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COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Or, A Disclosure From Jesus Christ About What Must Shortly Come To Pass

by Tom Stewart

CHAPTERS 1-19 ONLY (in progress)

Question: Why should you study this Book?

Answer: "That the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:
the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;
that ye may know

- what is the hope of His calling, and
- what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe,

according to the working of His mighty power,
which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in
the Heavenly Places,
far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not
only in this world, but also in that which is to come"
(Ephesians 1:17-21).

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Chapter 1: A Letter From the LORD of the Candlesticks

- "1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John:"

The Greek word apokalupsis is translated as "revelation" or disclosure of the truth of things previously unknown. Our growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18) also yields to us-- as a by-product-- knowledge of "things which must shortly come to pass". The Father reveals to the Son, who reveals to His "angel", who reveals to "His servant John", who reveals to God's "servants". This exactly coincides with our LORD's Promise to His disciples. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He

shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

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- "2 Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

A faithful witness-- as the Apostle John was-- is merely to recount accurately what he has been told. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth" (Acts 1:8).

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

A special Promise attends our reading, hearing, and keeping of the Revelation, i.e., acting in faith about what we heard. "But whoso looketh into the Perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). No man is a fool who acts as though the message of the Revelation concerns us here and now, "for the time is at hand." [See our article, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to see how our God has ingeniously designed His Promises to sanctify His people.]

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- "4 John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is To Come; and from the Seven Spirits which are before His Throne;"

The Revelation is in the form of a letter to the "Seven Churches which are in Asia", i.e., the modern nation of Turkey, which is in Asia Minor. The Apostle John begins with a greeting from the Triune God-- the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. The Father is The Ancient Of Days (Daniel 7:9,13,22)-- "from Him Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is to Come." The "Seven Spirits" point to the perfection of the Holy Spirit.

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- "5 And from Jesus Christ, Who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,"

Greetings from the Son, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession" (1Timothy 6:13). Jesus has the distinction of being the first to rise from the dead. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1Corinthians 15:17). And, if this "Prince of the Kings of the Earth", who "loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood", arose from the dead, then so also will we. "But every man in his own order: Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming" (15:23). [See our article, "He Will Subdue Our Iniquities" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship>

/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquity.html --, for a discussion of how anyone can be worthy and ready to meet God at any time.]

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- "6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

A Kingdom Of Priests was the LORD's original intent for His people Israel, as well. "And ye shall be unto me a Kingdom Of Priests, and An Holy Nation" (Exodus 19:6). Again, our God's desire for His Church is our assumption of the duties of a Kingdom Of Priests. "Ye also, as Lively Stones, are built up a Spiritual House, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1Peter 2:5). And, of course, "God" the Son has "His Father", God "which is [also] in Heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

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- "7 Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

Our LORD Jesus Christ is the One who "cometh with clouds". No other event in the history of creation will focus more attention on One Person than the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). If anyone is able to wonder or question if the LORD Jesus has appeared the Second Time, then it definitely did **not** happen-- because at His Second Coming "**all**... shall see Him" (24:30).

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- "8 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the LORD, Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is to Come, the Almighty."

Without a doubt, the LORD Jesus Christ claims to be God. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:6). The very idea of being "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending" places Jesus-- the speaker of Revelation 1:8-- in the role of the Eternal ("Which Is, and Which Was, and Which Is to Come") and "Almighty" God. "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the LORD of Hosts; I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside Me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6).

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- "9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The Apostle John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20), suffered exile to the island of Patmos (which means, "my killing"), a rugged and bare island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern Turkey, probably around 95 AD in Domitian's persecution of the Christians. "Yea, and **all** that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Timothy 3:12). John was an elder or

presbyter in the Church of Ephesus, before and after his stay on Patmos. John suffered "tribulation" like all of our brethren, "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ". He practiced what the early disciples preached. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that **ye should earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3).

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- "10 I was in the Spirit on the LORD's day, and heard behind me a Great Voice, as of a Trumpet,"

The Apostle John's experience parallels that of being Raptured, i.e., hearing "a Great Voice, as of a Trumpet". This reminds us of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. "For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1Thessalonians 4:16). Some believe that this indicates a Sunday ("LORD's day") Rapture; however, it could also mean that the Rapture will only occur for those who are walking "in the Spirit", in readiness for the event-- or both. "And to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1:10).

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- "11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

These Seven Churches could be reached by traveling to each in succession, i.e., first Ephesus, then Smyrna, and continuing through the list until arriving at Laodicea. The serial nature of the list of Seven Churches gives rise to comparing them to a serial or chronological list of periods representing the totality of Church History, as well as a chronological list of Tribulation Week Progress. Our LORD is able to lay much truth in store for those who are willing to "search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2). "But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples" (Mark 4:34). [See the "Tribulation Saints' Experience: Revival, Persecution, or Deliverance?" section of our article, "Thy Hidden Ones" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Thy.Hidden.Ones.html> --, for a discussion of the Seven Churches representing 7 successive periods of Church History, as well as Tribulation Week Progress.]

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- "12 And I turned to see the Voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;"

The Voice that spoke with John, belonged to the LORD Jesus. The "seven golden candlesticks" allude to the candlesticks of the Sanctuary for the nation of Israel. This seven branched candlestick, known as the menorah, may be seen represented on the Arch of Titus at Rome, taken as the spoils of war (70 AD). "And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it" (Exodus 25:37). Though Israel ultimately failed to hold the "Law [that] is Light" (Proverbs 6:23) up to the world, the Church has received a similar commission to bear the Light-- as "seven golden candlesticks"-- to the world. A candlestick is not the light; however, it does

lift up the flame, which gives off the light. And, that Light is Jesus Christ, Who said, "I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12).

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- "13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

The LORD Jesus is here described in the attire of a priest and judge, like Aaron's robe, "for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:2). Fastening the garment higher on the body-- "about the paps", i.e., the chest-- than the waist, allowed for greater movement, as well as greater dignity and majesty. "And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (Isaiah 11:5).

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- "14 His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire;"

Again, it is "not robbery" (Philippians 2:6) for the LORD Jesus to consider Himself the equal of the Father, because the Son of God is here described in the same fashion as the Father-- the Ancient of Days. "9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the **Ancient of Days** did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His Throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire... 13 ...behold, One like the **Son of Man** came with the clouds of Heaven, and **came to the Ancient of Days**..." (Daniel 7:9,13).

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- "15 And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters."

The LORD Jesus' feet are likened to "fine brass", which symbolize divine judgment. The "brassen altar" (Exodus 38:30) and other articles associated with the sacrifice for sin (27:2-4) were made of brass. The power and majesty of the LORD Jesus' Voice in judgment is compared to the "sound of many waters". "The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Psalm 93:4).

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- "16 And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength."

This reminds us of how Christ, the Good Shepherd (John 10:14), holds His flock eternally secure in His hand. "27 My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: 28 And I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). Jesus, the Eternal Word, Who "was made flesh" (John 1:14), here represents His Words like unto a "sharp twoedged sword"-- an offensive weapon for slaying the enemy. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations" (Revelation 19:15).

The brilliance of the LORD Jesus' "countenance" was seen also by the unconverted Saul on the Road

to Damascus. "13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a Light from Heaven, **above the brightness of the sun**, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a Voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I Am Jesus Whom thou persecutest" (Acts 26:13-15).

