

AN APOCALYPTIC WORLD VIEW

Apocalyptic literature deals with the details of the return of Christ and the end of this present age. It discusses how He returns, who is saved and who is destroyed, and how His kingdom will be set up. The writers of prophetic books are looking into the future; consequently their writings are the products of dreams and visions. Such will include images of death, supernatural places and creatures, destruction, and events in the world being carried out by future weapons of warfare that they do not recognize.

Basic to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature is the view that history has two essential parts:

- A. Before Christ comes
- B. After Christ returns to heaven

Many times apocalyptic literature refers to "the Day of the Lord." This day is seen as a time of judgment that ushers in a new age of peace and prosperity. The basic outline is as follows:

- A. The Messiah will be the central figure in the Day of the Lord
- B. The coming new age is preceded by a time of terrible war, famine, and calamity. The very elements that we know will disintegrate. Hatred and anger will be prevalent.
- C. The Day of the Lord will be a time when judgment is rendered to people

Included in the apocalyptic world view is a time of great peace and joy when Christ will reign on earth. Also included is the end of the millennial reign and the resurrection of the unsaved dead.

The following verses will introduce you to the concept of "the Day of the Lord." Read them and record what you learn here:

Isaiah 13: 6,9 _____

Isaiah 58:13 _____

Ezekiel 13:5 _____

Ezekiel 30:3 _____

Joel 1:15 _____

Joel 2: 1,11 _____

Joel 3:14 _____

Amos 5:18,20 _____

Obadiah 1:15 _____

Zephaniah 1:7, 14 _____

Malachi 4:5 _____

Acts 2:20 _____

1 Corinthians 5:5 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:2 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:2 _____

2 Peter 3:10 _____

This study of apocalyptic literature will focus on three books: Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation. Key passages from Isaiah and Ezekiel will also be examined in detail along with other pertinent passages. The goal is a fuller comprehension of the information contained in scripture.

Daniel: taken into captivity 605 BC by Babylon; continued in captivity until after Jerusalem fell in 586 BC

Zechariah: dates to about 515 BC

Revelation: dates to about 90 AD

We will look at key portions of Daniel first, making notes of any apocalyptic predictions that we find.

We will do the same for Zechariah and Revelation. Along the way, we will try to piece together the information that is being given here and elsewhere in scripture so that we have a more complete understanding of the end of the age.

To learn the most from this study, you will need the following tools:

1. A good Bible translation. An NIV or NASB is preferred. If a King James or New King James is used, please choose a text that is edited with the NU text notes if possible. A paraphrased Bible is not a good choice for this study.
2. A concordance or computer program with this tool that is keyed to the Bible translation you are using.
3. A notebook where you can record all of your findings on this topic for cross referencing in the future.

There is some information historically about Israel that will enable us to more easily understand some of the imagery being given in the apocalyptic books. That information is important in the study of all of the scripture in this class. The information is included on page 4. You may want to put an index tab on this page for easier reference in the future!

From the historical information contained in the chart on page 4, you can see that there have been six conquerors of Israel to date. There will be a seventh, but with some distinctions. When we read Revelation we will encounter a "scarlet animal" which is described as being "himself an eighth but part of the seventh." This future restored Roman Empire will produce the Antichrist foretold by scripture.

To begin our study, we will start in Daniel. To prepare for the next class, read chapters 7-12 in Daniel and record any important apocalyptic information that you encounter.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION CONQUERERS OF ISRAEL

Knowing the conquerors of Israel in the past is key to understanding prophecy concerning the future.

EGYPT 1500 BC – 1250 BC (Exodus)

ASSYRIA 722 BC Northern Kingdom taken into captivity

BABYLON 605 BC Daniel taken captive from Judah to Babylon
586 BC Jerusalem falls; last captives taken by Babylon

Babylon is Beast #1

Daniel's vision during Babylon era:

4 beasts (Daniel chapter 7)

Ram/goat (Daniel chapter 8)

Rulers during this era:

Nebuchadnezzar (fiery furnace)

Belshazzar (ruler during the 2 visions above)

MEDO-PERSIA 559 BC **Medo-persia is Beast #2** (Daniel 7:5)

Medo-persia is the Horned Ram of Daniel 8:3

Daniel's visions during Medo-persian era:

70 weeks of years

Rise of Greece

Rulers during this era:

Darius (Lion's Den)

Cyrus (Exiles return)

GREECE 332 BC **Greece is Beast #3** (Daniel 7:6)

Greece is Shaggy Goat (Daniel 8:5)

Rulers during this era:

Alexander the Great

4-way division under Alexander's generals

Kings of the North
(Seleucids/Syria
and Babylon)

Kings of the South
(Ptolemies of Egypt)

Kings of the East
(Antigonos/part of
Persia, Asia Minor)

Kings of the West
(Antipater/Greece
Macedonia)

The Kings of the North eventually produced Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a type of Antichrist, who defiled the temple by sacrificing pigs to Zeus on the Altar from 167 – 164 BC

ROME 50 BC **Rome is Beast #4** (Also future fulfillment)

7 heads described as 7 hills (Revelation 17:9)

10 horns are ten future kingdoms (nations)

FUTURE CONQUERER: RESTORED ROMAN EMPIRE (10 horns/crowns)

10 king federation--7 heads (7 kingdoms) described by John:

5 were (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-persia, Greece)

1 is (Rome was in power when John saw Revelation)

1 is to come (future restored Roman Empire with an 8th king who is part of the 7th arising from it)

APOCALYPTIC VISIONS FROM DANIEL

As we begin our studies from Daniel, it is important to remember that the chapters in this prophetic book are not arranged in chronological order.

Daniel had many dreams and visions he did not understand. He dreamed of four beasts, which represented four kingdoms of the world, and of a ram and goat, which depicted two of those kingdoms in greater detail. Daniel's visions reveal that the Messiah will be the ruler of a spiritual kingdom that will overpower and overshadow all other earthly kingdoms. These visions help us see that we should interpret all of history in light of God's eternal kingdom.

Read Daniel 7:4-7 and record the four beasts from Daniel's dream: _____

Chronologically, chapter seven takes place before chapter five. At this time, Belshazzar had just been given a position of authority (553 B.C.), and Daniel was probably in his late sixties. The first six chapters of Daniel present history; the last six chapters are visions relating mainly to the future.

Daniel had a vision of four great beasts, each representing a world empire. This was similar to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter two. Read that dream and record what you learn: _____

Nebuchadnezzar's dream covered the political aspects of the empires; Daniel's dream depicted their moral characteristics. These nations, which would reign over Israel, were evil and cruel; but Daniel also saw God's everlasting, indestructible kingdom arrive and conquer them all.

The lion with an eagle's wings represents Babylon with her swift conquests (statues of winged lions have been recovered from Babylon's ruins). The bear that ravaged the lion is Medo-Persia. The three ribs in its mouth represent the conquests of three major enemies. The leopard is Greece. Its wings show the swiftness of Alexander the Great's campaign as he conquered much of the civilized world in four years (334-330 B.C.). The leopard's four heads are the four divisions of the Greek empire after Alexander's death.

The fourth beast points to both Rome and the end times. Many Bible scholars believe that the horns correspond to ten kings who will reign shortly before God sets up his everlasting kingdom. These ten kings had still not come to power at the time of John's vision recorded in the book of Revelation (Rev. 17:12). The little horn is a future human ruler or the antichrist.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4 and record what you learn _____

God is illustrating the final end of all worldly kingdoms in contrast to his eternal kingdom.

In 7:9, the prophecy shifts to the end times. This judgment scene is similar to one that was seen by the apostle John. Read Revelation 1:14, 15 and record what you learn: _____

The Ancient of Days is almighty God, who assigns power to kingdoms and who will himself judge those kingdoms in the end. Daniel saw God judging millions of people as they stood before him. We all must stand before almighty God and give an account of our lives.

If your life were judged by God today, what would he say about it? How would he measure it against his will for us? We should live each day with the full awareness that we must appear before God to give account for how we used our lives. How will your life measure up?

The slaying of the beast in 7:12 represents the fall of Rome. While this beast was destroyed, the other beasts were allowed to live for a period of time. The kingdoms (or their cultures) continued to be recognizable in some form; history did not end when God intervened with his judgment. Read 7:13, 14 and compare with Matthew 26:64; Luk2 21:27; John 1:51. Who is "one like a son of man?" _____

In Daniel 7:24, we begin to see some very important future prophecy concerning ten horns, or ten kings. Read Revelation 17:12 and compare:

There were also ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Daniel 2:41, 42). While all do not agree concerning the identity of these ten kings, we are reminded in Revelation 17:12-14 that these kings will make war against Christ, but, as the King of kings, he will conquer them. The other king mentioned here in verse 24 is the future antichrist of 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.

While the exact meaning of this "time, times and half a time" is debated, we do know that God told Daniel that persecution would continue for a specific amount of time. In fact, "time, times and a half a time" is generally interpreted as 1 and 2 and 1/2. This corresponds to the 3 1/2 years that is a recurring time allocation in prophetic literature.

Daniel 7 probably was written when Daniel was in his late 60's. Chapter 8 follows the events of chapter seven, dating to about 551 BC when Daniel was about 70 years old. It gives additional information about two of the empires from chapter 7: the Medo-Persian and Greek empires.

The Ram with two horns is the Medo-Persian empire—the combination of two powerful nations. The Shaggy goat represents Greece. The large horn is Alexander the Great. The breaking of this horn symbolizes Alexander's death and the four horns represent the division of his kingdom into four parts. See the timeline for details. These four kings were known historically as the kings of the south, north, east, and west. The kings of the north eventually produced Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century BC. Daniel's prophecy probably refers to both this man and similar events that occur on a broader scale just before the second coming of Christ.

The 2300 days in 8:14 were literally fulfilled—it was 2300 days from the time Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the temple until the restoration of temple worship under the Maccabees in 165 BC. Daniel's vision was specifically said to refer to the end times and was interpreted to him by the angel, Gabriel. Find other references to Gabriel and record what you learn: _____

HISTORICAL INFORMATION FROM DANIEL Part Two

Today we will look at the most difficult of all of Daniel's prophecies. Darius, of Median descent, became ruler in the area of the former Babylonian empire where Daniel was located. Historically, it is known that Darius became ruler in 538 B.C. This is the same Darius who is spoken of in Daniel 6 and is the man who threw Daniel into the den of lions. How old would Daniel have been when he was thrown to the lions? _____

The Ahasuerus in Daniel 9 is NOT Esther's husband. The events described in Esther happen 50 years later.

It is speculated that Darius did away with the fiery furnace for destruction of enemies because he was a fire-worshipper who did not want to honor his enemies by allowing their death to occur by fire.

Chapter nine opens with Daniel's recognition of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the length of time the captives from Judah would be held in Babylon. Read Jeremiah 29:10 and record what you learn: _____

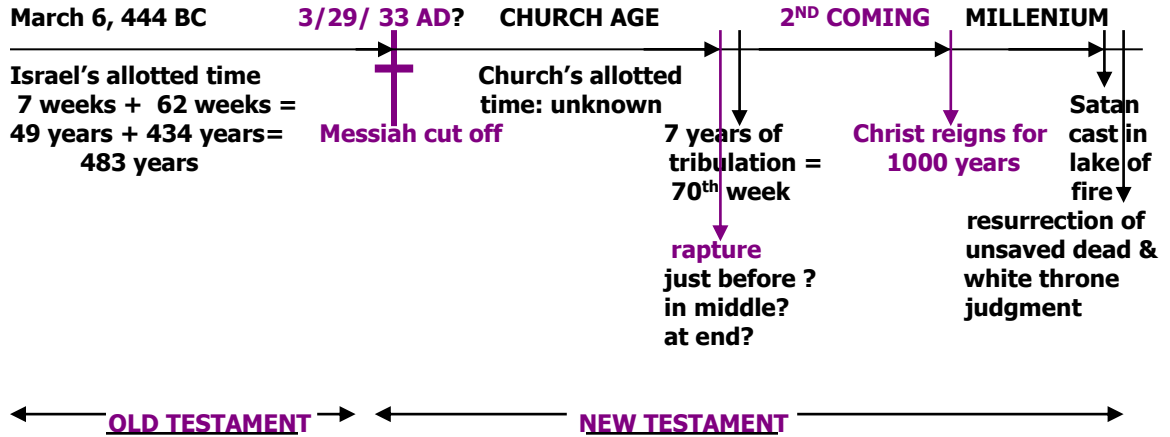
Read Daniel 9:3-19 and record the elements contained in Daniel's prayer: ____

Now, read Daniel 9: 20-27. This is one of the most far-reaching prophecies of the Old Testament. The seven years of future tribulation, as recorded in Revelation also, are seen here. Other very important information is also given. Record the elements of this prophecy here: _____

History is able to help us in interpreting this vision because some of the events mentioned have already happened and their dates are known. In working with prophecy, it is important to remember that Jewish years are 360 days long. In

interpreting this vision, we can begin with the decree from Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

**DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF 70 SABBATICAL YEARS (70 WEEKS OF YEARS)
490 YEARS - APPROXIMATE DATE OF VISION: 538 BC**



INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION Chapters 1-3 (The churches)

Revelation holds a promise that no other Bible book holds. Read Revelation 1:1-3 and record the promise: _____

Now read Revelation 1:4-7. Cross reference to Daniel 7:13 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and record what you learn: _____

This "catching up" of believers is known as the "rapture" of the church.

Revelation has "beatitudes," sentences containing "blessed" just as Matthew has. Read the beatitudes of Revelation and record them here:

Revelation 1:3 _____

Revelation 14:13 _____

Revelation 16:15 _____

Revelation 19:9 _____

Revelation 20:6 _____

Revelation 22:7 _____

Revelation 22:14 _____

It will also be important to look for the number "7" in Revelation. It is associated with God—with completion, fulfillment and perfection. In Revelation we will see:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ❖ 7 churches | ❖ 7 spirits | ❖ 7 lampstands |
| ❖ 7 stars | ❖ 7 horns | ❖ 7 seals on a scroll |
| ❖ 7 angels | ❖ 7 trumpets | ❖ 7 eyes of the Lamb |
| ❖ 7 thunders | ❖ 7 gold bowls | ❖ 7 heads of the dragon |
| ❖ 7 kings | ❖ 7 spirits | ❖ 7 heads of the beast |

Read the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-16 and compare it to the description of an angel in Daniel 10:4-6. Describe the similarities and

differences: _____

In Revelation 1:16, note the symbolism of a double bladed sword in Jesus' mouth. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Hebrews 4:12 _____

Ephesians 6:10-17 _____

Isaiah 49:2 _____

In Revelation 1-3 we read of seven churches. These were actual churches that were in existence at the time John wrote Revelation. In fact, John is historically believed to have been the bishop of the church of Ephesus. The letters to the churches basically follow a pattern:

1. **salutation**
2. **evaluation**
3. **exhortation**
4. **declaration of Christ's return and rewards**

Some believe that these letters were only for these churches at the time written. Some believe that these letters represent the progression of the church of Jesus Christ universal over time. Some believe that they represent the various problems in churches at many times and many places.

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (The loveless church)

Ephesus was the capital of Asia Minor, a center of trade. Along with Antioch in Syria, Alexandria, Corinth and Rome, it was one of the five greatest cities in the Roman Empire. The temple to Diana (Artemis) which was one of the wonders of the ancient world, was located in Ephesus. Production of idols used in the worship of this goddess was a major industry. (Acts 19:21-41). Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey and founded the church there; he stayed there three years on his third missionary journey. Timothy took up the leadership later. False teachers caused problems in the Ephesian church (Ephesians 4:14; 1 Timothy 1:3,4) but the church was able to resist them. The apostle John arrived in Ephesus, probably after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Jewish tradition teaches that he brought with him Jesus' mother, Mary, and that she died there. The protest in Acts 19 (57 AD) took place in an Ephesian theater that seated 25,000 people! The church at Ephesus had been commended for its

love for God and others (Ephesians 3:17-10) but the early church leaders had died, and the second generation of believers had lost their zeal for God. Over a long period of time, the church in Ephesus had refused to tolerate sin among its members. This was not easy in a city famed for immoral sexual practices associated with the worship of the goddess Diana.

