:8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part' shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

The cowardly are the first on this list of people cast into the lake of fire. If we are trusting God, then we are fearing nothing. Therefore, cowardice is a decision to not trust God.

21:9 And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: 12 having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 21:15 And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

It may be significant to some, that this linear unit of measure is the same for both men and angels.

21:18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Verses 11-21 describes the visual aspects of the new Jerusalem. It is a 3-dimensional cube. Gravity is apparently of no consequence to its inhabitants. They appear to be unbound by laws of physics that otherwise constrain the natural world. In the tabernacle, the holy of holies was also a cube.

21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.

The New Jerusalem is the fulfillment of the temple, and the lighting that fills it is the glory of God. Since this is where God lives, there is no mention of the approach phases of the courtyard and the holy place. These have been fulfilled and passed into history.

21:24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

The New Jerusalem provides light for the nations – which will exist at that time. It is unclear to me whether the seed of mankind that will populate this new creation will be taken from godly survivors of the previous creation, or be a new model created from the new dust.

In verses 24 and 26, the attention, honor, and respect of the nations will focus upon this city.

21:25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there):

Daytime is no longer defined by light from the sun, and the city is always open

21:26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: 21:27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Apparently the option of failure will remain for some in this new earth, but no impurity of any kind will ever enter the New Jerusalem.

Chapter 22

22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

This river begins in downtown New Jerusalem. I had a difficult time at first in reconciling twelve months in the absence of a lunar cycle in the New Jerusalem, until it dawned on me: There is a consistent pattern in the Bible of the natural realm being an expression of the spiritual realm. Jesus only did and said what He saw and heard the Father doing and saying. Therefore, these twelve months are not a pattern copied from the lunar cycle, but rather the moon and its cycle were created to express these twelve periods of time into creation.

22:3 And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; 4 and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

22:6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angels to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. 7 And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

22:8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. 9 And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God.

In the two verses above, John was again overwhelmed by the grandeur and began to worship an angel – don't ever do that.

22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand.

The words of this prophecy are intended to be understood, although obviously they can not positively identify the players and events until they actually come into existence. When these entities and events do arise, however, it will be very reassuring to see God's absolute foreknowledge and control of them.

22:11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still.

At some point, our persistent choices are cast for eternity. Tremble at this: We are warned way back in Gen.6:3 that “God's Spirit will not strive with man forever.”

22:12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

It is interesting that here the Father (Alpha and Omega – nouns) and the Son (beginning and end – sometimes adjectives) are identified as one.

22:14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.

Although there is a category of cleansing that only Jesus was able to perform, there is also a category for which we are responsible. We must continually strive for purity, and to discipline our minds.

22:15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

Even within this new creation where the previous saints are safe with God for eternity, there is a category of being who now has an opportunity to serve or reject God.

22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

Satan falsely held this “morning star” title in Isa.14:12. Jesus bestows conquest of this being as a part of the plunder for those who overcome at Thyatira in Rev.2:28. Satan is also exposed while wearing this disguise in 2Corinthians 11:14. But here, the source of light is identified with its unique and rightful owner.

22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

We are being invited to the wedding feast!

Let us be very careful to accept and apply the wedding garment of purity that God has provided for us through Jesus, and to bathe ourselves in his words and cleans ourselves of any filthy thing he reveals within us. Let us also remember to carry plenty of the oil that illuminates our paths when the natural light of our scholarship and rationality are not enough to lead us through the darkening alleyways of this world.

22:18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

Verses 18 and 19 provide a very sobering warning about tampering with this book, and I can only hope that I have been careful to handle it with integrity. May those who purposely attempt to make it say popular things to support their careers as end-times theologians live in terror.

It is interesting and fun to try and figure out who the global and localized players in the end-times scenario were or will be, but it becomes dangerous and corrupting to build such speculations into doctrines – not to mention worthless. Having said that, these words have been written so that we can be reassured of God’s control, and alerted to dangers as the details relating to our respective current lives become evident. For instance:

Whoever she really is, we can clearly see the influence of the historical monumental slut at work within our dear old U.S.A. She has kicked the name of Jesus out of our public schools, continually mocks God and Christians in the media and entertainment industries. She has won over many in positions of authority within our government,

spawning prostitutes devoid of conscience who spare no level of filth, betrayal, and falsehood to maintain their power and will. She continues to elevate all manner of sexual perversion and label it as good. In a monumental coup of judicial chicanery she made it legal to sacrifice millions of innocent unborn children to the goddess of self.

For our part, we are called to come out from among them and be separate, and not to participate in her sins or be afflicted by her plagues. At the very least this applies culturally in cases of obvious sin, but it is possible it may have more literal meanings appropriate to specific times and situations. God is quite capable of revealing these things if necessary.

God has provided this beautiful book of Revelation to reassure our hearts that God has noticed and anticipated these things, and remains in absolute control. He also reassures us that we are protected as we remain with him as he executes his judgments upon the accumulating garbage of this world. Indeed, these very actions are revealed in this book as a response to believers (both living and dead) crying out for justice.

22:20 He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

22:21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.