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- "17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I Am the First and the Last:"

Notwithstanding the close relationship of the Apostle John to the LORD Jesus, it was more than meeting an old friend when he recognized the LORD Jesus. John "fell at His feet as dead". Just as the prophet Isaiah was frozen with disdain for himself at the sight of the Holy God, i.e., "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:5), John had to be comforted by the LORD to even be able to continue the interview.

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- "18 I Am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I Am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Unmistakably, this is the very Jesus who was crucified on Calvary. "I Am He that liveth, and was dead." If we can believe that He was dead and now is alive, we have His Word that He is now "alive for evermore". "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Romans 6:9). So thorough is His mastery over death and hell that He possesses their key and control-- because He is the Almighty God. "He that is our God is the God of Salvation; and unto GOD the LORD belong the issues from death" (Psalm 68:20).

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- "19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;"

John is given an outline for the Revelation, which he is to record. "The things which thou hast seen" refers to chapter 1-- the Glorified Christ. "The things which are" corresponds to chapters 2 and 3-- the History of the Church. And, "the things which shall be hereafter" deal with chapters 4 through 22-- essentially Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:24-27). [See our article, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html> --, for a development of the entire 70 Weeks prophecy.]

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- "20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the Seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the Seven Churches."

The Greek word *aggelos* is primarily translated as "angel", but sometimes it is translated as messenger. That the "seven stars", which are the "angels of the Seven Churches", could be their

pastors, may be inferred from the reference of Daniel 12:3 to those who "turn many to righteousness". These who "turn many to righteousness" are compared to the "stars for ever and ever". "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). But, the idea that the "seven stars" are angelic beings is just as agreeable, for we know that even small children are given angelic watchcare. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 18:10). Again, the "seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the Seven Churches". See the above remarks concerning Revelation 1:12.

Chapter 2: Letters to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira

- "1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;"

A messenger carrying letters to the Seven Churches from the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, which is about 30 miles off the coast of Turkey and opposite the nearest port of the ancient city of Miletus, would land at Miletus and proceed northward about 25 miles to Ephesus. If a systematic distribution of the letters of the Revelation would take place, then a messenger would continue to the other six churches. After Ephesus, the messenger would go on "thirty more [miles] to Smyrna, and sixty-five more to Pergamos. Then moving inland in a rough semicircle southeastward, he would reach Thyatira forty-five miles away and Sardis thirty miles farther south. Turning farther inland he would come to Philadelphia about twenty-five miles away and eventually to Laodicea fifty miles beyond Philadelphia and farthest from the coast" (from Marshall Neal's *Seven Churches: God's Revelation to the Church Today*, pp. 3-4).

Throughout each of the letters to the Seven Churches, the LORD of the Candlesticks (or, lampstands) variously depicts some aspect about His character that the Apostle John saw when he "turned to see the Voice that spake with [him]" (Revelation 1:12). Here, the LORD Jesus is described as holding the "seven stars in His right hand"-- a picture of His ownership and control of **all** the messengers of **all** the local assemblies. "Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). His walking "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" signifies His complete presence in His Church. "22 And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, 23 Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (1:23).

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- "2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:"

The LORD describes each of the Seven Churches' condition with the omniscient statement: "I know thy works". "13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked

and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). This is only another statement that illustrates the divinity of the LORD Jesus. "The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Samuel 16:7).

Ephesus-- the church of the Apostle John-- was described as a patient and working church, i.e., "I know... thy labour, and thy patience". "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD" (1Corinthians 15:58). Apostolic Ephesus was well-taught. Ephesus could "not bear them which are evil", and had "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and [had] found them liars". "20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the Truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the Truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1John 2:20-22).

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- "3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

Further, Ephesus was an unfainting church, i.e., "hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted". A grand characteristic of the true Christian is perseverance. Humanly speaking, every Christian ought to be exhorted and expected to continue in faith until the end. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). Divinely speaking, the Saints are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1Peter 1:5). And, the Apostle John adds in his First Epistle that only those who continue in obedience are given the Divine Testimony of their sonship. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments" (1John 2:3).

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- "4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy First Love."

Ephesus had fallen out of love with the LORD Jesus Christ. The "God [that] is Love" (1John 4:16) declared, that "without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5), and that "without Charity, [you are] nothing" (1Corinthians 13:2). As much as Ephesus had been a working church and a well-taught church, Ephesus had now become a loveless church, i.e., "thou hast left thy First Love". Fallen-Out-of-Love Ephesus had forgotten the "great Love wherewith He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4), and now was only going through the motions of orthodoxy. **We all would do well to keep on remembering the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (3:8) in every aspect of our lives and beg Him for "grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16), if we would avoid this sad condition of Loveless Ephesus.**

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- "5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Since love is the foundational reason for human action, Loveless Ephesus was in a backslidden, unrevived condition, i.e., "thou art fallen", only detectable to the eyes of an Omniscient God. Only a relatively short time earlier, the LORD Jesus had restated the principle of love that was known to even the Old Testament Jew. "37 Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

The solution to anyone who has fallen out of love with the LORD Jesus is to:

- (1) remember "from whence thou art fallen", i.e., that you have actually sinned,
- (2) repent, i.e., change your mind and heart about your past actions and present condition, and
- (3) repeat, i.e., "do [again] the first works" of love and faith. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Malachi 3:7).

Coupled with the LORD's exhortation to repent, is a threat-- **repent "or else** I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent". Would our LORD threaten us so? Yes. Threaten the sinner and comfort the righteous. "19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20). But, what if they never repent? Then, they never knew Christ. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). Remember, the righteous always ultimately repents after backsliding. "6 But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end... 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6,14).

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- "6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

The LORD did not refuse to admit that even backslidden Ephesus hated the "deeds of the Nicolaitans" at that present hour-- even as He hates their deeds. Is this commendation for backslidden Ephesus? Not really. Though the action of hating the "deeds of the Nicolaitans" was a right thing, without love, it was unworthy of reward. "13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1Corinthians 3:13-15).

Some suggest that the "deeds of the Nicolaitans" was an advocacy of control by an elevated priesthood, because the word Nicolaitan comes from the Greek words nikao (conquer) and laos (people). Others conjecture that the word Nicolaitans comes from the Hebrew word nicolah (let us eat), i.e., to eat things offered to idols. Whatever the case was, through understanding of God's Word, we will learn to hate what God hates. "Through Thy Precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104).

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- "7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, which is in the midst of The Paradise of God."

That only those who are presently walking with the LORD could pay heed to the message to the Seven Churches, is evident by the phrase, "he that hath an ear". A "new creature" (2Corinthians 5:17) has the new ears to hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches". All others will not understand. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned" (1Corinthians 2:14).

The LORD Jesus addresses His Seven Churches as Ultimate Overcomers, i.e., "to him that overcometh". "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7). Christ, Who is the "Wisdom of God" (1Corinthians 1:24), is a "Tree Of Life to them that lay hold upon [Him]: and happy is every one that retaineth [Him]" (Proverbs 3:18). Therefore, the LORD Jesus offers Himself as our Reward for overcoming, as well as all the bounties of Heaven, i.e., "I [will] give to eat of the Tree Of Life, which is in the midst of The Paradise of God".

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- "8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, Which Was Dead, and Is Alive;"

Ancient Smyrna is today the modern port and manufacturing city of Izmir, Turkey-- anciently named for its trade in the anesthetic and embalming herb, myrrh. Known as a political center of Asia Minor, it took its obligation of Caesar worship seriously, especially when Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred by burning in 155 AD. When the proconsul pleaded to Polycarp to save his own life by denying Christ, Polycarp responded: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" It is reported that the city's Jews were so anxious to see Polycarp dead that they violated their own Sabbath to haul the faggots (wood) for the fire. Like the LORD Jesus, Polycarp "witnessed a good confession" (1Timothy 6:13) of how the LORD's people live and die.