We are also living in times of widespread sin and sexual immorality. It is popular to be open-minded toward many types of sin,, calling them "alternative lifestyles", or "personal choices." But when the body of believers begins to tolerate sin in the church, the standards are lowered and the witness is compromised.

The church at Ephesus is commended for:

1. **working hard**
2. **being patient**
3. **resisting sin**
4. **critically examining the claims of false apostles**
5. **suffering patiently without quitting**

Every church should have these characteristics, but these good things should spring from our love for Jesus. The Ephesians had lost their first love, and they may have been in danger of falling into legalism. The spiritual life of the Ephesian church had become sterile. Jesus describes this "first love" in his summary of the law in Matthew 22:37-40. Read these verses and record what you learn: _____

Because the Ephesian church had failed to love God above all else, they were under condemnation. Discuss the significance of having its candlestick possibly removed from its place among the churches. _____

The Nicolaitans were a religious sect claiming Christ, but also permitting the permissive sins of the society as part of their everyday life. They are compared to Balaam, the prophet who induced the Israelites to carry out their lustful desires (Numbers 31:15,16). Notice that Jesus commends the church at Ephesus for hating the wicked deeds of the Nicolaitans (the deeds, not the people).

Accept and love all people, but refuse to tolerate all evil. The world needs Christians who will stand for God's truth and point people toward right living.

Discuss the significance of the fruit from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God.

Jesus' message to the church at Ephesus to REPENT.

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA (The Persecuted Church)

The city of Smyrna was twenty-five miles north of Ephesus. It was a port city with a good harbor on the Aegean Sea. The church at Smyrna struggled against a Jewish population which had fled Jerusalem and which was strongly opposed to Christianity, and a non-Jewish population that was loyal to the Romans and supported the emperor-worship cult. They were opposed on every side, and persecution and suffering was rampant in the church. It is not easy to suffer, no matter what the cause. Jesus commended the church at Smyrna for their faith in the middle of suffering. He also told them that there was no need to fear the future if they stayed faithful.

If you are experiencing difficult times, don't let them turn you away from God. Instead, let them draw you toward greater faithfulness. The church at Smyrna received a completely positive message. Trust God and remember your heavenly reward. God is especially near to those who suffer for Him.

Jesus tells the church in Smyrna of more trials to come, but tells them that the "second death" will not touch them. Believers and unbelievers experience physical death and resurrection; believers are resurrected to eternal life with God, while unbelievers are resurrected to be punished with a "second death" and eternal separation from God. This is discussed in future Revelation chapters.

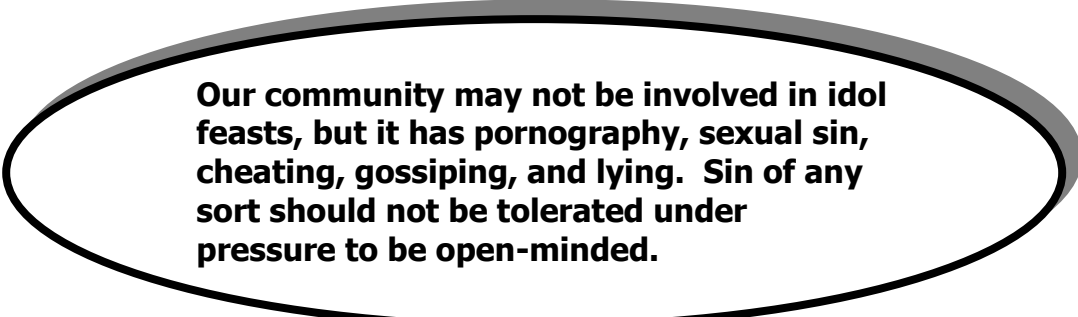
The message to the church of Smyrna is to remain faithful throughout suffering because God is in control and His promises are reliable. Jesus never said that by being faithful troubles would be avoided and we would not experience suffering and persecution. Rather, He told the church to be faithful to Him **IN** their sufferings. Only then does faith prove itself genuine. We must remain faithful by keeping our eyes on Jesus and on what He promises for us now and in the future. Read the following verses and record what you learn:

Philippians 3:13, 14:1; 2 Timothy 4:8 _____

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM (The lenient church)

The city of Pergamum was built on a hill a thousand feet above the surrounding countryside, creating a natural fortress. It was a sophisticated city, a center for Greek education and culture, and had a 200,000 volume library. It was the center of four cults including emperor worship and the worship of Diana. (Artemis) It rivaled Ephesus in worshipping idols. It was in Pergamum that parchment was first used for writing. The city had earlier been the capital of the Roman province of Asia.

Jesus calls the city "the place where Satan's throne is." This is probably referring to the huge, ornate altar to ZEUS which was the focal point of the community. Pergamum was also a center for Satan worship. The chief god was a serpent, considered the god of healing. People came to Pergamum seeking healing by this god. Jesus commends them for remaining faithful even when Antipas was martyred. The church at Pergamum obviously refused to deny Christ even when Satan's worshipers martyred one of their members. There is room for differences of opinion among believers in some areas, but there is no room for heresy and moral impurity!



Our community may not be involved in idol feasts, but it has pornography, sexual sin, cheating, gossiping, and lying. Sin of any sort should not be tolerated under pressure to be open-minded.

It was not easy to be a Christian in Pergamum. Believers experienced great pressure to compromise or leave the faith. Nothing is known about Antipas except that he did not compromise. He was faithful and died for his faith. Apparently, however, some in the church were tolerating those who taught or practiced what Jesus opposed. Compromise can be defined as a concession of principles. When evil is mixed with good, good is no longer pure.

DON'T ALLOW COMPROMISE TO INVADE YOUR FAITH

Jesus condemns the Pergamum church for tolerating people who are urging others to compromise. Jesus commands them to REPENT. Discuss the significance of the hidden manna and the white stone with a new name on it.

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (The compromising church)

Thyatira was an industrial town, with many trade guilds for cloth weaving, dyeing, and pottery. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi, was a merchant from Thyatira (Acts 16:14). The city was secular, with no focus on a particular religion.

The believers in Thyatira were commended by Jesus for their good deeds and their improvement in love, faith, and patience. However, they were compromising by permitting a woman (Jezebel may have been her real name, or she may have been like Jezebel (I Kings 19) who threatened the prophet Elijah and led others into sin.

This woman was apparently teaching immorality and indicating that it was not a serious matter for believers. Specifically, Jezebel was "teaching and leading astray" in two areas: sex sin, and eating meat offered to idols.

Read Paul's discourse on eating meat offered to idols in I Corinthians 8. Discuss what this woman was doing. _____

Why is sex sin serious? Sex outside of marriage always hurts someone. It hurts God because it shows that we prefer to follow our own desires instead of God's Word. It hurts others because it violates the commitment so necessary to a relationship. It hurts us because it adversely affects our personalities.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and record what you learn: _____

Sex sin has tremendous power to destroy families, communities, and even nations because it destroys the relationships upon which these institutions are built. God wants to protect us from hurting ourselves and others, so we are to have no part in sex sin, even if our culture accepts it.

In heathen temples, meat was offered to idols. The meat that wasn't burned was sold to shoppers in the temple marketplace. Paul discusses this in Corinthians. Taking meat offered to idols wasn't wrong in itself, but it could violate the principle of sensitivity toward weaker brothers and sisters who would be bothered by it. Jezebel was obviously more concerned about her selfish pleasure and freedom than the needs and concerns of others.

Jesus indicates that Jezebel was given an opportunity to change her attitude, but she refused. Obedience to Christ always involves a change of attitudes. When we are converted, a battle begins inside us as Satan tries to keep us from changing.

John records this example from Jezebel's life to show the importance of changes in attitude. Our attitudes powerfully influence our behavior. Which of your attitudes would Jesus highlight as needing change? The very things that we try to hide from God are the sins that need to be confessed to Him instead. We cannot hide from Christ because He knows what is in our hearts, and He judges both motives and actions.

Christ told the believers in Thyatira to hold on to their faith and let God's Word be their guide.

We should hold tightly to the Bible to avoid many errors set forth as "deeper truths." We can do this by listening carefully to teaching and preaching in church and by reading the Bible daily.

Jesus does not ask the church in Thyatira to repent. He merely says that he asks nothing more from those who have remained faithful and promises the victorious ones that they will rule with him and given them the Morning Star.

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS (The lifeless church)

The wealthy city of Sardis had an older section of the city on a mountain and the newer "suburbs" in the valley below. The city had a problem, not with heresy, but with spiritual death. In spite of its reputation for being alive, Sardis was called dead by Jesus. How can a church appear busy and active, but really be dead on the inside?

The church at Sardis was urged to hold on to the Christian truth they had heard when they first believed in Christ, and to get back to the basics of the faith. It is important to grow in our knowledge of the Lord, to deepen our understanding through careful study. But no matter how much we learn, we must never abandon the basic truths about Jesus. Jesus will always be God's Son, and His sacrifice for our sins is permanent. No new truth from God will ever contradict these biblical teachings.

Discuss what it means to have one's name erased from the Book of Life. What does it mean for Jesus to announce before His Father and His angels that we belong to Him? (Rev. 20:12) _____

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (The obedient church)

Philadelphia was founded by the citizens of Pergamum. The town was a frontier area used as a gateway to the central plateau of Asia Minor. Philadelphia kept barbarians out of the region and brought in Greek culture and language.

The city was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 AD and aftershocks kept people so worried that most of them lived outside the city limits. The church was small, with little status or influence; however, it was faithful to God and He was pleased with them.

When we feel small or insignificant, we should remember that God wants faithfulness more than worldly success. It isn't what we accomplish so much as what we are that really counts with God.

Christians have differing gifts, abilities, experience, and maturity. God doesn't expect us all to be the same, but He does expect us to persevere in using our assets for Him. The Philadelphians are commended for their effort to obey and are encouraged to hold tightly to whatever strength they have.

You may be a new believer and feel that your faith and spiritual strength are small. Use what you have to live for Christ and God will commend you.

The faithful Philadelphians are told that Jesus will make them a pillar in the temple of His God, He will write God's Name on them, and they will be citizens in the New Jerusalem, the city of God.

It was the custom in Philadelphia to honor magistrates by placing a pillar, in his name, in one of the temples in Philadelphia. Most of those had been destroyed by the earthquake. Jesus promises the faithful in a city where buildings had been destroyed that they will be pillars in a temple that will NEVER be destroyed and in a city that is ETERNAL. This must have been a great comfort and reward for the faithful church.

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA (The Lukewarm Church)

Laodicea was the wealthiest of the seven cities addressed in Revelation. Jesus describes the church as being "lukewarm" and said he would "spit you out of my mouth." This symbolism would have been clear to the church. The city had a problem with sufficient water supply and wells that would not accommodate the entire city's needs with ease. The Romans built an aqueduct from a hot spring about five miles away into the city. By the time the water reached the city, it was no longer hot. Instead it was lukewarm, and had dissolved minerals in it which made it additionally unpleasant to drink at lukewarm temperatures. Jesus points out to the church that they are materially rich but spiritually poor.

- ❖ **Laodicea was a famous banking center, but Jesus tells them to buy gold from Him, gold purified by fire, so that they can be truly rich.**
- ❖ **Laodicea was the "Paris" of Asia Minor, involved in the design and manufacture of clothing and renowned for dyeing processes that resulted in brilliant- colors. Jesus told them to purchase white garments from Him, clean and pure, so that they wouldn't have to be naked and ashamed.**
- ❖ **Laodicea had a famous medical school that produced a powder, compressed into tablet form, that was marketed throughout the world. When mixed with water, it became an eye salve that was especially effective in healing eye infections. Jesus told them to get medicine from Him to heal their eyes and give back their sight.**

God would discipline this lukewarm church unless they turned from their indifference toward Him. His purpose in discipline is not to punish, but to bring people back to Him.

Are you lukewarm in your devotion to God? God may discipline you to help you out of your indifference, but He uses only loving discipline. You can avoid discipline by drawing near to Him again through confession, prayer, worship, and studying His Word. The Holy Spirit can re-ignite our zeal for God when we allow Him to work in our hearts.

The Laodicean church was complacent and rich. They felt fulfilled, but didn't have Christ's presence among them. He knocked at the door of their hearts, but they were so busy enjoying worldly pleasures (money, security, material possessions) that they didn't notice He was trying to enter. The pleasures of this world can be dangerous because their temporary satisfaction makes us indifferent to God's offer of lasting satisfaction.

If you find yourself feeling indifferent to church, to God, or to the Bible, you have begun to shut God out of your life. Leave the door of your heart constantly open to God and you won't need to worry about missing His knock.

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL Revelation Chapters 4,5

Moving from the conditions within the churches in Asia to the future of the universal church, John sees the course of coming events in a way similar to Daniel and Ezekiel. From this point on, future events and heavenly realities are in the forefront in most of the book. John begins with the vision of God and His throne in heaven.

Compare Revelation 4:1-11 with Isaiah 6:1-7 and record what you learn:

The phrase, "after this I looked" with small variations, introduces new visions in the book. (See also: Revelation 7:1,9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1)

What is the significance of a door standing open? _____

Who's voice does John hear like the "sound of a trumpet speaking?" Compare with 1:10. _____

- ❖ **What does it mean when the voice calls John to come up into heaven?**
- ❖ **What is the significance of the phrase "what must take place?"**
- ❖ **What does this signify about the outworking of divine will?**
- ❖ **Do you think John is writing about matters of chance?**

What does it mean when John is described as "in the Spirit?" Compare with 1:10: _____

John uses the word "throne" of God in almost every chapter, for a total of 47 times out of a total of 62 times it is mentioned in the entire New Testament. Read Ezekiel 1:26-28. Compare his account of the throne of God to John's account. _____

John describes God on the throne as "jasper" and "carnelian." Unfortunately, scientific terminology in this time makes identification of precious and semi-precious stones difficult. Jasper may be the same stone as modern jasper, but it may have been green jade or green quartz, or even diamond since it was described as "clear as crystal." (21:11) Carnelian was a red stone, and is

probably ruby. Sardius is also translated as Carnelian. This could be important since the first and last of the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the High Priest (each engraved with the name of a tribe of Israel) were Sardius and Jasper.

There is a rainbow over the throne (Compare with Ezekiel 1:28) Some believe this is meant to conceal God. Others think that the rainbow signifies the covenant that God made eternally.

Most commentators agree that "smaragdinos" in 4:3 can be translated as "emerald." The color green is typically seen to represent the mercy of God.

Revelation 4:4 speaks of 24 elders who might be representative of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles signifying the old and new testament followers of God. The names of the twelve tribes are on the gates of the New Jerusalem, and the names of the apostles are on its foundations (see Revelation 21:12,14). Compare the song they are singing (4:11) to that of the priests in David's organization for worship and the Levites who were responsible for the music at the Temple. (1 Chronicles 24:4; 25:9-31).

The elders would represent the worship of heaven, of which that on earth is at best a copy. The thrones point to the royal state and white is the color of triumph throughout the book of Revelation.

Crowns of gold emphasize the high estate of these beings. (Greek "stephanos" meaning a wreath of victory rather than a royal crown.)

Thunder is the voice of God in several Old Testament passages and we should understand the "flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder" in that way here. (see Revelation 8:5; 11:19; 16:18)

Besides hearing the voice from the throne, there are seven lamps blazing before it. The lamps represent the sevenfold spirit of God, which may derive from Isaiah 11:2-4. Read that passage and record the seven virtues of the spirit listed there: _____

(wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the Lord, and righteousness)

It is not clear what the "sea of glass like crystal" refers to in 4:6. Some feel that it is an ocean in heaven above the firmament; others think it is a reference to

the laver in Solomon's Temple which was called a "sea." (I Kings 7:23). John is not giving an exact description, but is speaking symbolically.

Modern ideas about glass did not apply in the first century when glass was usually dark and opaque. Clear glass would have been enormously expensive if it was even available. The Koran relates that when the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, she thought that a pavement of clear glass before his throne was water and lifted up her skirt to pass through it. This legend shows that clear glass was thought of as splendidly magnificent and suitable paving for a royal court.