The LORD portrays Himself as "the First and the Last, Which Was Dead, and Is Alive" because of Smyrna's special need for grace in persecution. "The LORD is My Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6). **Suffering and persecution are God's appointed tools to sanctify His people. Though this concept may startle contemporary professing Christians, it was employed by the Father in the sanctification of His own Son.** "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). "For it became Him [the Father], For Whom Are All Things, and By Whom Are All Things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make The Captain Of Their Salvation [the LORD Jesus] perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). How can our sanctification and growth in grace be any less than that of the Sinless Son Of Man? [See our article, "Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto the Death" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html> --, for a discussion of this very sober subject.]

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- "9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy

of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

The LORD's omniscience-- "I know thy works"-- should be a great comfort to the Saints. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). Suffering Smyrna benefits from the wrath of Satan, because "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Now Persecuted Smyrna becomes Sanctified Smyrna, because God's people learn more about the LORD Jesus' "riches in glory" (Philippians 4:19) when we are motivated by "tribulation".

Sanctified-Through-Suffering Smyrna had "tribulation, and poverty", yet was "rich". The Greek word *ptochēia* is translated "poverty"-- having nothing at all. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" (James 2:5). Having nothing at all has the tendency to force us to depend upon the LORD Jesus for all. "12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in **all things** I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do **all things** through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:12-13).

The Apostle Paul instructed us concerning the characteristics of a true Jew. "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:29). Consequently, Suffering Smyrna's Jewish persecutors-- who assisted in Polycarp's martyrdom-- were of the "synagogue of Satan". Hostility to Israel's rejected Messiah will finally turn against His people. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (16:33).

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- "10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life."

It seems that every time the LORD speaks to us, He must tell us to not fear. "Fear none of those things which thou must suffer." John's First Epistle also reminds us, "There is no fear in Love; but perfect Love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in Love" (1John 4:18). Prison in the time of the Apostle John was normally to wait for trial or execution-- and not the punishment itself. [See our article, "Tribulation Survival Guide" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Tribulation.Survival.Guide.html> --, to see the relationship of faith to survival during the Tribulation Week.]

"Ten days" seems to be a determined period of testing, as it was with Daniel eating the king's meat. "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink" (Daniel 1:12). Our testing will not go on forever. Our LORD will **never** let us go beyond our capacity to keep from sinning. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make A Way To Escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).

"Faithful unto death" means that our LORD has sovereignly chosen some of us to be His martyrs. Ours is not to question His judgment, but to ask for His grace to "suffer as a Christian" (1Peter 4:16)

and die, "having obtained a good report [i.e., the LORD's approval] through faith" (Hebrews 11:39). Though our Reward is the LORD Himself, He does proffer gifts upon His overcomers. "I will give thee a Crown Of Life." The Epistle of James discusses this same crown, but does not attach martyrdom as a qualification. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the LORD hath promised to them that Love Him" (James 1:12). Lovingly enduring trial and temptation-- even unto death-- seems to be the requirement for the Crown of Life. [See our article, "The Judgment Seat of Christ" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> --, for a fuller discussion of this Crown and other rewards for the Saints.]

- "11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death."

If you have spiritual ears, then you are obligated to hear the Spirit's message. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath" (Matthew 13:12). Overcomers "shall not be hurt of the Second Death", which is the fate of those cast into the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8). We are given the blessed assurance that God will not suffer the rules to change after we get to Heaven, and allow us to "be hurt of the Second Death". "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection: on such the Second Death hath no power" (20:6).

- "12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath The Sharp Sword With Two Edges;"

The small Turkish town of Bergma, 60 miles north of Smyrna, is ancient Pergamos. This city was built on a mountaintop, and it was famous for the invention of the animal skin parchment known as the Pergamene sheet. The city's religious worship was to Aesculapius (healing), Zeus (savior), and Caesar (patriotism). "He which hath The Sharp Sword With Two Edges" describes the LORD Jesus as one with authority. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18).

- "13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

The LORD's omniscience speaks of the commendable actions of the church in Pergamos "wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you". "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name" (Hebrews 6:10). "Satan's seat" and "where Satan dwelleth" point out the extremely evil environment of Pergamos. Though Christians live in the world, they are not of the world. "I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

- "14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Unfortunately, Pergamos was a worldly church because of its toleration of those who held the "doctrine of Balaam". Balaam was the ungodly seer who was hired by Balak to curse the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Balaam ended his counsel to Balak with the recommendation that the best way to defeat Israel was to corrupt Israel by intermarriage with the Moabites, and to draw Israel into eating the sacrifices in the worship of their idols. "1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel" (Numbers 25:1-3). Thus, Balaam deviously proposed to use Jehovah's anger against Israel to destroy Israel. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully" (Jeremiah 48:10). **May we always remember that God's hatred of our sinning and worldliness will always move Him to deal with us.** "They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger" (Deuteronomy 32:16).

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- "15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

Laying-Down-Stumblingblocks Pergamos compounded its sin by also tolerating the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (cf. 2:6). It is never right, loving, or Christian to tolerate sin in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote pointedly concerning the lack of dealing with a wayward church member at Corinth. "1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our LORD Jesus Christ, 5 **To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the Day Of The LORD Jesus**" (1Corinthians 5:1-5). [For more on this topic, please see our article "How to Deal With Backsliders" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.to.Deal.with.Backslide.html> --]

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- "16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with The Sword Of My Mouth."

Compromising Pergamos had to cease and desist with its "politically correct" toleration of both the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, i.e., "repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with The Sword Of My Mouth". "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17). This sounds much the same as the warning to the professed Christians to disassociate themselves from Babylon before its coming destruction. "And I heard another Voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

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- "17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Hidden Manna, and will give him a White Stone, and in the Stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Spiritual ears will hear and obey the Spirit. Overcomers will "eat of the Hidden Manna" and not things sacrificed to idols. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). Unlike "being black-balled", receiving a "white stone" is a sign of acceptance. "Even unto them will I give in Mine House and within My Walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an Everlasting Name, that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:5). Our LORD is speaking to us "good Words and comfortable Words" (Zechariah 1:13). [See our article, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> -- to see how our God uses His Promises to meet our every need and sanctify us.]

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- "18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son Of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass;"

Thyatira's modern name is the city of Akhisar. This Turkish city is about 45 miles from Pergamos and 30 miles from Sardis. It was a natural stopping point for the caravans that traveled the important roads that passed through the city. Lydia, Paul's first recorded convert in Europe, came from Thyatira. She was a "seller of purple" (Acts 16:14), for which expensive purple dye Thyatira was famous.

Notice that the LORD Jesus represents Himself as a God of Judgment with:

- (1) a strong claim to His divinity, i.e., "Son Of God"-- "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little" (Psalm 2:12),
- (2) searching eyes "like unto a flame of fire"-- the "Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Corinthians 2:10), and
- (3) feet of judgment, i.e., "fine brass", which is an even more refined brass than regular brass; thus, denoting more processing and judgment-- "in righteousness He doth judge and make war" (Revelation 19:11).

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- "19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."

Thyatira's virtues **had been** increasing, i.e., the "last to be more than the first". Growth is a sign of life. "But the path of the just is as the Shining Light, that shineth more and more unto The Perfect Day" (Proverbs 4:18). Growth is also commanded. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18).