The "four living creatures" are described in the middle of the throne only here, but the Lamb is so described in 5:6 and 7:17. This indicates special closeness to God; they are also attendant on God as described by "around the throne." Many scholars think that these are the cherubim from Ezekiel 10:2,20; however, there are differences:

- *Cherubim have 4 wings; these have 6**
- *Cherubim cover the throne of God; these are around it**
- *Cherubim have 4 faces; these have one although each one has one face like a cherub.**

We can surmise that these are very important created beings; they constantly praise God (4:8; 5:8,14; 7:11; 19:4). They are associated with the outpouring of the wrath of God. (6:17; 15:7)

The living creatures are described as having one face each; one like a lion, one like a calf, one like an eagle, one like a man. There is a rabbinic saying dating from 300 AD, but possibly earlier: "the mightiest among the birds is the eagle; the mightiest among domestic animals is the bull; the mightiest among the wild beasts is the lion; the mightiest among all is man." These forms suggest whatever is mightiest in nature.

The living beings had six wings (see Isaiah 6:2 for a description of Seraphim). Their song is also similar that of the Seraphim in Isaiah 6:3.
Read that verse and record what you learn of the song: _____

Are you lukewarm in your devotion to God? God may discipline you to help you out of your indifference, but He uses only loving discipline. You can avoid discipline by drawing near to Him again through confession, prayer, worship, and studying His Word. The Holy Spirit can re-ignite our zeal for God when we allow Him to work in our hearts.

"Whenever the living creatures give glory" seems to mean that the song is intermittent; the worship offered by the created beings is invariably accompanied by that of the representatives of the people of God. God is referred to in terms of majesty (throne) and eternity (living forever and ever). The elders prostrate themselves before God, throwing their crowns before Him, expressing that God alone reigns and all other sovereignty must yield to His.

Worship (ascribe worthship) occurs literally as they intone "you are worthy." In Rev 4:9 the song was "glory and honor and thanks" but is now "glory, and honor, and power." The reason is that this is referring to creation, which is a work of power. Because of God's will, they were created.

God is Holy. The word means primarily "separate" and this separateness includes complete purity. God is good; real power is not with evil, but with God, who is Holy. This is not a passing occurrence; God is He who was, and is, and is come. God's power and eternal being ensure that His holiness will triumph over all evil.

While Revelation 4 deals with John's vision of God, the Creator, Chapter 5 deals with God, the Redeemer and the Lamb who has conquered by His death. These two chapters are key to understanding of Revelation. There are things that we don't understand, and circumstances where we feel caught up in the evil of the world and unable to break away. The world's inability to break free from the consequences of sin by its own power is evident around us. This chapter, with its seals that no one can break, shows us human inability. Through Jesus, the seals are opened and God's purpose is worked out.

CHAPTER FIVE SHOWS US THE WORK OF OUR KINSMAN REDEEMER IN CARRYING OUT THE PLAN OF GOD FOR MANKIND.

Chapter five is the first of a series of seven symbolic representations plagues. In chapter five, the plague springs from the opening of seven seals; later, there are seven trumpets and seven bowls. Some Bible scholars believe that these events are successive; others believe they are simultaneous. Compare the events in this chapter to Jesus' apocalyptic discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). _____

John saw a scroll on (not in; the Greek is "epi") the right hand of the one on the throne. This indicates that the scroll was on the palm and not held in the hand. A scroll was sheets of papyrus joined edge to edge until the length required for

the book was reached. The papyrus sheet was thin strips of papyrus in two layers, at right angles to each other, joined with glue. The side with horizontal stripes was a better writing surface than the vertical side; usually writing was only on the horizontal side, but if space was important, writing would be on both sides. John has a scroll written on both sides--it was as full as it could be! This scroll contains the destiny of the world that we know--the deed to earth, as it were--and is sealed with seven seals. Each part of the scroll was kept in place with an individual seal and was opened one section at a time until all seven seals were opened.

Read Jeremiah 32:10-14 and discuss how a deed was sealed after redemption of land: _____

Revelation 5:2 announces the first of several "mighty" or "strong" angels--especially strong and apparently especially loud, since his voice penetrated heaven, earth, and under the earth! Discuss the significance of these three locations: _____

The angel was seeking someone worthy to break the seals on the book and set into motion the end of the world. Is the angel looking for someone with goodness or with legal rights? Who would have been qualified under the Law to break the seal? _____

No one was good enough to open the seals on the scroll--area after area is found wanting. No angel or other created being in heaven could open the scroll; no saintly man on earth was good enough; no saints in the realm of the dead were good enough; certainly no one under the earth was good enough. Even the strong angels of God were unable to open the sealed scroll.

The word used for "wept" (5:4) means noisy grief and wailing. John had been promised a look at things that would happen (4:1) but now no one was worthy to open the book.

We see elders speaking to John in this verse and again in 7:13. Other times, an angel speaks with him (17:7, 21:9, 22:6). The elder tells John to stop wailing for the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is worthy. This expression occurs only here in the Bible.

Compare to Genesis 49:9, Hebrews 7:14,25; Revelation 22:16: _____

The "root of David" is also an expression not found in the Old Testament although the root of Jesse is mentioned. John is saying that Jesus was born of David's line (a shoot) but that David was from Jesus' line (a root). He also tells us that Jesus has triumphed (the word and tense used indicate that this is a final and complete victory.)

When John looked to see the Lion, he saw a Lamb instead.

The word for lamb (arnion) is found twenty-nine times in Revelation and only once in the rest of the New Testament (John 21:15). When Christ is called a lamb elsewhere the word is "amnos". (John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; I Peter 1:19).

When we associated animals with nations, we think of Russia and the bear, Britain and the lion, the USA and the eagle, France and the tiger, etc. All of these animals are predators. The Kingdom of Heaven is symbolized by a lamb, and a lamb "as though slain" at that. The tense used is Greek perfect and shows that the Lamb was slain at some point in time, but that the result of His slaying continues on.

The Lamb has seven horns. In scripture, the horn symbolizes might or strength. Seven is God's number of perfection. The significance is the perfect might or strength of the lamb. The lamb also had seven eyes which represented the seven spirits of God sent into the earth. This could indicate that Jesus had the perfect fullness of the spirit (which he did, Acts 16:7) or it could mean that He is all-seeing--nothing escapes His notice.

The symbolism means the following: Jesus is from the Tribe of Judah, the line of David, is supremely powerful, all seeing, and He has won a victory by His sacrificial death.

The Lamb took the scroll from the hand of the one on the throne. **This symbolizes both the worthiness of the Lamb and the assent of the one on the throne to His worthiness.**

Revelation 5:8-10 make it clear that the Lamb is worthy to break the seal because He is the rightful owner of what is represented in the scroll—he has the

right to break the seal because He has made the purchase—**He is the rightful owner!**

Discuss the praise in heaven that follows the acknowledgement of the worthiness of the Lamb. Discuss the utensils of this praise. For another reference of incense being the prayers of the saints, see Psalm 141:2. In heaven, the prayers of the saints are precious and are brought into the very presence of God himself, and the bowls in which they are offered are golden. (precious)

Discuss the meaning of the new song. The Greek word is "kainos" and signifies "fresh" as opposed to "neos" which means "recent." The song extols the fact that Jesus has already died and paid the penalty for sin. He is now gathering us into His Kingdom and making us priests to reign in the future with Him. When we realize the glorious future that awaits us, we will find the strength to face present trials.

Revelation 5:11 portrays angels that encircle the throne, the living ones and the elders. They are in an important place, but not in the middle or center. The expression for their numbers is probably not intended to pinpoint a specific number, but rather intended to mean that they are very many in number.

Almost all of the qualities ascribed to Christ in 5:12 are also in other places in the New Testament:

- ❖ **power (1 Corinthians 1:24)**
- ❖ **wealth (2 Corinthians 8:9, Ephesians 3:8)**
- ❖ **wisdom (I Corinthians 1:24)**
- ❖ **strength (Ephesians 6: 10; 2 Thessalonians 1: 9)**
- ❖ **honor (Hebrews 2:9; Phil. 2:11)**
- ❖ **glory (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:9)**
- ❖ **blessing or praise (Mark 11:9-10; Romans 15:29)**

Read 5:13 and record everything (everyone) who does not recognize the superior worth of the Lamb: _____

The words used in the song of 5:13 are not the same as in the preceding verse and the ones that are, appear in different order. The word for power in this verse is "kratos," but in verse 12 is "dynamos."

In the prior verse, all seven are grouped under a single article in the Greek, where in this verse, each of the four has its own article to give separate emphasis. Here, there is no mention of "worthy." These songs are the fervent

outpouring of hearts full of adoration and praise for what God has done through the Lamb. God and the Lamb are linked throughout this book (6:16, 7:9,10,17; 14:1,5; 21:22,23; 22:1,3). There is not the slightest doubt that the Lamb is with God and is God.

The four living creatures began the chorus of praise (4:8) and end it with their Amen. John does not say whether they are worshipping God or the Lamb, and there is no need to. In this passage, the two are not differentiated.

Chapters four and five proclaim in confident terms that the world's destiny is not under the control of some blind fate. We are in the hands of a loving Father and a Savior who died for all of us. Christ has paid the price for the redemption of Earth and its people. He can break the seals on the scroll because He is the rightful owner of everything contained therein. He became the owner by purchasing it with His blood.

THE SEVEN SEALS

Revelation 6

Chapters four and five show in confident, vivid terms that the world's destiny is not under the control of blind fate, but in the hands of a loving Father and a Savior who died for us. In the chapters that follow, we begin to understand that Jesus died not only for salvation from sin, but for condemnation of sin. We cannot fully understand Christ's saving work apart from an element of judgment.

There is a new angle to apocalyptic writing in Revelation. Here, we are seeing the church. Specifically, in chapter six, the martyrs are singled out and chapter seven describes a great multitude of the redeemed. God is in control of the whole process being described, and God is concerned for his people. So, even though apocalyptic judgments will be loosed against all mankind, believers included, God's people do not need to be fearful.

Beginning in chapter six, we see a pattern of four, two, and one in terms of the groupings of the judgments of the seals. This same pattern will repeat with the trumpet and bowl judgments. In chapter six, the first four seals take place on earth; the next two seals take place in heaven, and the seventh seal ushers in a new segment of the revelation.

The first four seals show the self-defeating character of sin. When the spirit of conquest is abroad, events take their course and sinners will inevitably be punished. This is not the whole story, and other aspects show that God is active in sending his judgments on sinful people. Chapter six shows that war, famine, and pestilence come in the wake of conquest.

WHEN JESUS OPENS THE FIRST SEAL, this is the likely point where the final week of Daniel's vision begins--the seven years of tribulation begin here. They are set into motion by the seven year treaty made with Israel that we discussed earlier.

Review the four living creatures who are calling forward the four horsemen of the apocalypse. When the scroll begins to be opened, we might have expected John to read it, or for it to be read to him. Instead, he sees visions of what is contained inside. The first vision is of four horses with colors like those in Zechariah 6:1-3. The Zechariah horses were drawing chariots, but here they are ridden by horsemen.

The **first horse** is WHITE and his rider carries a BOW. Later, John sees another rider on a white horse who is called "the Word of God" (19:11-13), but the horse of 6:2 is a different white horse, and it is not Christ who is riding it. The rider is a victorious warrior carrying a bow and given a crown. This word for "crown" is "stephanos" (see 2:10) and is not the same as "diadema."

Stephanos means a victor's wreath, as awarded in Olympic games. Diadema means a crown signifying royalty or kingship. White is the color of victory. The first rider went out not only conquering, but determined for more conquering. The expression probably indicates extreme purpose. Conquest was his entire aim. We should note that the crown **WAS GIVEN** to him. He probably thinks that his own might produced his victory, but we see here the sovereignty of God. The conqueror has only what God allows him to have. Throughout the Bible, the bow is symbolic of military power (Isaiah 41:2; Jeremiah 49:35; 52:3,56; Psalm 46:9; Ezekiel 39:3; Hosea 1:5; Zechariah 9:10)

A bow is even associated with God himself when He is depicted as a triumphant warrior (Lamentation 2:4; 3:12; Habakkuk 3:9). It should be noted that the bow was not a typical Roman weapon, so it does not come from the time in which John lived. The first rider embarks on a career of conquest that unleashes bloodshed, famine, and destruction.

In 6:3,4 the second living creature summons the second horseman. The **second rider is astride a fiery red horse**. He is given power to take peace from the earth. Again, notice the use of the wording "was given." This rider is given a large sword, but notice that the verse clearly says that the men kill one another. Some Bible scholars think that the first rider is concerned with conquest, but the second with civil war. Others believe that the second rider is a natural progression from the first: conquest breeds war. In any event, the second rider takes peace away and men do the damage to each other. The word translated "slay" in the NIV and NAS is more appropriately translated "slaughter" or "butcher."

In verses 5 and 6, the third living creature calls forth the **third horseman**. This time, the rider carries a pair of scales, which is certainly unusual for a horseman. Ezekiel speaks of eating food "by weight" (Ezekiel 4:9-10) and Leviticus 26:26 refers to doling out bread by weight. Based on the value of a denarius at the time John was writing, the shortage of food also represents about an 800% inflation rate. The word translated "quart" is "choenix" which was about a liter and was considered to be a daily ration of wheat. More barley could be purchased, so a man with a family might buy barley so there would be enough

for dependents. About one day's wage would be spent on this ration for a working man based on the money system of John's time.

The word translated "hurt" the oil and wine is a strange word that means "cut off." It seems to indicate that there will be plenty of oil and wine, but a scarcity of bread. Some speculate that the roots of the olive trees and grapevines are deeper than the roots of annual grain crops and would not be so easily damaged by a difficult agricultural year. Others think that it means that the necessities of life for the poor will be in short supply while the luxuries of the rich will not cease. The Old Testament always links grain, oil, and wine as basic needs. When one of these is harmed and the others are not, there is only a partial provision of needs. This seems to indicate that there is some sort of famine, but not yet a total disaster. Things are certainly difficult, but the end has not arrived yet.

In verses 7 and 8, the fourth living creature summons the **fourth horseman**. The horse is described as "pale." The Greek word is "chloros" (from which we get our word chlorine) and means a yellowish green. This is a very strange color for a horse! Each of the preceding riders had an emblem (bow, sword, scales). Death needed no such sign. Death and Hades are commonly linked. Again, we see that power is "given." God is supreme and we are again reminded that even death can exercise only the power God allows. The power given here is awesome. One fourth of the earth's population is slain. The agents of death are similar to those in Ezekiel 14:21.

THE FIRST FOUR SEALS CHARACTERIZE EVENTS ON EARTH. THERE IS A WORLD POWER, OUTWARDLY VICTORIOUS AND EAGER FOR FRESH CONQUESTS, YET FULL OF ELEMENTS OF UNREST, DANGER, AND MISERY. War, scarcity, pestilence, mortality, etc. are evident. These forces are set loose by the hand of Jesus to prepare the way for his coming.

The first four seals deal with happenings on earth, but now John begins to see events in heaven.

In verse 9, John sees the souls of martyrs "under the altar" (see 8:3,5; 9:13; 11:1, 14:18; 16:7). The altar of incense typifies the offering of prayer. The association with the souls of the martyrs is thought by some to indicate that the martyrs have offered up their lives as a sacrifice to God. It is unusual to have a reference to SOULS under the altar. There are Jewish references to people buried in Israel under altars, and there are churches where saints are buried under the altar. This is a reference to "souls" and it is thought by some to

indicate that the bodies of the martyrs have not yet been raptured and given a new heavenly body. Based on history, under the altar seems to be a place of privilege and safety.

Some scholars think this means that when the martyrs sacrificed themselves, the most significant part of what happened took place in heaven. The indication that they were slain for the "word of God" and the "testimony" indicates that they were committed, dedicated people who considered their testimony more important than life itself.

The martyrs address God in a loud voice calling Him "ho despotes," which translates as "Sovereign Lord." This is used of God the Father in Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24 and of Jesus in 2 Peter 2: 1, Jude 4 and as either in 2 Timothy 2:21. It is the word used for a master of slaves. But, it also conveys the thought of "holy and true." The expression stresses God's goodness and reliability and acknowledges Him as sovereign. They ask God to judge and avenge them. The events of Revelation 19:2 are almost a direct answer to this prayer for justice. While the martyrs are asking for judgment, they are not seeking indiscriminate revenge; the implication is that they are requesting justice.