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- "20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman

Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

However, growth stopped by the presence of sin, because "ye cannot serve God [grow] and mammon [sin]" (Luke 16:13) at the same time. When we are engaging in our sin, we have "eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (2Peter 2:14). These are the circumstances exploited by false prophets and prophetesses. "9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the Law of the LORD: 10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:9-10).

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- "21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."

Even Thyatira's Jezebel was given a chance to repent-- but to no avail. "6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6-7).

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- "22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

Thyatira was typically a defeated church. She had already committed her spiritual adultery. She was sleeping with the enemy. "9 And they that escape of you shall remember Me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from Me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations" (Ezekiel 6:9).

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- "23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

God will certainly bless the Righteous with Godly children. "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). Likewise, to the disobedient, God will curse their children, i.e., "I will kill her children with death". If they are old enough to sin, then they are old enough to be judged! "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (3:11).

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- "24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden."

Sleeping-With-the-Enemy Thyatira had to be a divided church for there to be some that had "not known the depths of Satan". These had escaped unscathed from sin. But, rather than lecturing them on how to deal with their backslidden brethren, the LORD put upon them "none other burden". "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14). **He was just as concerned about these that had "not known the depths of Satan" as He was the sin of the others in their church, and He desired that they would make it to the end without succumbing to sin. Therefore, He dealt gently with them.** "A bruised reed shall [the LORD Jesus Christ] not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" (Isaiah 42:3).

- "25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."

To the faithful of Thyatira, He counsels more to maintain than to increase. To "continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22) is an achievement, and is not to be despised. "For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10).

- "26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:"

Overcoming for the faithful of Thyatira is to simply finish the race. But, remember, this is acceptable. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2Timothy 4:7). All that finish will be given "Power over the nations". "But the Saints of the most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Daniel 7:18).

- "27 And he shall rule them with a Rod Of Iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father."

The weakest Saint is capable of accomplishing whatever task the Master has appointed, i.e., "he [the Overcoming Saint] shall rule them with a Rod Of Iron". "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

- "28 And I will give him the Morning Star."

Again, the Motivation and the Reward is the LORD Himself. Our LORD Jesus is the "Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

- "29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Notice that the message is not just to Thyatira, or to just the Seven Churches, but to **all** the churches-- that means you and I. "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10).

Chapter 3: Letters to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

- "1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

The fifth of the Seven Churches was Sardis, which was 50 miles inland from the Aegean Sea and due east of Thyatira (modern Izmir). Though the city was a prosperous trade city, e.g., its king Cresus is remembered with the saying, "as rich as Cresus", it was gradually dying of moral decadence. The LORD of the Candlesticks identifies Himself as having the "Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars", i.e., possessing the All Present Spirit, as well as owning the Church, "which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Without a single word of praise for past actions, Sardis is omnisciently labeled as a dead church, i.e., "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead". This spiritually dead condition of the professed Body of Christ also was addressed by the Epistle of James. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). Whenever the Saints depart from their walk of faith and holiness, it is right for them to be described as dead. "But she [a widow] that liveth in pleasure [leading a voluptuous life] is dead while she liveth" (1 Timothy 5:6).

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- "2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

Dead Sardis is counseled to "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die". If Sardis is already completely dead, then how could there be "things which remain, that are [still] ready to die"? Though Sardis was characteristically dead, Sardis still had some who had "not defiled their garments" (3:4). These were still alive! To prevent these from Spiritually dying, the LORD instructs them to "strengthen" themselves. How? Through prayer. "And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD GOD, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" (Judges 16:28). Through the Word. "My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen Thou me according unto Thy Word" (Psalm 119:28). By His Presence. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of My righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

The condition of basically Alive-in-Name-Only Sardis is much more critical than apparent to modern readers of the Revelation, for the LORD said, "I have not found thy works perfect before God." Perfection, as far as our LORD Jesus was concerned, is simply to give ourselves 100% to God, as He has completely offered Himself to us. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). [See John Wesley's "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" and our study, "An

Urgent Call to Christian Perfection" for a development of this thought.] So, the LORD's call to "strengthen" is to those who had "not defiled their garments" (3:4), and it gives the sense of imminent danger, if action is not taken quickly.

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- "3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

In essence, the LORD advises Dead Sardis to remember, repent, and hold fast. They were to "remember" in the present what they had "received and heard" in the past. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and **received, and heard**, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Remembering the "great things the LORD hath done" (Mark 5:19) for them, they were to "repent, and hold fast". "Prove all things; hold fast that which is Good" (1Thessalonians 5:21).

The LORD then warns Sardis. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Because a thief is an adversary, the LORD warns that He will treat impenitent Sardis as an adversary. "2 For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the LORD so cometh as a **thief in the night**. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake you as a **thief**" (1Thessalonians 5:2-4). Whether the occasion is a Pre-Tribulational Rapture or a Pre-Wrath Rapture, those who are not ready, will see Him as a Thief. [See our article, "The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, to explore the idea of more than one Rapture.]

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- "4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy."

Typically, the "few names in Sardis" correspond to "narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14). Even **inside** the Professed Church, there are only a "few" that had "not defiled their garments". Why? Defilement occurs because we do not hate sinning. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3). But, more importantly, we become defiled because we do not sense our need to cling to the LORD, Who is our Only Good. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is Good" (Romans 12:9). Therefore, the privilege of walking with the LORD "in white" belongs to the undefiled, "for they are worthy".

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- "5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book Of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."

White is the color of the raiment of the angels (Mark 16:5) and of the robes of the Redeemed. "After

this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

To "not blot out" the name of the Redeemed from the Book of Life is the privilege given to the Overcomers. If salvation, is "by grace" (Ephesians 2:8), then being kept in the Book Of Life is also God making "all grace abound toward you" (2Corinthians 9:8). On reflection, we do not value the grace of God enough. "By Whom [our LORD Jesus Christ] also we have access **by faith into this grace** wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2).

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- "6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

How does the Spirit speak to the churches? The Revelation is only a part of the inspired Word of God. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Peter 1:21). And, the voice of the Scriptures is the unmistakable voice of the Spirit. "16 All Scripture is given by inspiration [the breath, i.e., Spirit] of God" (2Timothy 3:16). So, the Word of God, which incorporates this God-Breathed Revelation, is how the Holy Spirit communicates with His Church.

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- "7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

The Philadelphia of the Revelation, the city of brotherly love, is now a small village known as Alasehir. It is situated in modern Turkey, about 28 miles southeast of Sardis and 75 miles from the Aegean Sea coast. Numerous pagan temples dotted the skyline of the ancient city, with their columns dedicated to noteworthy citizens. An earthquake that devastated Sardis in 17 AD did the same to Philadelphia. During the ensuing years, Philadelphia was plagued with recurring quakes.

The LORD Jesus reveals Himself as the standard of holiness and Truth, as only God can, i.e., "He that is holy, He that is true". "There is none holy as the LORD" (1Samuel 2:2). And, "The LORD is the True God" (Jeremiah 10:10). The possession of the "Key of David" (Revelation 3:7) alludes to Christ's absolute Power over His Church to open and shut without hindrance. Notably, this Power was offered to the Apostle Peter, as well as to every living Saint. Of the Apostle Peter it is said: "And I [Jesus] will give unto thee [Peter] the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 16:19). And, for the rest of us, this magnificent Prayer Promise is recorded: "If two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

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- "8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an Open Door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name."

Our omniscient Eldest Brother (Hebrews 2:11), the LORD Jesus, assessed the condition of Faithful Philadelphia, with the offer of a Window of Opportunity to accomplish the ministry of His Word, i.e., "I have set before thee an Open Door". In spite of Philadelphia's "little strength", these faithful ones had kept His Word and not denied His Name-- no mean achievement. This illustrates that the Almighty is not interested in any supposed greatness on our part, but in simple faithfulness. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9).

The beginning of the end of the Window of Opportunity to missionize the world with the Gospel, will come when the Church walks through the Open Door of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. "After this I looked, and, behold, a **Door** was opened in Heaven: and the first Voice which I heard was as it were of a **trumpet** talking with me; which said, Come up hither" (Revelation 4:1).

Possessing-a-Little-Strength Philadelphian Christians are blessed with the opportunity of proving the strength of God. "9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Corinthians 12:9-10).

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

When God's people are unwilling to let the difference between the holy and the profane, to become blurred by those who falsely profess Spirituality, i.e., the "synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie", then the LORD Jesus will ensure that that difference will be upheld at His Judgment Seat. "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." This is the same concept that speaks of the submission of even the enemies of the LORD Jesus Christ to Himself at the Judgment Seat. "9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

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- "10 Because thou hast kept The Word Of My Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth."

Because of Faithful Philadelphia's keeping of the "Word Of [His] Patience", the LORD Jesus has promised those who have that Spiritual character of the Philadelphians: "I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth." Unlike the solo participation of Enoch and Elijah (Genesis 5:24; 2Kings 2:11) in their individual Raptures, the Pre-Tribulational Rapture includes all the Watching and Waiting Church. [See our article, "A Tale of Ten Virgins" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html> --, for an explanation of who is watching and waiting.] Notice that the following Words of the LORD Jesus are both a Command to

pray for escape, as well as a Promise that escape is possible. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape **all** these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

The "Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon **all the world**, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10) makes reference to more than a local situation for this originally addressed church in Asia Minor. The "Hour of Temptation" (3:10) is equivalent to 15 days, if Daniel's Seventieth Week (1 week) equals 2,520 days. One hour would be 1/168 of a week or .0059523 of a week, which is 15 days. This would be the time equivalent to Tishri 1 to Tishri 15. If the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church occurs at perhaps the midnight hour on Tishri 1, then approximately 8 to 9 days (depending on how you count it) would be left in the Tribulation Week, which would then extend through Tishri 9. This would allow for the pouring out of about one Vial a day during the Seven Vial Judgments. Armageddon lasts 5 days from Tishri 10 (the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ) to Tishri 14-- the day before Tishri 15 (the Inauguration of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ on Earth). 9 days (for the Vial Judgments) plus 5 days (for Armageddon) equals 14 days, which lacks only one day to complete the "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10). That one day lacking is Tishri 15. [See our article, "The Appointed Time" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, to see how the Seven Feasts of Israel of Leviticus 23 correspond to upcoming prophetic events.]

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- "11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown."

Though the Apostle John recorded the Revelation toward the end of the First Century AD-- nearly 1,900 years ago-- our LORD did not think it out of place to say, "I come quickly." In fact, the LORD Jesus repeated the same statement three other times in the Revelation (22:7,12,20). Admittedly, that has the tendency to raise the hopes and expectations of the readers for a soon Coming of the LORD Jesus; but, was that not His purpose? Consequently, any decision made by the Saints during the last approximately 1,900 years based upon **that** statement of Coming quickly, is based upon faith-- and justifiable. "1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Hebrews 11:1-2).

With the words "hold that fast which thou hast" (Revelation 3:11), the LORD warns His faithful to "keep on, keepin' on". The key to receiving the benefit of anything received by faith, is patience and perseverance. "35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:35-36). Crowns or rewards may be lost, i.e., "that no man take thy Crown" (Revelation 3:11), so care must be taken that we do not stumble into sin. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2John 8). [See our article, "He Will Subdue Our Iniquities" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquit.html> --, to see how God makes normal Christians to walk without sinning.]

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- "12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write

upon him My New Name."

Remembering the earthquakes of ancient Philadelphia, you can easily imagine the frightened citizens of Philadelphia scurrying out of the temples, whose pillars were inscribed with their names, with each after shock. By comparison, our LORD "will write upon" the esteemed inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, His "New Name"-- signifying His ownership, for we "are bought with a price" (1Corinthians 6:20), and signifying a New Chapter in our lives, for "He will dwell with" us forever (Revelation 21:3). And, the dwellers of New Jerusalem "shall go no more out". This is perfect tranquility. "Thou wilt keep him in Perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

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- "13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Spiritual ears to hear the Command of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture-- "Come up hither" (Revelation 4:1)-- are the same to hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches". Likewise, those who refuse to hear have already been described. "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts 28:27).

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- "14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God;"

The last of the Seven Churches was Laodicea, whose name meant "justice of the people". It was about an 100 miles inland from the Aegean Sea, 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, and due west of Colosse. Laodicea was known for its wool industry, its production of an eyesalve, and its banking industry. Because the city did not have a good water supply nearby, it had to depend more on diplomacy than military strength to prevent a siege.

The description of the LORD Jesus as the "Amen, the Faithful and True Witness" is our LORD's way of showing the necessity of clear-cut delineations between good and evil, light and darkness-- as opposed to the unwillingness to take a stand for the good and against the evil. "5 This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth: 7 But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1John 1:5-7).

Here, it is significant that the LORD Jesus is so confident of His divinity that He would label Himself as the "Beginning of the Creation of God". This identifies the LORD Jesus as "begotten of the Father in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by men, before any creatures were in being" (from John Gill's comments on Colossians 1:15)-- as unique as only God can be. "15 Who [Jesus] is the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of Every Creature: 16 For **by Him [Jesus] were all things created**, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Colossians 1:15-16).

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- "15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

In this instance, Laodicea's Spiritual temperature is omnisciently understood to be "neither cold nor hot". Our LORD prefers a more straightforward profession of unbelief ("cold") or faith ("hot"). "He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke 11:23). At least a straightforward admission of unbelief can be more readily approached with the bold claims of repentance and faith. "13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And **when he came to himself**, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (15:13-17).

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- "16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

Lukewarmness is the transitional condition of having been warm-- but now backslidden. The true warmth, like the glory of God, has departed from Miserable Laodicea. "And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the Ark of God was taken" (1Samuel 4:21). Like the lukewarm and nauseous mineral spring water near ancient Laodicea, the Lukewarm church at Laodicea caused God to vomit them out of His mouth. Again, the God of Truth (Psalm 31:5) refuses to hold up a compromising and uncertain standard of gray. He-- and His people-- must be known by the certain sound of fervent hot "**HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**" (Zechariah 14:20).

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- "17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

The stark contrast between the Laodicean's perception of themselves, i.e., "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing", and the LORD's perception of them. i.e., "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked", is the difference between self-deception and a true assessment. "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:3).

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- "18 I counsel thee to buy of Me Gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and White Raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with Eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

The only advice worth taking, comes from God. "22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? 23 Turn you at My Reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My Words unto you" (Proverbs 1:22-23). The LORD Jesus gives counsel concerning the repentance of Laodicea's so-called

Christianity:

- (1) purchase the "True Riches" (Luke 16:11) from Christ of "Gold tried in the fire" (Revelation 3:18) by seeking "first the Kingdom Of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33),
- (2) acquire "White Raiment" (Revelation 3:18), which is the "Righteousness of Saints" (19:8) flowing from a right relationship with Jesus Christ, and
- (3) confess your wretched condition of self-deception to the LORD, then He will be "faithful and just to forgive [you your] sins, and to cleanse [you] from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9), i.e., "anoint thine eyes with Eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18).