Many Bible scholars feel that the martyrs under the altar are the martyrs all time. Others feel that they are martyred during the tribulation period only. People from the first school think that asking justice on the "inhabitants of the earth" is just a way of asking for justice on unregenerate mankind as a whole (3:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:8). Those from the second school feel that they have recently died and are requesting revenge against specific people still living on earth. In either scenario, there is the recognition that the Christian should not pursue personal vengeance. Retribution is God's prerogative. Most scholars agree that this plea is not against individuals but a call for the reversal of the world's judgment on God's people.

In verse 11, we see white (the color of victory and purity) robes given to them. This seems to indicate that, while they appeared to have been defeated by their enemies in the world's eyes, actually they had been given the victory by God.

Some scholars believe that the white robe represents justification; the robe is given because people do not justify themselves, but are justified by God. As in verse six, there is a speech without the speaker being named, but the words are authoritative when they are told to "wait a little longer." The end will not come until the full number of martyrs is complete. This does not mean that God is counting down a specific number of dead believers; it means that he is working out his plan and that the plan will include other martyrs. The plan cannot be speeded up.

The early Christians had questions about why God doesn't punish sin immediately. Part of the answer was at the cross; however, the cross does not mean the abolition of judgment. Part of the message of the cross is that we are judged based on our attitude toward the sacrificial love of Jesus on the cross; but Jesus' death also signifies judgment of sin. Sin will be totally overthrown and there will be more martyrs during the process. However, the final destruction of evil is assured. The only question for the martyrs is how much longer until this occurs.

In verses 12-17 we find that the opening of the sixth seal brings about a variety of cosmic activities. Compare to Joel 2:31 and record what you learn here:

Apocalyptic literature typically mentions the regularity of the heavenly bodies. The end of the world is accompanied by irregularities of various kinds.

In the first century, people appear to have thought of heaven as a solid vault. Here, heaven was rolled up like a scroll and taken out of the way. On earth, mountains and islands were moved. Yet, John tells us that men are seeking a hiding place so the break-up of the cosmic system as we know it must not be totally complete.

There are seven classes of inhabitants seeking to hide themselves: kings, great men, commanders, rich, strong, slave, free. This number may indicate completeness of mankind. The emphasis is on the fact that not even the greatest will be immune. The normally secure will be without resource. They all hide themselves in caves and rocks. These people are calling to the rocks and hills and asking the mountains to fall on them, indicating that the calamity is so great that almost anything is preferable to facing it. The phrase "the wrath of the Lamb" is found only in verse 16. Whoever heard of a meek, gentle creature being angry? It is the anger of love which has been sacrificed for us and our salvation, and which says with certainty that evil awaits its doom at the hand of God.

"Orge" used in 5:16 and in 6:17, 11:18, 14:10, 16:19, 19:15 and "thymos" used in other places are translated as wrath and vengeance. There is no doubt that divine wrath is a reality in the end times.

The last day is described as the "great day of their wrath." The end times are described in terms of divine wrath! It is the day of reckoning for all evil. As in

Joel 2:11,31 and Zephaniah 1:14,18; 2:2, "who can stand?" All of mankind will be impotent in that day.

Revelation chapter six tells us with certainty that God is over all. God is working His purposes and will do so even though it means that this world order and the whole mighty universe passes away.

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." Isaiah 54:10

SEVENTH SEAL FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS Revelation 7, 8

After the sixth seal was opened, but before the seventh, there is an interlude. John will refer to interludes in other portions of the book. In this interlude, we find special servants of God being sealed, or placed under His special care.

This portion of the book is difficult to understand. Bible scholars differ as to whether the 144,000 persons sealed are the same as the great multitude mentioned later in the chapter. There is disagreement about whether the 144,000 are really literally Jews, or whether they represent "spiritual Jews" (Christians.) There is disagreement about whether the 144,000 and the group later mentioned are the martyrs who are to be brought to completion. There is no translation of these problems for us in the book, so we must study and draw our own conclusions.

In 7:1, John saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. This is probably a way of saying that they overshadow the whole world and none of it is beyond their control. Their function is to hold back the "four winds of the earth.

Read Zechariah 6:5 and record what you learn: _____

Some think that the four winds may be another way of referring to the four horsemen of the first four seals. Zechariah's four horses are interpreted as the "four winds of heaven." Zechariah speaks of winds of heaven stressing their subjection to God in heaven, but John refers to winds of the earth for their destructive activity in connection with the earth.

John sees another angel coming up from the east. The east is generally considered to be a source of blessing (where light originates).

- ❖ **It is from this direction that the glory came to the temple (Ezekiel 43:2);**
- ❖ **Jesus is to appear in the eastern sky; Islamic people pray facing to the east.**

The angel from the east has the "seal of the living God." A seal is a mark of ownership. It was very important in a time when people could not read. Here it indicates who belongs to God and preserves them from the destruction that will fall on others. We see God's people bearing His mark elsewhere in Revelation.

Read 13:16-17; 14:9; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4 and discuss the sealing of the good and the wicked. _____

The angel who belongs to God shouts to the other four who have the ability to hurt the earth and sea.

The sealed Angel commands the others not to hurt the earth, seas, or trees until God's servants are sealed on their foreheads. The word translated servants is the Greek "doulos" and expresses freed slaves who have stayed with the master out of devotion. It is important to note the restraint of the forces of destruction until God is ready.

In 7:4, John then hears the number of those sealed (Greek "ephragismenon"). The word means "sealed permanently." It indicates that God will not go back on His choice. Twelve is regarded as the number of Israel, and many scholars believe that this is meant to represent Israel.

Some take this to mean the literal, physical Israel; some think it means those in Israel who are Christians; some think that Israel (Jewish by faith) means the church. The church is referred to as "the twelve tribes." (James 1:1; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30)

However, these verses may be taken to mean the Jewish Christians only. The Christian appears to be the true Jew (Romans 2:29) and the church "the Israel of God."

Descriptions of old Israel began to be applied to the church and it is the church which is:

- ❖ **God's "very own" people (Titus 2:14) and**
- ❖ **"the circumcision." (Philippians 3:3)**
- ❖ **Abraham is the father of all who believe (Romans 4:11) and these are Abraham's children (Galatians 3:7).**

Many believe that **"Israel after the flesh"** implies there is an **"Israel after the Spirit."** (I Corinthians 10:18)

No wonder the view is so widespread that nobody can interpret with total certainty what John meant here. Later we will read that the new Jerusalem is

the spiritual home of Christians (21:2) and that the gates of the new city have the names of the twelve tribes. There is good reason to see the reference in this verse to the church as the true Israel; but there is also good reason to see this as a literal sealing of Jews. Some think that this is a reference to martyrs who will be preserved from the four horses because they have a part to play later on.

In 7:5-8, the tribes of Israel are listed here. There are 12,000 from every tribe mentioned; except this is not really the case! The **tribe of Dan is excluded** for some reason. The tribe of Joseph has two allotments here: Joseph and Manasseh. When we see the double allotment to Joseph, we usually see it mentioned as "Ephraim and Manasseh."

Many Bible scholars believe Dan was left out because of the frequent association with idolatry. Some scholars also believe that the antichrist will be a Jew from the tribe of Dan. Read Jeremiah 8:16 and record what you learn: _____

There is no other place in scripture where the tribes of Israel are listed in this order. Note that Judah comes first.

Next, John sees a great multitude that was too large to count. This may speak against the idea that this is the 144,000 sealed earlier because those were clearly counted. This multitude comes from every nation, tribe, people, and language. The phraseology here indicates that the crowd is universal and seems to indicate that they are not from just Israel. The crowd is standing before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb (so Christ is still at the Father's side)

These redeemed are dressed in white robes. ("stolas" meaning long robes). White is the color of victory, justification and purity and these robes are the same color as those given to the martyrs under the altar. Palm branches were also emblems of triumph. This suggests to many that this great multitude are the rest of the martyrs that are mentioned in the preceding chapter that must be brought to completion. This is further supported by the indication that the Father spreads His tabernacle over them. What is really significant about these redeemed is that they are "coming out of the great tribulation."

Verse 10 clearly indicates a great multitude ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb. They know that their salvation has come through a sovereign act of God through Christ.

As we read through 7:11, 12, it seems that when the redeemed cry out, the angels fall to their faces and worship. First they said "amen" which shows their agreement with the cry of the multitude. The angels' act of worship was called

into existence by their joy at God's saving act. They then ascribe seven qualities to God. The list is the same as that in 5:12, except that "thanks" replaces "wealth."

7:13-14 reveal John and the elder conversing and discussing where the multitude is coming from. The elder explains that the multitudes are those "coming out of the great tribulation." In the Greek, the tense is present. It seems to indicate people coming out of the last seven year tribulation and not just tribulation in general. The elder further informs John that these have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Here the tense is aorist, meaning "once for all" action.) The completeness of Christ's atoning death is being strongly asserted. It is on the grounds of His death that people are able to stand before the throne properly clothed. The strongest indication seems to be that the multitude is composed of those Christians who are dying in the great tribulation and coming before the throne of God and not just those who are being martyred.

In verse 15, note the use of the phrase, "He who sits on the throne shall spread" which indicates something to occur in the future. The verb "skensei" used in connection with the Tabernacle in the wilderness. (skene) It might be translated, "He will make His Shekinah to dwell with them." Shekinah is the glory of God; it means God's immediate presence; the Shekinah Glory of God filled the early tabernacle. We might have expected a present tense, but the future points to still more things to come in heaven.

7:17 pictures Jesus at the center of the throne as one who will be the shepherd of the redeemed. "Center" is the word "mesos" and is the root from which "mesites" or mediator comes. The point is that Christ, by His sacrifice, makes provision for the needs of His people. He will "lead them to springs of living water." Their state is the result of warm fellowship with Jesus and His tender concern makes complete provision for their needs.

Using your concordance, find other places where "mesites" is used of Christ: ___

After the interlude of chapter 7, the final seal is opened. It is generally agreed by Bible scholars that the first part of chapter 7 occurs before chapter 6 and the last part of chapter 7 occurs during chapters 8 and 9.

The sixth seal was opened in 6:12, so there has been quite an interval before the opening of the seventh seal.

Clearly the opening of the seventh seal is a solemn and impressive moment. It is possible that the silence is connected with the offering of the prayers of the saints just as in 7:3 certain plagues were held back until the servants of God were sealed. The saints may appear insignificant to the world, but it is clear that they matter immensely to God!

Even cataclysms are held back while saints pray. Angels who had been praising God at the end of chapter 7 are now silent while the prayers of the saints are presented to God. Silence may also indicate awe at the judgments that God is unleashing on the world.

The vision introduced by the opening of the seventh seal is one of "the seven angels who stand before God." The definite article shows that a specific seven are indicated. Jewish writings speak of the seven who "present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One." (Tobit 12:15) The apocryphal book of Enoch, (I Enoch 21:1 lists the names of the seven angels: Uriel, Raphael, Raquel, Michael, Saraquael, Gabriel, and Remiel. The "el" ending implies their close connection with God.

John refers to seven angels in other places, but after this chapter they refer to angels who had the seven bowls introducing the last seven plagues and it is unclear whether they are the same seven. Standing before God and serving God mean about the same thing. The angels are given seven trumpets. **Read Matthew 24:31; I Corinthians 15:52; and I Thessalonians 4:16 and record what you learn:** _____

Before the angels blow their trumpets, the prayers of the saints are offered. This is not an unrelated parenthesis. John means for us to see that the prayers of God's people are supremely important. Even the cataclysmic judgments which follow are held up until these prayers have been offered to God. In a way, it is these prayers that set the judgments into motion. (8:5)

Frequently, John introduces a new angel by saying "another angel." We have no way to identify this new angel, nor do we know who gave him "much incense." The incense is closely connected with the prayers of all the saints, but it is not identical with them (as it was in 5:8) It is offered "with" them which may symbolize the unity of the worship of heaven and earth. The use of a golden censer and a golden altar point us to the value of these prayers.

In 8:4, we see the incense and the prayers go up before God. Note that they went from the angel's hand. Prayer is not the lonely venture it often feels like. There is heavenly assistance and our prayers reach God. It may be significant that there is an altar connected with this, for it implies that there is something sacrificial in true prayer. We should not view the angel as a mediator because angels are fellow servants (19:10; 22:9) We are Christians only because of Christ's sacrifice and all of our service and praying is to be sacrificial.

Earlier the angel had a censer for purposes of intercession; now in 8:5, he has it for purposes of judgment. After filing the censer with fire from the altar and hurling it on the earth, the result on earth was peals of thunder, flashes of lightning and an earthquake. The fire came from the very altar on which the prayers of the saints were offered. This must mean that the prayers of God's people play a necessary part in bringing in the judgments of god. What is the real master-power behind the world?

More potent than all the dark and mighty powers let loose in the world is the power of prayer set ablaze by the fire of God and cast upon the earth.

As with the seven seals, there is a distinction between the first four trumpets and the last three. The first four are concerned with forces nature and the last three are concerned with people. The division between the four and the three is underlined by an eagle flying in mid-heaven and uttering three "woes" because of the plagues to be unleashed by the next trumpets.

The trumpet judgments are not about the church per se. They are God's judgments on a sinful world. Revelation is an account of judgment. Human wickedness does not go unnoticed in heaven. God will deal with it in His time and His way.

The seals seemed to show that judgment follows more or less inevitably on the heels of sin. The judgments of the trumpets emphasize God's activity against sin. These are not the final judgments; only a third is affected and this is a strong warning. The trumpet was used by the nation of Israel as a warning.

Although 8:6 does not tell us exactly how the angels prepared to blow the trumpets, but there was preparation involved.

The **first trumpet** (8:7) was a signal for widespread destruction by hail and fire. This could be a massive electrical thunderstorm or it could be something more dramatic. Mixed with blood may give us the color (Joel 2:30) or it may indicate

the kind of destruction brought about by the lightning: though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

The **second trumpet** (8:8) was something that John could not exactly describe. It is not a burning mountain, but "what I can only call a great mountain."

8:9 tells us that the salt waters and their ships saw a destruction of one third of all marine life and all vessels on the seas. This is probably not pollution of water alone because a third of the ships were also destroyed.

8:10 tells us that the inland (fresh) waters were contaminated by the **third trumpet**. A great star, blazing like a torch, fell from heaven. Again, a third affected, but this time the rivers and springs (inland lakes)

The name of the star is revealed as "wormwood" which was a bitter, but not poisonous tree. A third of the waters became bitter, but many people died. We don't know what this is implying but it may be something like wormwood but that is poisonous.

Interesting aside: Chernobyl is the Russian word for wormwood.

The sounding of the **fourth trumpet** was followed by effects in the heavens with the sun, moon, and stars. Read Amos 8 concerning prophecy of earthquake and eclipse. Record what you learn: _____

The proportion of one third is retained although exactly what happened is not clear. The first part seems to mean that one third of all three failed so that there was a third less light all the time. The last part seems to mean that one third of the time there was no light at all by day and by night. Regardless, the point is that one third of all light is gone.

8:13 is an interlude between the first four trumpets and the last three. John saw and heard one eagle. The eagle was in full flight in midair and proclaimed a threefold woe to the inhabitants of the earth. The **first woe** is said to be past in 9:12; the **second woe** is said to be past in 11:14. The **third woe** is not specifically mentioned. It might be the descent of Satan in 12:12. The solemn words of the eagle show that the plagues to come are worse than those already experienced. There is a deepening of intensity at this point.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH TRUMPETS Revelation 9 and 10

As with the last three seals, the last trumpets move into the spirit realm. The seal judgments were about heaven and spirituality in heaven. The trumpets are about the abyss and demons. The last trumpets are described in more detail than the first. The locust judgment is difficult to understand. The basic understanding beyond specific interpretation is that people who fail to respond to God's invitation for salvation, and who thereby oppose God and His purpose, become prey to horribly demonic forces. God is Sovereign. Even demonic forces work out his purpose. We now see people reaping the results of earlier choices-- and so it is with us.

There are possibilities of evil always latent in us and we too often see them realized. However, there is more to what John is seeing than this.

"Whenever men go beyond their own humanity in committing their crimes, whenever they become so debased that they let themselves be obsessed by a force of evil greater than human nature itself could conjure up, then human sin becomes inhuman, men are the offspring of beasts, and judgment lashes the soul with its most unspeakable terrors."

There is another thought--repentance. God uses the evil results of our sins to call us to repentance. The release of the demonic forces in one sense result from sin; but from another sense, it is God's chastening. God's chastening is never aimless. When properly received, it should lead to a change in behavior. John sees God and not the demons as being in control.

Unlike the star in 8:10, in 9:1 this one has, in some sense, personality. Angels are sometimes called stars, and it seems likely that this star is a **fallen angel**. The angel was "**given**" a key. This star-angel had no independent authority to open up the abyss. The abyss (also translated bottomless pit) is a great pit that may have a narrow opening at the top but widen out farther down. The shaft is locked, but the key was given to the star. The abyss was the place where demons were bound, but the fact that God gave the key indicates that He had it under control. It is not the place of eternal punishment, for that is described as a lake of fire (20:10, 14-15). The abyss is inhabited by those hostile to God, but they are subject to His control.

Read 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6, and Luke 8:31 and record what you learn: _____

When the shaft was opened, smoke rose up and the sun and sky (more accurately "air") was darkened. In 8:12, a third of the light was gone. There is no estimate of the effects here in 9:2. The point seems to be that there was a lot of smoke; air seems to be used as the abode of demons.

Read Ephesians 2:2 and record what you learn: _____

Compare Revelation 9:3 to Exodus 10:12-20, Joel 1:4, Joel 2:25 and Amos 7:1. Record what you learn: _____

In Revelation 9:3, we see the locusts "**were given**" power like scorpions of earth.

A command was given to the locusts, but the speaker isn't identified. Ultimately, the command must have come from God, but it is unclear who actually spoke the words. The content of the command was for the locusts not to harm vegetation. The world of demons has no power against those who have been sealed by God as belonging to Him.

Demons can exercise only the power given to them. Here, they can torment but not kill. The torture they inflicted was like that of a scorpion, which is painful, but rarely fatal. The five months may be due to the fact that a natural locust has a life span of this period.

People will be in so much pain that they will want to die. There is an interesting contrast with Paul, whose personal preference was for death, which he regarded as gain, but who accepted life. (see Philippians 1:23-26)

Revelation 9:7 tells us that the locusts were of a fearsome appearance. It is unclear whether they are a natural phenomenon of the end times under demonic control, or whether they are actual, visible demons. Note the description and discuss what natural occurrences of warfare might be described.

Discuss the armor of the locusts, their noise, and their appearance. Are they actual, visible demons, or other beings under demonic control? Other options?

In Revelation 9:10, we note that John strongly switches to the present tense. Again the five month period is mentioned. The locusts are not leaderless. Unlike natural locusts, they have a king, first called the **angel of the Abyss**, but later named Abaddon and Apollyon (destroyer).

Some believe that these are other names for Satan; others believe that there is a specific angel in control of the abyss.

The eagle had announced that there would be woes; now the first is past, but more are coming. Revelation 9:12 shows that the forces of destruction loosed by the sixth trumpet are much more deadly. Whereas locusts tortured, the angel hosts kill. A third indicates a great number, but not a majority. It is a call to repentance, but John records that **NO ONE REPENTED**.

Throughout Revelation, there is an emphasis on the **refusal to repent**.

God is sending judgments, but there is a purpose of love behind them. They are to make the seriousness of sin apparent and to lead people to repentance and salvation. When people do not accept this, they should not think that they have triumphed over God; they may resist His will, but to their own damnation.

John was writing to the Christian churches. The message is that believers must live in the world, not an imaginary place where everything is perfect. We must not expect to live in a world that understands us and welcomes our witness. No matter how great the judgments of God, the world in general continues with its idolatries and sin. We must understand this world, where sinful people resist God to the maximum degree, even when they are hurt in the process.

We live in a world under judgment.

When the sixth angel blew his trumpet, (Revelation 9:13,14) John simply heard a voice. The four angels who were bound seem to be specific angels; the fact that they have been bound indicates that they are not good angels going forward voluntarily to do God's will. They are evil and have been restrained until now. This ties in with the general demonic orientation of this chapter. The Euphrates River is just beyond the promised land in near the site of Babylon.

These four angels had been prepared for this very month, day, and hour.

The Old Testament frequently refers to month and year, but never hour. John is speaking of a **specific** divine plan. Again, a third of mankind dies. This is a very stern warning, but not the destruction of mankind entirely. We hear of a mighty army of horsemen, but it seems to be the horses who actually kill people.

The number of the horsemen is two hundred million. John hears this number; it is not simply a large number as in 5:11; the mighty horde was beyond counting. It is difficult to say where the troops came from--some say beyond the Euphrates; some say from the abyss.

In Revelation 9:17, John reminds us that this is all being seen in a vision. He describes breastplates of fiery red and dark blue and yellow. It is not clear whether all were tri-color or if there were some of each color. The ferocity of the horses is brought out in the comparison of their heads to heads of lions; their fearsome nature in the fact that their mouths issued fire, smoke, and sulphur.

In 9:18, notice what kills a third of mankind. _____

The fire, smoke, and sulfur was killing. Discuss the appearance of these horses and what they might be. _____

In the final verses of Revelation 9, John turns his attention from the plagues to the rest of mankind.

Those not killed still did not repent!

They continued to worship false gods. From their gods, John turns to their sins. These people still did not repent of their murdering, magic acts, sexual immorality, or of stealing.

In Revelation 10, we see the second interlude. As in the case of the seals, there is an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The interlude centers on a book. John is told to eat it after which he will prophesy.

John saw another angel coming down from heaven. Other perspectives have been from heaven, but now John sees them **coming down**, so he must have moved back to earth. Until now, not much has been said about the appearance of the angels that John saw; this one is described in some detail.

Describe the appearance of the angel: _____

The angel was associated with a book (biblion). The book lay open (the perfect participle, meaning that the book is open and will remain open.)

The angel put one foot on the land and one on the sea. Some see this meaning that the message in the book concerns all whether on land or sea, and is a universal message. This posture also indicates gigantic size. While Christians may feel insignificant, their faith is based on the Word of God, held in the hands of a colossal figure spanning both land and sea.

**God's Word is supremely significant. It towers
above the affairs of men.**

In Revelation 10:3-6, we see an angel, like the previous angel, crying out with a loud voice. His shout is followed by the speaking of the seven thunders. John was about to write what the thunders said, but it was **forbidden**.

There are parts of God's plan that were not to be revealed.

The angel now hears a solemn oath which singles out God's eternity and His activities in creation.

The oath points out that what follows is not some panic device to which a surprised deity must resort in reaction to unexpected machinations of evil men and evil spirits. The God who created time fulfills what He planned. This angel is solemnly promising that the events of which He speaks will take place certainly and speedily.

Revelation 10:7-8 and very important verses. Read verse 7 in context with 11:15-19. The mystery being revealed is being further described in chapter 11.

Those who believe in a mid-tribulation rapture of the church combine the above verses with I Corinthians 15:51-52 and I Thessalonians 4:16-18 to support their position that the rapture occurs at the 7th (last) trumpet.

TWO PROPHETS AND THE LAST TRUMPET

Revelation 11

In Chapter 11, John gives account of two witnesses who testify during the last days. He also mentions the antichrist who is not able to ultimately overcome God's plan.

The chapter is very difficult to interpret and the most diverse solutions are suggested by various commentators. It is important to read the chapters carefully and cross reference as much as possible. Some expositors feel that the witnesses and the temple referred to are literal. Some believe they are symbolic.

Symbolic approach: The spiritual temple, the church, will be preserved though it will be subjected to physical oppression as the Gentiles trample it. John already used the lampstand and explained it as referring to the churches. Thus, they take the witnesses as symbolizing the witnessing church (or part of it). The two witnesses in this scenario stand for that part of the church that is faithful. Perhaps the martyrs are in mind.

It is possible that part of the significance of the number two is that the Jewish law required the testimony of two witnesses. God provided all the witness that is required by law. The symbolic approach believes that the two witnesses testify for 3 1/2 years because the church is present only during the first 3 1/2 years of the tribulation period. The great city (11:8) is identified with Sodom and Egypt and Jerusalem. The symbolic approach thinks of the city as an earthly city in opposition to the heavenly city of chapters 21 and 22. It represents man in organized community and opposed to God. It is another name for the world as a worldly system.

Literal approach: This approach believes that the two witnesses are two literal men who testify with special God-given powers for a 3 1/2 year period. Exactly where this 3 1/2 year period fits into the 7 year tribulation period varies with commentators. **Some believe the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah** because of the qualities that describe them and because they are the two who appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Some argue that they are **Elijah and Enoch** because of the scripture indicating that "it is allotted to man once to die" and Elijah and Enoch are the only men mentioned in the Bible who did not die--their lives may have been preserved so that they could testify during this critical period before their deaths. It should be noted here that God is capable of making exceptions and the scripture quoted was probably meant to refute reincarnation. Certainly, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but he is not still living today.

As we go through the verses, we will try to call out key words and summarize from both points of view.

Revelation 11: 1-3:

The symbolic point of view believes that the temple (here "naos") is the church; the outer court is symbolic of those who did not accept Christ (verse 2) and trampled by the world.

The literal point of view believes that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem prior to the tribulation period and this is a literal temple.

There are some combination points of view that believe various other things--the words are literal, but the temple is in heaven and the court is on earth--the temple is redefined as the body of believers, etc. Cross reference to Zechariah 6:12 regarding Jesus rebuilding the temple during the millennium. Record what you learn: _____

Cross reference also to Ezekiel 40, where he has a vision of the millennial temple (the dimensions do not match Solomon's temple, the temple of Zerubbabel in Nehemiah's time, nor the Herodian additions to it. Note that he is also ascribing measurements being taken.) Record what you learn: _____

Cross reference to Daniel 9:27. It is hard to justify this verse if a temple is not literally rebuilt. One possibility is that the sacrifice being offered is literally Christians offering themselves (Romans 12:1). Read Isaiah 66:20 regarding the gathering of the brethren from all nations to Israel as a "grain offering to the Lord." In this way, the verse from Daniel can also be taken symbolically.

There is a lot of disagreement among Christians as to whether an actual temple will be built and standing during the tribulation period or whether it will be built during the millennium or whether temple references are symbolic. Cross reference to Revelation 11:19 and record what you learn: _____

Revelation 11: 4-7:

The **symbolic translation** believes that the two witnesses are the "two lampstands" representing churches from Revelation 1:20. These are the two faithful churches and they are witnessing for 3 1/2 years and are then cut off, killed, raised from the dead, and taken to heaven. This represents the churches witnessing during the first 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, then falling under severe persecution at the 5th and 6th trumpets, and then being raptured at the 7th trumpet.

The literal translation believes that the two witnesses are two literal men. Cross reference to Zechariah 4:3 regarding two witnesses. These men are described as having the same powers earlier given by God to Moses and Elijah (I Kings 17:1; Exodus 7:20)

Revelation 11: 8-10:

The **symbolic translation** believes that the dead of the church will be in the wicked world (Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem--representing wicked world systems.) The **literal translation** believes that the witnesses will literally be killed in Jerusalem which is symbolically also called Sodom and Egypt because it has become a dwelling place for many apostate religions in the later days.

The literal translation believes in the literal resurrection of the two human witnesses. The symbolic translation believes that this resurrection is of the dead as described in the verses on the rapture that we looked at last week. This is happening simultaneously with the seventh trumpet being blown and the rapture of the church.

Those who believe that there are two literal witnesses are generally divided into two camps:

- 1. Those who believe that the witnesses are restored to life at this time and raptured, but the rapture of the church has either already occurred or will occur at the end of the 7 years**
- 2. Those who believe that the witnesses are restored to life and raptured, and the church is raptured immediately thereafter (or simultaneously) at the 7th (last) trumpet**

Therefore, these witnesses are seen by various points of view as testifying during the first 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, the second 3 1/2 years of the tribulation, or during some overlapping of the two periods.

Read Revelation 10:7 and 11:15. Notice that the two are separated by the interlude describing the two witnesses.

THE WOMAN; THE DRAGON; TWO CREATURES Revelation 12, 13

Chapter twelve begins a series of visions shown to John that start with Israel before Christ and conclude with the harvesting of the earth during the tribulation period. The visions are as follows:

- 1. Woman clothed with the Sun (12:1-6)**
- 2. Satan cast out (12:7-12)**
- 3. War between Satan, the Woman, and her Son (12:13-17)**
- 4. The Beast from the sea (13:1-10)**
- 5. The Beast from the earth (13:11-18)**
- 6. The Lamb on the Mount of Zion (14:1-5)**
- 7. The harvest of the earth**

These events do not necessarily fall into line chronologically at this point in the text. Some of them happened many, many years ago, and some have not yet happened. These seven visions are an overview of the drama that has been played out over the years, that is finally concluding during the tribulation period at the second coming of Jesus.

REVELATION 12:1-6 THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

The word for "sign" here is "semeion" which is used often in the gospel of Mark when referring to Jesus' miracles. The action John is describing seems to take place on earth but he sees the actors in the sky. There is a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. The symbolism likely refers to Israel, with the twelve stars representing the twelve tribes

Compare to Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9. Record what you learn: _____

Many scholars believe that the moon as reflected light, represents Israel before Christ and the sun, or direct light, represents Israel and/or the church after Christ.

The idea of Israel as a travailing woman is used in other places in scripture. (Isaiah 66:7-8; Micah 4:1-10 and 5:3.) Most important is the symbolism in Isaiah 26: 17-18. The old Israel could not bring salvation to the earth. This was accomplished by Jesus. John uses the Greek present tense for "cries" and the participles of "travailing" and being in pain. (the latter phrase is usually used not

of childbirth, but of torture. For early Christians, there was an important continuity between Israel and the church. Here the woman is probably Israel, giving birth to the Messiah; but later, she may be the church, persecuted for her faith.

The second sign in the sky is an **enormous red dragon**. Most scholars believe that this is Satan. Pharaoh is called a dragon (Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2) and there is a lot of symbolism associated with Egypt in Revelation. The language about the plagues is behind many of the trouble introduced by the seven trumpets. The great city is Sodom and "Egypt" (11:8). By contrast, the song of deliverance is the song of Moses, who delivered the people from Egypt and the song of the Lamb (15:3). Egypt stands for what is evil, especially the bondage and persecution of God's people.

There are other Old Testament passages where referral is made to the dragon in connection with evil beings such as Leviathan or Rahab (Job 26:12-13; Psalm 74:13-14; Isaiah.27:1; 51:9) Those versed in Old Testament scriptures will understand that the term " dragon" is associated with an evil being.

The dragon is red, as is the beast on whom the great whore sits (17:3-4). The red dragon is a fearsome being with seven heads and ten horns. The horn is a symbol of strength (see Daniel) and the ten horns point to the power of the dragon. Reread Daniel 7:7,24. Record your thoughts: _____

We cannot overlook the fact that the beast, Satan's henchman, has seven heads and ten horns (13:1; 17:3), and is red (17:3). The evil we see on earth seems to be made in the image of Satan.

The crowns on the dragon's head are crowns of royalty, "diademata" and not laurels of victory, "stephanos". John pictures Satan as immensely powerful and exercising sovereignty--or at least claiming it.

The dragon's tail dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them to the earth. As with the trumpet judgments, a third denotes significance, but not majority. We are probably seeing a third of the angels fall with Satan. However, the primary interest is in devouring the child about to be born. Satan was hostile to Jesus from birth. Read Matthew 2:13-18 and record what you learn: _____

The woman gave birth to a "male" son, the adjective putting emphasis on the sex.

Do a word study on the word "rule" in 12:5. Record your results here: _____

The verb that is translated to "rule" is literally "to shepherd." Who snatched up the child to heaven John does not say; also he does not say how it was done without the dragon being able to prevent it. John merely

points out that the **Son was protected from Satan's destruction.** The sovereignty is further indicated by the reference to the throne.