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- "19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

God is love (1John 4:8), but that does not mean that He will not chasten His people for sinning. Ask Adam and Eve if sin had consequences. Providentially, the LORD is known for seeing His good works through to their conclusion. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). It is actually a matter of joy that the LORD sees something about Deceived Laodicea's sonship, that Laodicea could only prove by repentance. "6 For whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Hebrews 12:6-8).

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- "20 Behold, I stand at The Door, and knock: if any man hear My Voice, and open The Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

This is the classic invitation verse used by Soul Winners, who have brought a Lost Sinner down the Roman's Road of Salvation:

- (1) "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23),
- (2) the "wages [earnings] of sin is death" (Romans 6:23),
- (3) but the "[free] gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (Romans 6:23),
- (4) "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9), and
- (5) "for whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

However, notice that the LORD Jesus Christ is standing **outside** of the church at Laodicea-- knocking for permission to enter. Though God does give "repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25), He only receives that repentance from a **voluntary** submission from the sinner. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Lukewarm Laodicea is also composed of those professed Christians who have never actually been saved-- but are still known to God to be elect-- in addition to the backsliders of Laodicea. These Elect-But-Lost Laodiceans are among those who repent at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

Elect-But-Lost Israel will also repent at the LORD's Second Coming. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a **nation be born at once**? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). Both of these will enter as subjects of our LORD's Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:6)

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- "21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."

Overcomers of this Church Age "shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). The LORD Jesus-- our Example of overcoming-- has graciously invited us to share the inheritance of His Government with us. And, if we will share with Him in judging this world, then should we not be careful to exercise love when making judgments about our daily life? "2 Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1Corinthians 6:2-3).

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- "22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Let no man say that he has not been warned. It has always been a matter of whether or not we have been willing to listen to the counsel of the Holy Spirit. "24 Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of Mine, and doeth Them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a Rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a Rock. 26 And every one that heareth these Sayings of Mine, and doeth Them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Chapter 4: Angels and Saints Around the Throne

- "1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven: and the first Voice which I heard was as it were of a Trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

Again, the divisions of the Book of Revelation follow the Divine Pattern of chapter 1, verse 19, where the Apostle John is commanded to record:

(1) the "things which thou hast seen", i.e., the revelation of the LORD of the Candlesticks in chapter 1,

(2) the "things which are", i.e., the complete, future "history" of the Church-- from Pentecost to the Pre-Tribulational Rapture-- as seen in chapters 2 and 3, and

(3) the "things which shall be hereafter", i.e., essentially the events of the Tribulation Week as seen in chapters 4 through 22. [See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> -- , for an exposition of 2Thessalonians 2:1-12 concerning the removal of the Restraining Influence.]

Just as John earlier saw a vision of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., he "was in the Spirit on the LORD's day [Sunday], and heard behind [him] a Great Voice, as of a Trumpet" (Revelation 1:10), this chapter of the Revelation begins with a new, Heavenly vision, when he saw that a "door was opened in Heaven" (4:1). This is the Open Door of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture that was shown to the faithful Philadelphians. "I have set before thee an **open door**, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name" (3:8). Interestingly, the LORD Jesus described more than one door in His Olivet Discourse. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the **doors**" (Matthew 24:33). I believe that this indicates more than one Rapture event will occur.

The "Voice which [the Apostle John] heard was as it were of a Trumpet talking with [him]; which said, Come up hither" (4:1) reminds us of the Apostle Paul's description of a Rapture event. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Corinthians 15:52). Twice, the expression, "Come up hither" is used-- Revelation 4:1 and 11:12, describing the Pre-Tribulational Rapture and the Pre-Wrath Rapture, respectively. Finally, "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (4:1) refers to the events of the Seal Judgments, the Trumpet Judgments, the Seven Thunders, and the Vial Judgments that complete Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:24-27).

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- "2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the Throne."

Once the Pre-Tribulational Rapture Command-- "Come up hither"-- is given, the obedient Saints' response will cause them to be **immediately** translated into the Heavenly presence of the Throne of

God. "Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). Only those who are ready, will respond. "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:40). It appears that the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:6), will precede-- ever so quickly-- the actual "Come Up Hither" Command. The Watching and Waiting Wise Virgins (Matthew 25) will be ready, while the Foolish Virgins will hear, but not be ready, i.e., be backslidden. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" (Proverbs 14:14). [See our article, "A Tale of Ten Virgins" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html> --, for an exposition of the Matthew 25 parable describing the difference between the prepared and the unprepared.]

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- "3 And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

This exalted picture of the presence of God was seen also by Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel (Exodus 24:1) when the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) were given. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of Heaven in his [or, "its", i.e., the body of Heaven's] clearness" (24:10). Also, the "breastplate of judgment" (28:15), the high priestly garment worn by Aaron, had twelve stones-- beginning with the sardius or sardine stone (probably signifying Reuben, the firstborn) and ending with the jasper stone (probably denoting Benjamin, the youngest)-- which corresponded to the Twelve Tribes of Israel. "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes" (28:21). The "rainbow round about the Throne" (Revelation 4:3) may also be the LORD's way to remind us of Noah-- a Gentile-- and that the Gentiles are also a part of His covenant. Thus, both God's covenanted people of Israel and the Gentiles are remembered around God's Throne.

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- "4 And round about the Throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

Again, these 24 Elders seem to represent the entirety of the Saints of God, both Israel and the Church. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). There seems to have been an understanding of even the ancient Jews that they would have a part in rulership during the reign of the Messiah. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or, set up], and the Ancient of Days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His Throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire" (Daniel 7:9). And so, the Church will also be honored to judge alongside the LORD Jesus during the Millennium. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

That they are "clothed in white raiment" (Revelation 4:4), indicates that they are Overcomers, i.e., a Promise given to the faithful of the Church at Sardis (3:5). "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment" (3:5). The "crowns of gold" (4:4) are the *stephanos* (Greek), which are the wreaths or garlands which were given as a prize to victors in public games, e.g., the ancient Olympics. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4).

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- "5 And out of the Throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

The magnificence and awesomeness of God's Throne is illustrated by the "lightnings and thunderings and voices" (4:5). "With God is terrible majesty" (Job 37:22). The "seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 4:5) are symbolic of the perfection of the Holy Spirit-- the third member of the Trinity. "3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart **to lie to the Holy Ghost**, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? **thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God**" (Acts 5:3-4).

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- "6 And before the Throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the Throne, and round about the Throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind."

The "sea of glass" (4:6) indicates the tranquility of the presence of God, i.e., as calm water reflects like glass. "Of the increase of His government and **peace** there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isaiah 9:7). The "four beasts" (Revelation 4:6) are properly, four living creatures; and, not to be confused with the Antichrist-- the beast "out of the sea" (**13:1**)-- or the False Prophet-- the beast "out of the Earth" (**13:11**). Instead, these "four beasts" (Revelation 4:6) correspond to the seraphim-- a six-winged angelic being (Isaiah 6:2)-- seen by the prophet Ezekiel in Babylon by the river Chebar (Ezekiel 1:1). Though Ezekiel described his vision of "four living creatures" (1:5) as having each "four wings" (1:6), it does not disqualify Ezekiel's living creatures from being the six-winged seraphim of Isaiah 6, i.e., by saying that they had **only** four wings.