No details are given between the birth and resurrection of Christ. The purpose is to show the hope for believers, and not the entire life history of Jesus. Satan tried to destroy Christ, but did not succeed.

The woman fled into the desert which is more appropriately translated "wilderness. She was thus protected from the dragon just as was her Son. The woman's place was prepared for her by God. Jesus himself predicts the flight. Read Matthew 24:20 and record what you learn: _____

In the wilderness the woman stays for 3 1/2 years and the manner of statement is exactly like that in 11:2 where the time is given for the two witnesses.

REVELATION 12:7-12 SATAN CAST OUT

This little vision shows that we are caught up in a wider conflict than the one we see. The thought is not quite the same as wrestling "against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms." Rather, John is speaking of spiritual battles between angelic beings. Michael is the leader of the heavenly hosts; he is described as an archangel in Jude 9. He is apparently a fighting angel (Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1 and Jude 9). His enemies, the dragon's helpers, are also angels, but fallen angels/demons.

The result of the battle is the defeat of the dragon and his angels so that they lost their place in heaven. He had been the accuser of God's people (Job 1: 6-9; 2:1-6; Zechariah 3: 1). Satan is fully described in Revelation 12:9 as "the devil" which means slanderer, and Satan, which means "destroyer."

The name would have made a strong impact in the first century when were paid informers called "celators" who accused Christians before authorities. Specifically, this passage tells us that Satan was cast "to the earth."

John hears yet another loud voice and the speaker is not named, but the plural "**our**" shows that it comes from a group. "Our brothers" leads some to conclude that they are not angels speaking. The reason for the song of triumph is that Satan has been overthrown; the picture is of hostility on the part of Satan and triumph on the part of God.

Satan had argued the sins of the brothers in the highest court, but he was overthrown and became powerless to ultimately harm Christians. It can be said

that the brothers overcame him, but not alone. They overcame "by the blood of the Lamb."

What the Lamb has done avails for His believers; the redeemed bear witness to the Redeemer. To give way in the face of persecution is to fall away from Christ and lose everything, but to stand firm means final victory over Satan. The terminology clearly implies that John has the martyrs in mind.

While the rejoicing is called for from the inhabitants of heaven, it is plain that we can rejoice too. **Our**, citizenship is in heaven. Although we suffer trouble on earth, we are assured that triumph is ultimately ours. Satan is doing all the harm he can while he can because he will not be able to do so for much longer.

REVELATION 12: 15-17 WAR BETWEEN SATAN AND THE WOMAN

This vision develops the theme of the persistent hostility Satan shows to the people of God. Since Jesus is safe from his hostility, Satan turns his attention to Israel and the church. The war in heaven seems to be an attempt to destroy Jesus. Unable to do this, the dragon turns his attention to Israel. The persecution of the church is not primarily of human origin; it is Satan's reaction to his defeat in heaven. Since his activity must now be confined to earth, he lashes out at those associated with his conqueror.

The woman is given the wings of the great eagle to flee to the wilderness to a place prepared for her. This same terminology is used of Israel's flight from Egypt. (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40:31)

God provides for the woman for 42 months (note the 42 stages of wilderness wanderings (Numbers 33:5). During this period, the woman is secure in hiding and inaccessible to Satan in some way.

The woman found an unexpected ally in the earth, which swallowed up the river emitted by the dragon. God uses His creation to help His people. Since the woman's son was not vulnerable to attack, the dragon vents his rage on the remainder of her offspring--the Christians. He is not able to accomplish his purpose against God and therefore, he does what he can in opposing God's people.

As Revelation chapter 13 opens, we see the dragon standing on the shore of the sea. The sea is usually symbolic of peoples (Daniel 7:2,3; Revelation 17:1,15).

The beast in Revelation refers to an antichrist, the earthly head of an evil kingdom as well as a supernatural spirit out of the abyss.

Beasts as symbols mean either a kingdom or a king, as well as supernatural powers which control the kingdom.

Who is the beast? We don't know and won't until he is revealed by making a covenant with Israel for seven years (Daniel 9:27)

Where does he come from? Daniel helps answer this question. See Daniel 2:31-44; Daniel 7:23-25; Daniel 7:7,8. It seems that the beast comes from part of a revived Roman Empire of some sort, but comes on the scene after the empire is already in place.

Sensational writings that try to predict the antichrist cause confusion and guessing is better left out. The purpose of Daniel 8 compared to Daniel 7 seems to be to narrow down the geographic origins of the antichrist from the ten kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire to four of them. Many interpret the passages from Daniel to mean that antichrist will come from Syria, Greece, Turkey, or Egypt.

How long will he reign? He will reign over one of the ten kingdoms from the beginning of the last 7 years, but over all ten kingdoms only the last three and a half years. (Revelation 13:5; Daniel 7:25; 12:7).

In the last 3 1/2 years he will exalt himself above all Gods (Revelation 13:4-18; Daniel 8:25; 11:36-45; 2 Thessalonians 2:4)

Where will he reign? The last 3 1/2 years will be in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Only when antichrist becomes head of the ten kingdoms by the middle of the week will he set up a central throne.

Where does he get his power? From Satan and by consent of the other kings; but God must permit Satan and his agents to give their power to the beast (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12; Revelation 13:1,2)

As we read Revelation 13, we are struck by the fact that Satan has set up a fake trinity. He has always wanted to have the place of the Father. Now, he has set up a fake (anti) christ and a fake holy spirit. (Revelation 13:11-18). As you read through Revelation 13, write the roles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and compare them to the roles of the false trinity that Satan will establish in the end times: _____

THE 144,000 AND THE FINAL PLAGUES Revelation 14, 15

While chapter 13 deals with forces of evil, chapter 14 turns to the triumph of the Lamb.

In verse 1, John sees 144,000 (12,000 from each tribe) with names written on their foreheads. These contrast with the followers of the beast who have his name on their foreheads or right hand. Mount Zion is sometimes associated with deliverance. Read Joel 2:32 and record what you learn: _____

God's people are finally triumphant.

Some believe earthly Zion is referred to, in which case the reference is to the millennial reign. It is interesting to notice that the Lamb stands on a mountain, whereas the beast stood only on the sands of the shore. Notice that the 144,000 were sealed and now 144,000 are with the Lamb; not one that Jesus sealed was lost.

In Revelation 14:2, John hears an unidentified voice from heaven. The voice was impressive, described with a threefold simile:

**roar of rushing waters
peal of loud thunder
harpists playing**

The voice was loud, melodious, and pleasing.

In verse 3, the new song is identified, as sung before the throne, so presumably before God and the Father. We do not understand why only the 144,000 could learn the song, but since they are redeemed from the earth, there seems to be some connection. Without the experience of redemption, perhaps the song could not be learned.

Revelation 13:4 refers to the fact that the 144,000 did not defile themselves with women.

This is surprising if the 144,000 is taken to mean the whole church, both men and women; it is also surprising because the New Testament does not regard proper sexual relations as defiling. The most the New Testament writers imply is

that there are some areas of service that may be better carried out by the unmarried. Some suggest that the 144,000 had no improper sexual relations, some that they were virgins. Perhaps the reference to virginity is used as symbolism. Virginity is ascribed to the people of God in the Old Testament. Read 2 Kings 19:21; Jeremiah 18:13; Lamentations 2:13 and record what you learn: _____

Unfaithfulness to God is like improper sexual relations (Ezekiel 16; Hosea 5:4).

Paul also described the church as the bride of Christ saying, "**I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.**" (2 Corinthians 11:2)

Later the bride, the wife of the Lamb, is presented. The marriage is at a future time, so the bride must be kept chaste. The symbolism probably means that the 144,000 were not unfaithful to the Lord; they glorified God in their bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

The second point about the redeemed is that they follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They cannot and do not lay down the place of service; the Lamb leads and they follow.

The third point is that they were purchased from among men as first fruits

(The correct translation is not offered). From among men means that they no longer belong to the world. Firstfruits were the first part of the harvest and were holy in a special sense; they could not be used in ordinary secular use because they belonged to God. Read Exodus 23:19, Nehemiah 10:35, and Proverbs 3:9 and record what you learn: _____

Obviously, the point of belonging to God is primary. James sees the church as a "kind of first fruits of all he created," (James 1:18) and it must be something like that John has in mind.

The church belongs to God; her calling is consecrated to Him.

Revelation 14: 5 indicates that truthfulness is a characteristic of the church: "no lie" is found with them. These are summed up as blameless, even rejecting the lie of the anti-christ.

REVELATION 14 THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH

This is the final of the seven signs. In itself, it is sevenfold. Seven angels either proclaim judgment or take part in bringing it to pass. The final scene ends in a terrible picture of the earth covered in blood. We can consider the messages from the three angels and the voice from heaven as an interlude between the sixth and seventh signs, just as the interludes between the sixth and seventh seals and trumpets.

As three angels in succession proclaim judgment, the saints are assured once more that the triumph of evil will be short-lived. God is bringing judgment on evil in His time.

Revelation 14:6 refers to "another angel" and it is hard to determine where a first angel occurred in this sequence. This angel proclaims the eternal gospel. This is the only reference to the gospel in the book of Revelation.

Compare this with Mark 13: 10 and record what you learn: _____

This is the last appeal for repentance for those who are about to be judged. "Eternal" points to a message that is permanently valid; the phrases "those who live on the earth" and "every nation" show the universality of the gospel.

The angel in a loud voice speaking to all mankind, calling on them to fear God. The angel's message is not negative; he calls on people to give glory to God.

In verse 8, a second angel announces that Babylon has fallen. The aorist tense marks completed action. There is the feeling of imminence and certainty. There is absolutely no doubt.

This is the first of several mentions of Babylon (16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) In every case, Babylon is referred to as "great." The first time the Bible mentions Babylon (Genesis 11:9) we find that after the flood, people tried to reach to heaven by building a tower; thus Babylon stands for the pride of mankind and for the heathen city-empire.

Babylon is a great city and the symbol of mankind together opposed to the things of god. John is looking forward to the overthrow of all evil that Babylon stands for, especially the perverted religious activities. The reason for her fall is that she has been a bad influence, corrupting them with her evil ways, and this has brought down the wrath of God on the nations.

In verses 9 and 10, a third angel speaks, also with a loud voice. He is addressing those who worship the beast and his image and bear his mark. These will face divine wrath. John uses both "thymos" meaning fury, and "orge" meaning anger. Besides here, "thymos" is used of divine anger only once. It is the more vivid of the two words and occurs often in Revelation (12:12; 14:8,10,19; 15:1; 16:1,19; 18:3; 19:15).

The wine of God's wrath is poured out full strength. The word for poured really means "mixed" and was used for preparing wine for drinking by mixing with spices, water, or other additives. It is John's way of saying the wrath is mixed, but not diluted; there is no mitigation; the effect is torment with burning sulfur.

Here on earth, sinners may rejoice over evil deeds; in hell they suffer for them.

This takes place in the "presence of the holy angels and the Lamb." Christians who suffered for their faith did so in the presence of onlookers; ultimately these tormentors are punished in the presence of more impressive spectators.

Revelation 14:11 further pictures the torment from verse 10 as eternal. These have no rest "day or night." They contrast with the four living ones who worship unceasingly (4:8). John spells out the identity of the sufferers, "those who worship the beast and his image and anyone who receives the mark of his name." John is not gloating over the suffering of the wicked. He has a serious purpose. People must deal with ultimate reality.

It is these realities that sustain the people of God (verse 12). They must pass through trouble, but these are temporary where those of the wicked are eternal. Such values lead to peace.

A SHORT INTERLUDE: THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD (14:13)

This is a little interlude that details the blessedness of those who die in Christ. Our natural tendency is to think of Revelation 8:3-5. This may be in mind here. John sees the judgment as God 's final answer to the prayers of the saints. This angel has "charge of the fire," an unusual expression. This is also associated with judgment, but also with the altar of incense. The angel is commanded to gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, adding that they are ripe. The word for sickle is "drepanon" which also means "pruning-knife." Cross reference to Joel 3:13 and record what you learn: _____

In 14:19, the angel obeys and reaps the earth, hurling what he gathers into the "great winepress of God's wrath" in a vivid description of the judgment of the wicked.

Verse 20 does not specify who treads the winepress nor the city where it takes place. Cross reference to Isaiah 63:3 and Hebrews 13:12 and record what you learn: _____

The concern is to show that mankind is destroyed.

Chapter 15 of Revelation deals with the introduction of the final seven plagues, known as the "bowl judgments."

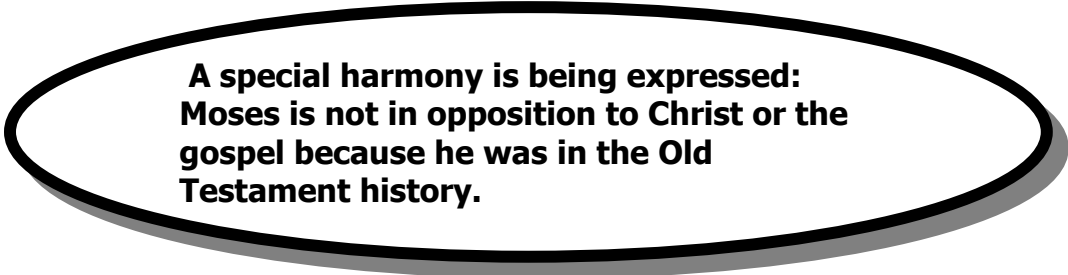
The book of Revelation takes us through God's judgments. There have been seven seals and seven trumpets. Now we begin with imagery of seven angels pouring out contents of seven bowls. This time there is clear knowledge of finality. Chapter 5 was an introduction to the seals; chapter 8:1-5 was an introduction to the trumpets Chapter 15 is an introduction to the bowl judgments.

Revelation 15:1 opens with a sign described as "great and marvelous." No other sign is described in this way. The word for plague is general, from a root meaning "blow" or "stroke," it has come to mean misfortune. There is an air of finality.

In verse 2, John's understatement again begins as he sees what is "like" a sea of glass, mixed with fire. The fire may be meaning that the context deals with wrath or judgment. The red glow on the sea spoke of the fire through which the martyrs passed and more about the wrath that was coming on all of the world. **This is a heavenly red sea!**

Those who had obtained victory triumphed over the beast. Real victory is not to live in safety, carefully preserving life. Real victory is to face the worst that evil can do, and triumph over it, even if such faithfulness leads to death.

These triumphant ones stand on or by (Greek "epi" can mean either) the glassy sea and are given harps (by God); these victors enjoy their triumph because of what God has done for them. In verse 3, they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb



**A special harmony is being expressed:
Moses is not in opposition to Christ or the
gospel because he was in the Old
Testament history.**

Paul spoke of the law as bringing us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Moses is a "servant of God"--a theme prevalent in prophecy, particularly Isaiah. Exodus imagery comes to mind because of the deliverance under Moses and its relationship to that completed by the Lamb. The words "the song of" are repeated and some exegetes understand this to mean two songs; one the song of Moses (see Exodus 15) and the other the song of the Lamb. Most commentators think there is one song with both names.

The song is made up of almost all Old Testament expressions, showing parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry. It calls God's words "great and marvelous." (Psalms 92:5; 139:14). The inhabitants of the world have wondered at the beast and his powers. In reality, God is wonderful and powerful, and is thus hailed as Lord God Almighty. His power is incomparable.

From power, the description moves to justice, showing God's ways as "just and true." (1 John 1:6) God is called King of the ages (or nations). The number of times God's sovereignty is mentioned implies its exceeding importance in these days. In verse 4, the view of God's greatness leads to the question. The name represents all of God. There are three statements ending with "for."

❖ **The first declares God to be "holy.' The word is "hosios"**

used only here and in 16:5 in all Revelation. It means perfect purity.

- ❖ **The second statement predicts that all nations will worship before God.**
- ❖ **The third concerns God's "dikaiomata." Many translate this as righteous acts but better might be "righteous judgments." The word implies legal acts and here it relates to judicial sentences of God on the nations by way of mercy or condemnation.**

**In the end, God's judicial sentences
will be known by everyone.**

The song is sung by the victors; there is no word about themselves or how they overcame. All of their attention is fixed on Christ. Heaven is heaven because all self and self-importance are lost in the presence of the greatness and glory of God.

In Revelation 15:5, the "temple of the tent of witness" is an expression found only here, but the Greek is a translation of the Old Testament "tent of meeting," or tabernacle.

In verse 6, the sanctuary is opened and there come out the seven angels with seven plagues. These must be seen as having the full knowledge and authority of God because they come from the Holy of Holies.

It is unusual for the appearance of angels to be described in Revelation, so we must note this: they are clothed in "clean, shining linen."

The word for linen (linon) is not usual for a garment, and some believe it is a variant of "lithon" which means stone. This is possible in the sense in which the king of Tyre is described "every precious stone adorned you. (Ezekiel 28: 13). Since the variation of "linon" is sometimes used for clothing this seems a better translation. The angels have gold sashes around their chests. A gold sash around the chest was worn by the high priests (who could go into the Holy of Holies) and by Jesus (our high priest). The sash is probably meant to mean that they can be in the presence of God. They appear spotless.

Those pouring out the wrath of God on the world are concerned with the rightness of their judgment. The judgments are not poured out with evil passion, but by messengers who are pure and from the very presence of God.

In verse 7, the bowls are given to the angels by one of the four living beings by the throne of God. This also shows that the plagues have divine sanctions. God, who lives forever and ever, contrasts with those receiving the plagues, who are "in time." The Greek for bowls is "phialas," the same word used of the container holding the prayers of the saints (5:8) and it is not impossible that they are connected. Revelation points out the fact that the prayers of God's people are important and may initiate divine judgments.

The last verse of chapter 15 indicates that the temple was filled with the smoke of the glory of God (see Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:20; Isaiah 6:4; Ezekiel 10:4; 44:4).

At this solemn moment, God's glory is especially manifested. With glory there is linked his power, which is obvious in this book filled with the might of the Lord.

John tells us that nobody "could enter the temple" (i.e. the sanctuary) until the seven plagues were completed."

He does not say that the smoke brought this about, though this may be the case. The main point is the inevitability of the plagues. When God's good time has come, nothing can stop His final judgment.

THE PROSTITUTE; THE SCARLET ANIMAL Revelation 16, 17

In chapter sixteen, the angels proceed to pour out their bowls on the earth, thus releasing the seven last plagues. These are described more succinctly than the other judgments; the first four relate to nature; an interlude between the sixth and seventh bowls is also similar.

There are some resemblances to the plagues of Egypt, just as their was with the trumpet judgments. There are also differences: the fourth is new; the rest are a new presentation. No suffering occurs in men as a result of the first five Egyptian plagues or by the first four trumpet visitations. Man is involved at the very beginning of this cycle. These judgments are not partial or tentative; they are punitive and decisive.

In Revelation 16:1, John hears a voice which he does not identify except to call it **LOUD**. The adjective precedes the noun in the Greek (usually it follows the noun) so there is emphasis on LOUD! The voice is from the temple, and so associated with God, whose voice it may be since no one could go into the sanctuary until these judgments were completed (15:8). This seems to exclude angels and others. If so, this must mean that the last plagues are released by God Himself.

The first angel went (Greek "apelthen" which means "went away") which seems to mean that they poured out their bowls and then disappeared from the scene. The first plague caused ugly and painful sores on those who had the mark of the beast or worshipped his image. There are some evils that afflict those who give themselves over to wickedness but do not affect other people.

The second angel poured his bowl on the sea which turned to blood "like that of a dead man." Compare with Exodus 7:17-21: _____

In the Greek, "like" precedes dead man, not blood; the word order is unusual. When the second trumpet was blown, something "like a mountain" was hurled into the sea and a third of the water became blood. Here there is no partial involvement; everything in the sea dies--expressed very unusually: "every living soul in the sea."

When the third trumpet was blown, the fresh waters were affected; this is the case with the third bowl. Here is an intensification. With the trumpet, one third were affected; now all are involved. Without water to drink, there is no future for the human race.

In Revelation 16:5, the term "angel of the waters" appears nowhere else. Jews believed angels to be responsible for specific areas of the universe. Jews would probably not be surprised by the expression. I Enoch 66:2, an apocryphal book, mentions "angels in charge of the waters."

This angel speaks of God as just and judging. The bowls are not arbitrary actions, but solemn judgment. God is described eternally; there is no "who is to come" for the consummation has arrived.

The "punishment fits the crime" theme is explicit in 16:6. These sinners shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and are given blood to drink. Those who shed the blood of Christians find themselves fighting one another and consequently shedding their own blood. The forces of evil are not a united front (17:16). There are hatreds and divisions among its members. "As they deserve" puts emphasis on justice.

Revelation 16:7 is the only place in Revelation where the altar is said to speak, although there was a voice from its horns. (9:13) The altar is connected with the prayers of the saints (8:3) which introduce the judgments of God (8:5). The angel who commanded that the earth be reaped came from the altar (14:18). Now the altar interjects its agreement with the angel.

The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun. There is no independent power in the sun; God gives it the power to scorch people. Previously, there have been signs in the sun restricting it in some way. This time, the sun becomes so fierce that people are scorched with fire. (contrast 7:16)

"Seared by the intense heat" emphasizes the effect. But, sinners cursed God's name and **did not repent**.

THERE IS NOW A CHANGE. The first four bowls relate to nature: land, sea, rivers, springs, the sun. The last three are political and take us to the powers of evil.

The fifth angel attacked the beast 's citadel--his throne--with curious results: the beast's kingdom was "plunged into darkness." Compare with Exodus 10:21-23:

The beast's followers "gnawed their tongues in agony." This is similar to the fifth trumpet where smoke came from the abyss and darkened the sun and locusts tortured people.

Read Revelation 16:11 and record the response of the people: _____

Sinners again react wrongly, blaspheming God. People did not recognize the majesty of heaven when they saw it, but were preoccupied with pain. Ulcers are singled out.

Again, people do not repent.

More is said about the sixth bowl than any of the first five: it prepares the way for the end.

The sixth angel pours his bowl on the Euphrates River, mentioned in the sixth trumpet with regard to four angels bound there. The Euphrates dried to make way for the kings from the East. A mighty act of God is frequently associated with drying up of waters (Red Sea, Exodus 14:21; the Jordan, Joshua 3:16-17; Isaiah 11:15; Jeremiah 51:36; Zechariah 10:11). When Cyrus captured Babylon, he marched into the city across the drained bed of the Euphrates. A new Babylon is soon to be destroyed, and the drying of the river marks the removal of the last obstacle.

The Euphrates was the boundary of the Roman Empire; for Christians of John's time, the area beyond was unknown. John is suggesting that in the end, all the fears of what was "beyond" will be realized. After indicating that the way is cleared, John does not actually say that the kings used them.

In Revelation 16:13-16, John now sees three evil spirits come from the mouth of the dragon, the beast and false prophet. The dirty spirits are like frogs. Compare with Exodus 8:3: _____

Frogs have evil as well as magical associations. These spirits are like the "lying spirit" who was to entice Ahab into battle (I Kings 22:21). Instead of enticing one man, they enticed the world.

These demonic spirits work miraculous signs, with meaning. They go to the kings of the world and their influence is exerted on rulers. This doesn't bring about the day of "rulers of this world" or "evil spirits," but the **GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY!** Read 2 Peter 3:12: _____

The story of the bowls is interrupted by the warning that a ready man would "have his clothes with him." This seems to imply that the fate from which he is kept is of walking naked and his shame being seen. Elsewhere garments stand

for God's sentence of justification. We would not be God's people without them. Believers caught unprepared will be ashamed at a critical time.

The dirty spirits gather the kings of earth to Armageddon. This is a Hebrew word, most believed to be from "harmigiddo" or the "city of Megiddo."

Many biblical events happened on the plain of Esraelon. Mountain of Megiddo might be a closer translation, and Old Testament verses look for an ultimate battle near mountains (Ezekiel 39:1, Daniel 11:45) but there are no mountains near Megiddo although it is situated on a great mound.

The climax comes with the seventh bowl. This speaks of utter destruction. It does not say all people will be killed, but this bowl completes the fragmentation of life.

In Revelation 16:17-21, the seventh angel poured his bowl on the air, which was held to be the abode of demons (9:2). The evil spirits are being attacked in their own element. John heard another loud voice coming from the temple and throne, saying, "**it is done.**"

This announcement caused excitement as after the seventh trumpet (11:19). There is an earthquake greater than any other.

The great city may stand for civilized man, ordering affairs apart from God, symbolizing the pride of human achievement and the vanity of putting trust in man. The city is shattered into thirds and God visits wrath on the city. There is no doubt that Babylon will receive the worst possible judgment from God.

John describes what happened as a result of the splitting of the city. The mountains disappeared and islands fled away.

Compare with Zechariah 14: 10 and record what you learn: _____

A great hailstorm (45-100 pounds) occurs next.

Again, the people blasphemed God.

As chapter 17 opens, the focus shifts to the triumph of God over his enemies. Until now, the emphasis has been on God's sovereignty. Here the focus is the

end time, the overthrow of evil. God casts down each stronghold, and the wicked are judged.

God is completely triumphant.

The Judgment of the great whore: The chapter opens with a description of this prostitute, identified with Babylon; she is translated in many ways: organized man apart from God polluted religion men separated from God by unholy practices. The woman is clearly of earthly splendor, but evil and opposed to God's people. The chapter introduces the judgment of the prostitute that is seen in the next chapter. Sexual promiscuity in the Old Testament is used in more than one way. People of God are seen as His bride so unfaithfulness is likened to adultery (Jeremiah 3:9; Ezekiel 16:32). The prophets sometimes think of this as habitual and mercenary. Isaiah said, "see how the faithful city has become a harlot." (Isaiah 1:21). This is a way of describing sin that is first and foremost sin against God's love.

Another way the symbolism is used is describing idolatrous world powers as harlots (Tyre in Isaiah 23:16-17) and Nineveh (Nahum 3:4). They are not called adulteresses because they are not God's people--they are prostitute. This would imply that John is not speaking of people of God, but a secular power.

The prostitute "sits on many waters." If the woman symbolizes a city, this might refer to water or seagoing commerce. Babylon is addressed as "you who live by many waters." (Jeremiah 51:13), which immediately calls to mind the Euphrates flowing through Babylon. But the Old Testament uses streams or rivers to refer to people (Isaiah 8:7-8; 23:10; Jeremiah 46:7, 47:2; Ezekiel 29:10). This is the apparent meaning here, though there are many interpretations.

The kings of the earth obviously value the city for trade and commerce, which John describes as "fornication" with the prostitute. The inhabitants of earth are intoxicated by the prostitute and sin spreads throughout the people, although they seem happy with this system.

Until now, the angel had talked about the prostitute, but now she is described. John is in the wilderness (opposite of the city). In detachment, God's people can see the prostitute for what she is; in proximity they are blinded to her essential nature. (the frog in the kettle syndrome.)

John sees the prostitute riding a "scarlet" beast. (13:1). The woman is closely associated with evil and supported by the beast. Red is the color of the dragon, but this beast is "scarlet" from "kokkinon", a dye made from insects. It was a worldly color of splendor, but a biblical color of sin. Blasphemy is characteristic

of the beast (13:1,5,6), but here the beast is said to be "covered" with it. This is blasphemy to the "nth degree."

The woman was royally robed--purple was extracted from murex, a shell fish and the process was expensive. She was lavishly adorned (gilded points to gold). The woman also has a gold cup, but it is filled with abominable things. The cup entices people to join the evil ways of the harlot--seducing them from God. There is regal standing, but moral corruption.

The harlot has her name on her forehead--"mystery" indicates that the meaning of her name is not obvious to everyone. The angel reveals it.

The first part is Babylon, the mother of prostitutes--she spawns evil like her own. She is linked with "abominations of the earth" and "drunk with the blood of the saints". She had not slain a couple of saints, but many and the implication is that she enjoyed the process. Drunk is the present participle in Greek; this is a continuing state.

Having shown John the harlot and the beast, the angel proceeds to explain their meaning. It evolves that the beast is more important than the woman, but their mystery is together.

❖ **First the beast is explained: some symbolism may have dual meaning--the beast is ruler and/or kingdom; a henchman of Satan. The beast once was, now is not, and is to come. This demonic spirit thus previously existed in some other kingdom or ruler. At the time John wrote, the beast was not in existence, but would return. He will come up from the abyss (9: 1) and "go to destruction."**

Unregenerate man does not see that evil will not triumph and will be astonished. John is not speaking of truth that everyone will understand. The seven heads are seven hills. This may identify her with Rome (or seven empires). Some believe this to be the Catholic church, but more likely it refers to the center of religious sin. The harlot always opposes the bride, the new Jerusalem. The seven heads are seven kings. These are undoubtedly the seven empires discussed earlier as conquerors of Israel.

Five of these empires have fallen; they are past. (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece). One is (Rome was in power at the time John wrote). The seventh had not yet come and would reign in the future. The eighth is "one of the seven". This means that the antichrist may arise from one of the ancient seats of government and is certainly one of the seven renewed in some way.

The eighth is equated with the seven--heads of the beast. We can make no firm identification, but we know that he is going to destruction.

REFER TO YOUR SHEETS ON "CONQUERORS OF ISRAEL"

The beast's horns are ten kings who haven't received a kingdom. These ten "hate the prostitute". They are antichrist's helpers but oppose the prostitute's worldly system. Some scholars thus believe that the prostitute represents the worldly church and its complex legalism and the Antichrist hates the Christianity she supposedly represents. True Christians hate her hypocrisy.

These ten, who receive authority for one hour (short time), are associated with the antichrist; receive authority with the beast and do not reign in their own might. They are not independent thinkers--they work for the beast. John sees them warring against the Lamb, against whose troops they are powerless. The Lamb has chosen, faithful people who work for Him.

- ❖ **The final section shows the disunity of evil forces--there is no cohesion in evil; it self-destructs. There is hatred between the horns and the prostitute--they bring her to ruin and strip her resources. This shows the beast's treachery in destroying the prostitute he was sustaining.**

THE FALL OF BABYLON AND THE WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB Revelation 18, 19

In vivid language, John outlines the judgment of the great city. There are many coincidences of language with the description of the fall of Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28) and that of Babylon (Isaiah 13: 14, 21; Jeremiah 50:51). But we are missing the point if we conclude that John is only denouncing contemporary Rome or Babylon.

**As Byron could say, when falls
the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
when Rome falls--the world.**

It is something of this character that John has in mind. He is summarizing all that the prophets have said announcing the doom of Tyre or Babylon or Nineveh; but he is really describing the collapse of civilization. Final judgment will ultimately mean the overthrow of everything that is in opposition to God.

Events of Chapter 18 are set in motion by an angel with authority--one of the few places where angels are thus described, although elsewhere authority is "given". This angel is particularly important because he also has splendor that shines like light over the earth (Ezekiel 43:2). The angel tells us that John's vantage point is earth.

"Ischyros" is used to describe the angel's mighty voice, although in 19:6 it refers to the voice of mighty thunderings. In 5:2, 10:1, 18:21 angels speak with "great" (megale) voices. The city's doom is future but is spoken of as if accomplished. There are three areas of desolation:

- ❖ **HOME FOR DEMONS**
- ❖ **HAUNT FOR EVIL SPIRITS**
- ❖ **HAUNT FOR UNCLEAR AND DETESTABLE BIRDS.**

Birds such as this usually choose deserted places. We should note that the Old Testament says Babylon became the habitation of strange creatures (Isaiah 13:21-22; Jeremiah 51:37).

The city is desolate because of her sin in corrupting others. These kings may have become wealthy by trade with the harlot, as had the various merchants.

Because they will be persecuted, God's people may be tempted to come to terms with the city. However, compromise with worldliness is fatal. God's people must hold themselves apart from what is in mind here.

The next voice seems to belong to God, but the following verse doesn't seem to come from God, although the speaker seems to be the same. An angel could be quoting God. The call to God's people is important because John wants people to understand the urgency of the situation. John is not gloating over the city's downfall; he is appealing to believers to see reality and act accordingly.