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- "7 And the first beast was like a **lion**, and the second beast like a **calf**, and the third beast had a face as a **man**, and the fourth beast was like a flying **eagle**."

That these "four beasts" (Revelation 4:6) are the same as Ezekiel's "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5), is apparent by the similarity of both of their descriptions. "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a **man**, and the face of a **lion**, on the right side: and they four had the face of an **ox** [which corresponds to the calf] on the left side; they four also had the face of an **eagle**" (Ezekiel 1:10). These are the seraphim, who are the angels that stand in the presence of God. "God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the Throne of His holiness" (Psalm 47:8).

- "8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

The seraphim take great delight in the holiness of God. "And one [seraphim] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3). To which we may add, "Be ye holy; for I [the LORD] am holy" (1Peter 1:16). And, we are reminded, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which **no man** shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14).

We must understand that magnifying the Living God is a fit and fulfilling vocation for both seraphim and man for all eternity. "1 I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever. 2 Every day will I bless Thee; and **I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever**. 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and **His greatness is unsearchable**" (Psalm 145:1-3).

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- "9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the Throne, Who liveth for ever and ever,"

"Glory and honour and thanks" (4:9) are given to the Eternal God by the angels. How much more should we, who were rescued from the "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13), praise Him? "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107:2).

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- "10 The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the Throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the Throne, saying,"

Notice that the Saints, who "know their God [and who] shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32), will fall down before the Throne of God and worship Him; and, not attempt to recall their past deeds and exploits for their own glorification. "Let them praise the Name of the LORD: for **His Name alone is excellent**; His glory is above the Earth and Heaven" (Psalm 148:13). [See our article, "The Judgment Seat of Christ, Or, Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown?" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> --, for thoughts on the rewards promised to us by God.]

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- "11 Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

God alone is worthy to receive praise, i.e., "to receive glory and honour and power", because God alone is good. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12). And, "There is none good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18).

Our LORD Jesus Christ is **the** pre-eminent Creator. "16 For by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or

principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: 17 And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17).

And, what was the LORD Jesus' purpose for our creation? God created us for His pleasure, i.e., "and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). For this reason, **our trusting in God is the fulfillment of the reason for our existence**. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). [See our article, "How to Trust God, Or, Our Necessities Are Merely Opportunities to Trust God" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html> --, to see how we can please God.]

Chapter 5: The Worthy Lamb Prepares to Open the Seven Seals

- "1 And I saw in the Right Hand of Him that sat on the Throne a Book written within and on the backside, sealed with Seven Seals."

A book "sealed with Seven Seals" is seen in this continuing Heavenly vision-- which began in chapter 4-- in the "Right Hand of Him that sat on the Throne" (5:1). The Right Hand is indicative of the power and authority of the LORD Jesus Christ, to Whom "**all** power is given unto" (Matthew 28:18). "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy Right Hand [Jesus], upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (Psalm 80:17). It will become apparent in verse 7 that the Father is actually here indicated; but still, Jesus said, "All things that the Father hath are Mine" (John 16:15).

The fact that the Book is "written within and on the backside" (Revelation 5:1) points to the fullness or completeness of Its contents. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet **full**" (Genesis 15:16). The sealing "with Seven Seals" (Revelation 5:1) speaks of the importance of the Book's contents. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29).

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- "2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

Worthiness is a question that even the Angels of Heaven ask; but, the reply is anticipated. Unquestionably, our LORD **alone** is worthy "to open the Book" (5:2). "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (4:11). Because the Saints submit their wills to Him that His Spirit may work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), we are then "**accounted worthy** to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36)-- which is a Promise for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture.

- "3 And no man in Heaven, nor in Earth, neither under the Earth, was able to open the Book, neither to look thereon."

This matter of opening the Book and "loosing the seals thereof" (5:2) requires more than the strength and intelligence of the "strong angel" (5:2). In short, "no man" (5:3) was found to open the Book. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him" (Isaiah 59:16). Man is accounted as many "grasshoppers" in the sight of Him that "sitteth upon the circle of the Earth" (40:22). "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (2:22).

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- "4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look thereon."

Not surprisingly, the Apostle John-- more than an excellent example for the Body of Christ-- wept because no one "was found worthy to open and to read the Book" (5:4). "8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my LORD, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the Words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:8-9).

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- "5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the Seven Seals thereof."

One of the 24 Elders (4:10) tells John the Beloved to stop crying because Someone has been found to "open the Book" (5:5). This Someone had "prevailed" (5:5) or overcome, to be able to open the Book. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15). The "Lion of the tribe of Juda" (Revelation 5:5) refers to Christ in reference to Jacob's prophecy concerning his son, Judah. "9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him [Jesus Christ] shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:9-10).

The "Root of David" (Revelation 5:5) indicates that the LORD Jesus was not just the "son of David" (Matthew 22:42), but was also **before** David. "42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him LORD, saying, 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? 45 If David then call Him LORD, how is He His Son?" (Matthew 22:42-45). This enigma of understanding how the LORD Jesus can be both the "Root and the Offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16) is a secret, which is plain only to those who walk in faith. "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" (Proverbs 14:6). And, how does one enter this walk of faith? By submitting to the truth that is **known by all men**. "19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20).

- "6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as It had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the Earth."

Surrounding the Throne were:

- (1) the angelic seraphim, which are the "four beasts" (4:6), and
- (2) the representatives of the Old and New Testament Saints, which are the "four and twenty elders" (4:10).

And, "in the midst of the Throne", is a Lamb "as It had been slain" (5:6). This, of course, is the LORD Jesus Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This Lamb has "seven horns" (Revelation 5:6), which represent the perfection of power. Daniel understood the horns to represent kingly power, i.e., "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings" (Daniel 7:24). The "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 5:6) represent the "eyes of the LORD [which] run to and fro throughout the whole Earth" (2Chronicles 16:9). "7 Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy Right Hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10).

Again, the contrast of the LORD Jesus being both the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" (Revelation 5:5) and a Lamb (5:6) at the same time, demonstrate the all-sufficiency that the LORD Jesus is to His people. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2Corinthians 3:5). God's people ought to take great joy in this revelation, because it demonstrates that the LORD is revealing His secrets to His people. "His secret is with the righteous" (Proverbs 3:32). And, secrets such as the Pre-Tribulational Rapture are meant to be revealed to the Righteous. "Surely the LORD GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

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- "7 And He came and took the Book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne."

This verse indicates that "Him that sat upon the Throne" (5:7) is the Father. However, both the Father and the Son are identified as the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9 and Revelation 1:14). The unity of the Father and the Son is no trouble to the understanding of the Righteous. "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30). Though the Saints will always be His creation, we are intended to have a union with our Creator, in a fashion similar to the union of the Father with the Son. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (17:21).

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- "8 And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down

before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints."

Both the angelic seraphim, i.e., the "four beasts" (5:8), and the 24 Elders worship the Lamb. Twice in the Revelation, the Apostle John was told to only "worship God" (19:10;22:9). The classic picture of angels with harps is seen here, but with the Saints as well, in harp accompaniment. "Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings" (Psalm 33:2).

What happened to all those prayers uttered by the Saints throughout the ages? "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17). Our God must consider the "prayers of Saints" to be precious to place them in "golden vials full of odours" (Revelation 5:8). "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18). It is a lie of the devil that our God does not hear or answer our prayers. "12 Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:12-13).