In 18:5, John sees the sins of the city as a pile that reaches to heaven (the word translated "piled up" really means "glued together.") From the standpoint of the church, it may seem that evil men are prevailing; from God's standpoint, this is not so. See Genesis regarding a tower that reaches to heaven and note its location.

Verse 6 addresses those carrying out judgment. They are commanded to do to the city what she has done to others. **"Give" is "apodote" and means recompense.** It is not sufficient to simply repay; but it must be double. She has mixed a cup for others and must drink it double strength.

The voice describes torment in proportion to the way the city gave itself glory and luxury. There had been a deep-seated attitude--maybe one which the city was unaware of--as being supreme over all. She is no "widow" (see Isaiah 47:78).

However, 18:8 tells us that the punishment is taking place in "one day." There is no warning or delay. Four plagues are singled out. Death should end everything. This may mean that some die in the city, but the city may continue for a while. Death could be translated "pestilence." There is mourning, famine and fire. The power of God must not be overlooked. This is not an arbitrary happening. God inflicts on the city earned judgment.

Earth's rulers are distressed by the city's fate, because they have been associates in the city. They watch the city burn.

However, verse 10 tells us that earth's rulers are afraid and keep their distance. **Note that no one can stand against the judgment of the Lord--the kings apparently recognize the justice of the situation.**

The merchants join in, wailing (not silent weeping). The verbs are present tense--no one buys their cargo anymore. Their distress seems to be caused by financial loss, not care for the city.

**John gives a list of cargo which cannot be sold:
gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine clothes,
special woods, ivory and expensive wood products.**

The list continues with spices, food and drink, animals, and people. Many great world empires have had traffic in the souls of men.

The city is addressed and informed that her luxuries are things of the past. The fruit and riches and splendor are gone forever.

Those with a vested interest in the city mourn--but no one approaches to help. They speak of a double "woe".

Like the kings, the merchants see destruction in one hour. The wealth was quickly brought to ruin.

The seafarers mourn--but again from a distance. The city seems to have brought profit to many, but was loved by none.

The kings mourn in the future tense; the merchants in both present and future; the seafarers in the imperfect.

Revelation 18:19 tells us that the sailors carry their mourning farther--they throw dust on their heads and express the double "woe" on the city and the suddenness of destruction. They, like the merchants, are distressed by loss of profit. From the forces of evil, the focus changes to good. First, the righteous make a call for rejoicing and a vow to overthrow the city. This is not a vindictive outcry. It is a longing for justice.

**The hearers have staked their lives on the truth
of Christianity. These are passionate cries
from the conviction that right will triumph.**

The throwing of a great stone into the sea is symbolic and recalls Jeremiah's action in having a stone attached to a book thrown into the Euphrates.

Revelation 18:22-24 list things that will no longer be heard or done in the city follows: The city had fostered arts, but they will cease. Likewise, craftsmanship and routine daily activities like grinding will cease. There is a finality about "will never be heard in you again." John is picturing the cessation of all life

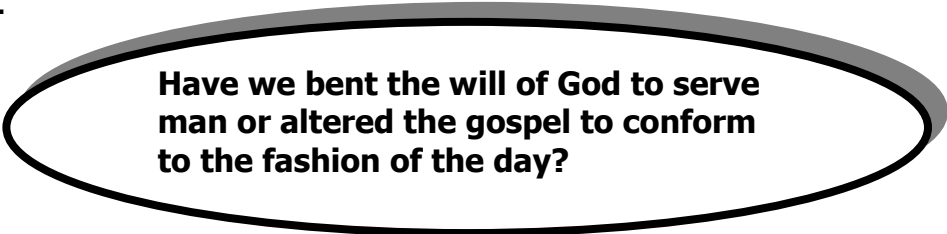
in the great city. Lamps will no longer shine; marriage will cease. Deception apparently occurred in connection with magic.

In verse 21, Babylon was spoken of in the third person. Now the third person appears again. The blood of God's people was found here--"all who have been killed on the earth." This is an argument for taking "the great city" symbolically. There is no real city of which this could be said.

Chapter 19 opens with thanksgiving in Heaven at the conclusion of God's judgments.

The singers of 19:1 are not named. They sing a song that begins "hallelujah!" which means "praise God." The word is found four times here (1,3,4,6) and not again in the New Testament. This is the only passage in the English Bible where Hallelujah occurs.

The overthrow of Babylon is not described in terms of power, but judgment--justice. We need to examine our lives and see where we have committed adultery with alien ideologies, pagan doctrines, false principles and deceitful practices.



**Have we bent the will of God to serve
man or altered the gospel to conform
to the fashion of the day?**

Again, the throng praised God--it is not clear whether the smoke of the city portion is part of the song or a description. This song closes one age and opens another.

In 19:4, we see the inhabitants of heaven join the praise. The 24 elders and 4 living beings prostrate themselves and worship. They say two words "amen," indicating their assent, and "hallelujah," the word of praise.

The speaker of 19:5 is not named, but comes from the throne and is probably speaking on behalf of God. The voice calls on God's people to join in the praise. All are encouraged to participate. The triumph of the servants of God is portrayed in the scene of the heavenly marriage--the church is seen as the bride of Christ.

Note the use of "like" in 19:6-8. The voice is powerful and musical and begins with praise. God reigns, and all should rejoice and be glad. The marriage of the Lamb is about to take place.

The imagery is used elsewhere--Isaiah 54:6; Ezekiel 16:8; Hosea 2:14 and marriage symbolism is in the gospels (Matthew 22:2; 25:1). Read these verses and record what you learn: _____

The song affirms that the bride is given fine linen, bright and clean in contrast to the harlot (17:4, 18:16)--the linen represents righteousness. This may mean "righteous acts;" however, "dikaionoma" never is used elsewhere to mean this. The plural indicates that many individuals are involved. The white robes are the result of being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

In Revelation 19:9-10, those invited to the wedding supper are described in terms of their call. John began to worship but is stopped because only God should be worshipped. The angel belongs to those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus." It is unclear if this means that "the testimony which Jesus bore" or the "testimony borne to Jesus" is the intent.

The victory is won and the power of evil is broken. Now John introduces a vision of a fighter. The vision of the "Word of God" leaves no doubt as to the final reign of the risen Lord.

John saw heaven standing open and a white horse (symbolizing victory). John gives a detailed description.

- ❖ **First, the name expresses the character of the person, "faithful and true."** His deeds are in righteousness--the present tense points to the continuing action.
- ❖ **The fact that He makes war is comforting when we need a strong helper.**
- ❖ **His eyes are "like blazing fire," searching out all things.**
- ❖ **He has many crowns** (diademata--crowns of royalty)-widespread dominion.
- ❖ He has a name that only He knows--there are hidden depths that we cannot understand. In John's day, those who practiced black magic believed that knowing one's name gave you power over the one named.

In 19:13, "is dressed" and "dipped" are both perfect tense and indicate permanency. This is a reference to the cross where Christ overcame by shedding His blood.

For a third time, a reference is made to His name--"the Word of God." This is the only place in scripture where the full expression "the word of God" is applied to Christ (John 1: 1; 1 John 1: 1).

Heaven's armies follow, on white horses. Their clothing resembles the bride's but "leukon" means "white" rather than "lampron" which meant "bright." These are probably angels. Although called armies, there is no mention of weapons, and they are not said to fight.

A "sharp sword" comes from His mouth (**note it is not called double edged**). He will rule with an iron scepter, showing his absolute authority. He will both "rule" and "tread." There is now a fourth reference to His name, on His robe and thigh. Everyone can see this. (Psalm 45:3 says a sword girded on the thigh;) this may be a way of saying the sword is the Word. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" refers to Jesus as supreme ruler.

The beast and his helpers are now overthrown.

One angel stands in the sun from which to control the -birds to whom he speaks. This meal contrasts with the marriage supper. No one is excluded from this defeat.

In Revelation 19:19-21, we see the forces of evil array themselves for a last struggle with good. The beast heads the army, along with earth's kings. Nothing is said about the battle. The beast and false prophet were captured and thrown into the lake of fire. All that they stood for was destroyed, and their followers were killed by the sword from Christ's mouth.

The "Word" destroyed them.

THE MILLENNIUM; NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH Revelation 20, 21, 22

From the beast of chapter 19, John turns his attention to Satan, who is being seized by an angel and cast into the abyss for 1000 years. This chapter has been disputed by interpreters for years, and evangelicals have split over it as well. Therefore, it is important to approach it with humility and respect.

There are three positions with regard to Christ's return:

PRE-MILLENNIALISM: Christ's return is before the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth. After this, Satan will be released for a time.

POST-MILLENNIALISM: Christ's return occurs at the end of the millennium, which is sometimes seen as representing the triumph of the gospel in this present age and sometimes regarded as a literal 1000 year reign at the end of time.

A-MILLENNIALISM: There is no literal millennium; the 1000 year period is symbolical and stands for the time between the life of Jesus on earth and his second coming.

As we begin chapter 20, John says nothing about a time sequence. The final unimportance of Satan is shown by the fact that not Father or Christ deals with him, but only an unnamed angel. The angel had the key to the abyss and a chain. This must be symbolic since a spirit cannot be confined by chains. Satan is called all four names given him in Revelation: dragon, ancient serpent, devil, and Satan. Satan is restrained for 1000 years in an abyss which is locked and sealed. This was not for punishment because that comes later; however it was so he would be removed from the earth.

FIRST RESURRECTION: Attention is turned to those who suffered for the sake of the gospel of Jesus, who reign through the millennium.

John sees thrones, although he doesn't say where. John uses the word throne forty-seven times and except for Satan's throne (2:13) and the beast's throne (13:2) all seem to be in heaven. John doesn't indicate how many sufferers there are or whether they are sitting on the thrones. These are given authority to judge (the Greek may mean they "serve justice." The word "beheaded" literally means "killed with an axe." The word is probably a general term for execution.

These came to life "ezesan", which isn't a word usually used for resurrection. It seems to mean that the martyrs, though slain, live on in heaven with Christ; not only living but reigning for a thousand years.

The martyrs are differentiated from others who are dealt with separately. The pre-millennial view assumes that a first resurrection implies a second--others believe the two are different sorts. It is a blessing to have part in the first resurrection because the second death has no power over such people--they are priests of God and of Christ and reign for 1000 years.

At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released. John does not say if an angel also sets him free, but he will resume his prior activities, and on a grander scale.

He will gather the nations for a final battle (Gog and Magog probably mean "all people.") Gog is mentioned in I Chronicles 5:4, Ezekiel 38-39, and here. Magog is found in Genesis 10:2; 1 Chronicles 1:5, Ezekiel 38-39, and here. Gog seems to have come from Magog, and in Judaism are sometimes thought of as two leaders. In apocalyptic writing they symbolize the forces of evil. John is referring to hosts of wicked. He has in mind the last great attack of evil on God's people.

John strangely turns to the past tense in 20: 9. The "breadth of earth" may mean the armies are large. They encircled the camp of saints, which may also be the beloved city. John is picturing evil hosts taking up threatening positions over the servants of God. A great battle is expected, but isn't recorded. John goes instead to the destruction of the wicked with fire from heaven.

Satan is here referred to as he who deceived, and is thrown into the lake of burning sulfur to join the beast and false prophet, to suffer day and night for eternity--there seems to be no end to this phase of Satan's existence.

WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

Here we see the dead judged, and death and Hades being overthrown. There is a great white throne--Paul refers to the judgment seat of Christ. Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 and record what you learn: _____

Read also John 5:22 _____

The dead must all stand before the throne; no one is excepted. Books are opened and the deeds of people are recorded therein. There is another book,

the book of life containing the names of those given eternal life. The dead were judged according to what was written according to what they had done. But salvation was not theirs if their name was not in the book of life.

Separate mention is given the sea, death, and Hades as giving up the dead. All dead, wherever or however they died, are included. Some believe this judgment is only for the wicked; some believe it is for all people and believers are given rewards according to their deeds in this judgment.

Death and Hades are now also thrown into the lake of fire. This means that they are ultimately powerless against God.

Being cast into the lake is the "second death."

Chapter twenty ends with the affirmation that anyone whose name wasn't in the book of life was thrown into the lake.

Chapters 21 and 22 deal with the new heaven and earth, the result of the renovation by fire. From here onward, John sees only those things from the new order. Here is some of what is seen:

- ❖ **People are called upon to rejoice**
- ❖ **Jerusalem is created for rejoicing**
- ❖ **God rejoices in his people in the New Jerusalem**
- ❖ **Righteousness dwells here forever**
- ❖ **There is no more death, sorrow, crying or pain**

Compare with 2 Peter 3:10-13: _____

Compare also with Isaiah 25:8 _____

The voice from the throne saying "behold, I make all things new" proves that all things are not done away with but some merely renewed--they cannot cease to exist and also be renewed.

The New Jerusalem is fresh and new in character--applying to eternal things that need no renovation. Everything in the presence of God is fresh by His very presence. The actual age of the city is not known, but it could have been created with the heavens and earth in the beginning because it is the location of the throne of God, which has been established since the heavens were created. (Ps. 11:4; 93:2; 103:19; Isaiah 6:1, 66:1; Rev. 4:210; 5:1-13; 7:9-17; 8:3; 22:1-

Its hope existed in Abraham's day because God promised him and the Old Testament saints the city (Hebrews 11:9-11, 14-16). The New Jerusalem was prepared by God and comes from heaven to earth to be the eternal city and dwelling place for God and His people.

The light of the city radiates the glory of God. The wall of the city has three gates on each of the four sides (see Ezekiel 48:30--35).

The twelve gates have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The walls have twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles. (Matthias was numbered with the eleven apostles)

The various dimensions are interpreted by some to mean that the city is a cube; by others that it is a "mountain-like" peak. The streets are "plateia" which, means "broad." There are mansions and other buildings as well. The streets are paved with gold that seems to be transparent and are the same material of the buildings of the city.

God and the Lamb are the sanctuary for all peoples in the eternal state. However, there seems to be a literal temple as well. The light of the city will surpass the light of the sun, moon, and stars.

See Isaiah 30:26 for information on the sun and moon during the millennium.

It seems that others can do business with the New Jerusalem, but cannot enter it. There is an abundance of water (rivers and living fountains). There seem to be wide roads that lead from the twelve gates and there is a river and tree of life is either associated with each, or all lead to the one tree of life.

The book concludes with a confirmation of the revelation (22:8,9). These writings are said to be "faithful and true."

John also reveals the mistake of worshipping an angel again (Rev. 22:8,9). J

John was told not to seal the prophecy of the book, and is given a warning against adding or taking away from what the book says (Revelation 22:10-19).

Lastly, Jesus confirms to John that **He will come again.** (Revelation 22:20,21).

REVELATION OUTLINE

Introduction (1:1-11,19)

- I. Things which you have seen:
 - a. Vision of Christ (1:12-18)
 - b. Symbols of the Vision interpreted (1:20)

- II. Things which are:
 - a. Seven churches

- III. Things which will be hereafter (4:1- 22:5)
 - a. Door (4: 10)
 - b. Throne (4:2, 3, 5)
 - c. Elders (4:4)
 - d. Sea of Glass (4:6)
 - e. Living creatures (4:6-8)
 - f. Worship because of creation (4:9-11)
 - g. Book (5:1-4)
 - h. Worship because of worthiness of the Lamb (5:8-14)

- IV. The Seventieth Week (6:1-19:21)
 - a. First six seals (6:1-17)
 - b. Seventh seal and six trumpets (8:1-9:21)
 - c. Seventh trumpet (11:14 - 13:18)
 - d. First six vials (15:1 - 16:12)
 - e. Seventh vial (16:17 - 18:24)
 - f. Marriage of the Lamb, second coming, Armageddon (19:1-21)

- V. The Millennium
 - a. Expulsion of Satan from earth
 - b. Millennial reign of Christ and the saints
 - c. Satan's post-millennial deeds and doom
 - c. Final judgment

- VI. The Conclusion
 - a. New heaven, earth (21:1)
 - b. New Jerusalem, new people (21:2-3, 9-21)
 - c. New conditions, new light, new paradise (21:4-27)
 - d. Confirmation of revelation (22:6,7)
 - e. Last promise and prayer (22:20,21)