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- "9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"

A "new song" (5:9) is appropriate to be sung, because the Revelation is full of our LORD making "all things new" (21:5):

- (1) a "new name" (2:17) is promised to all overcomers, which signifies a new relationship with the One Who Gives the Name,
- (2) a "New Jerusalem" (3:12), which is the new residence of the Saints in the Father's House of "many mansions" (John 14:2), is also promised to the overcomers, and
- (3) a "New Heaven and a New Earth" (Revelation 21:1) indicate our LORD's ability to give an **absolutely fresh beginning to everything**. "There is none like unto the LORD our God" (Exodus 8:10).

Why are the Saints overcomers? The Saints overcome because God has made provision for our victory:

- (1) Victory over the **world**-- "4 This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ" (1John 5:4-5),
- (2) Victory over the **flesh**-- "If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16), and
- (3) Victory over **Satan**-- "The shield of faith shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16). And, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20).

[See the "Conclusion" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perf.Conclusion.html> -- of our article, "An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --, to see how Charles G. Finney attempted to demonstrate that Christian victory and overcoming are actually what Scripture calls sanctification-- and what Finney, Wesley, and myself have called Christian Perfection.]

The new song begins, "Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof" (Revelation 5:9), because the LORD Jesus' worthiness is key to His ability to open the seals. "O sing unto the LORD a new song; for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory" (Psalm 98:1). The song continues, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9), demonstrating that His atonement is the basis for His worthiness. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8).

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- "10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the Earth."

The hosts of Heaven have good reason to be singing the praises to the Lamb of God, for our LORD's victory is our victory. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57). Because the LORD Jesus suffered, died, and rose again, it is we that are "partakers of the benefit" (1Timothy 6:2). For example, we will partake of the administration of the Millennial Reign of our LORD Jesus Christ. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

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- "11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;"

The scene around the Throne is animated with "**the** voice" (5:11)-- a **united** voice-- of:

- (1) "many angels",
- (2) the angelic seraphim (angels who abide in the presence of the LORD), i.e., the "beasts", and
- (3) the representatives of the Old and New Testament Saints, i.e., the "elders". Their number is more than 100,000,000-- "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (5:11).

This hearkens back to Daniel's description of the scene around the Throne of the Ancient of Days. "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: **thousand thousands** ministered unto Him, and **ten thousand times ten thousand** stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the Books were opened" (Daniel 7:10). The scenes are so similar in both Daniel and the Revelation, that it is as if both

writers were recording the same event from Old Testament and New Testament perspectives that were nearly 700 years apart.

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- "12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

The dwellers of the "sea of glass" (4:6), or sea of tranquility, around the Throne of God give forth a Mega Voice, i.e., "loud voice" (5:12), praise of the Lamb. "7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. 8 **Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His Name:** bring an offering, and come into His courts" (Psalm 96:7-8). Gratitude and love-- for His Sacrifice of Himself-- have been the Saints' inspiration throughout their Earthly sojourn for their obedience to the Son of God. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [or, burdensome]" (1John 5:3).

Praise to the LORD Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is becoming or appropriate-- "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (5:12)-- unlike giving praise to man. "Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely [or, becoming]" (Psalm 147:1). Praising God must take up much of the time of the Saints in Heaven, because the LORD Jesus alone is infinitely worthy of receiving praise. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God **continually**, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Hebrews 13:15).

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- "13 And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

All of creation "in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the sea" (5:13) realize the appropriateness of giving praise to the Worthy Lamb. At our LORD's Triumphal Entry at the beginning of the crucifixion week, the Pharisees objected to the unadulterated praise given by the disciples to Christ. Little did those Pharisees realize how appropriate that praise was. So appropriate was the praise, that the inanimate creation would cry out, if the disciples ceased their praise. "37 And when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; 38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the Name of the LORD: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. 40 And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:37-40).

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- "14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever."

Some have labelled the word "Amen" the best known word in human speech; since both the Hebrew,

Greek, Latin, and English all mean the same thing. Before a discourse, "Amen" signifies a statement of certainty, i.e., surely, truly, of a truth. At the end of a discourse, the "Amen" signifies hearty agreement from the hearers, i.e., so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled. For this reason, the LORD Jesus identified Himself to the Laodicean Church as the "Amen, the Faithful and True Witness" (3:14). The "four beasts" (5:14) are voicing their agreement to the praise offering, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him [the Father] that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb [the Son] for ever and ever" (5:13).

The 24 Elders "fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever" (5:14). Satan requested this same worship from the LORD Jesus Christ, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness before beginning His Earthly ministry. "9 And [Satan] saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:9-10).

Worship is appropriate for the Lamb, because it is only appropriate to "worship God" (Revelation 22:9). "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). Understanding the character of God enables us to ascribe to Him the "glory due unto His Name" (Psalm 29:2). And, imitating that character-- or, following in "His steps" (1Peter 2:21)-- demonstrates that we are truly worshipping "Him in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24).

If we will worship God endlessly in Heaven, then our lives should now demonstrate that we give more than lip service to the High and Lofty One That Inhabith Eternity (Isaiah 57:15), that our worship would now be acceptable. "1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Chapter 6: Opening the First Six Seal Judgments

- "1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."

When considering the Apocalyptic Judgments, we must remember that "God is the judge" (Psalm 75:7). The LORD Jesus Christ's Second Coming is all about His judgment of the Earth. "26 For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; 27 And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:26-27). The Lamb of God (John 1:36) was alone found worthy to open the seals (Revelation 5:9). The "four beasts" (6:1) are the angelic seraphim around the throne of God described earlier (4:6; 5:6). Their invitation to John to "come and see" (6:1) has the thunderous sound of authority.

- "2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

This is the First Seal Judgment, which signifies political conquering. "When Thy Judgments are in the Earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9). Though the LORD Jesus Christ returns riding a "white horse" (Revelation 19:11), this rider appears to be a spurious, substitute Christ, i.e., the Antichrist, who begins the Tribulation Week by confirming "the covenant with many for one week" (Daniel 9:27). This "conquering" (6:2) is reminiscent of Hitler's pre-WW2 conquering of Europe by means of the diplomatic appeasement of British prime minister Neville Chamberlain. Antichrist's "bow" and "crown" (6:2) indicate that his conquering is based upon his threat of military force and the recognition of governmental power that he already possesses. The "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12) have already given their assent to his quest for Global Government.

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- "3 And when He had opened the Second Seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see."

In the midst of these Apocalyptic Judgments, it is the same LORD Jesus who gave the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) that is unsealing these Divine Judgments upon the world. This Second Seal Judgment is announced by the "second beast" (6:3), i.e., angelic seraphim, with the words, "Come and see" (6:3). This reminds us that the Revelation was first a vision given to the Apostle John before it was penned. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

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- "4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the Earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

This Second Seal Judgment (6:4) shows us a red horse, which indicates the blood of warfare. Permission must be granted to the rider of the red horse "to take peace from the Earth" (6:4). When the Restraining Influence of the Holy Spirit is suddenly-- but not permanently-- removed via the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Saints, then the Antichrist can conduct his conquering by political treaty, i.e., "the covenant with many for one week" (Daniel 9:27). "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He [the Holy Spirit of Promise] who now letteth [restrains] will let [will continue to restrain], until He [the Holy Spirit via His indwelling in the Saints] be taken out of the way [through the Pre-Tribulational Rapture]" (2Thessalonians 2:7). God is still in sovereign control of this world. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he [Job] hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand" (Job 1:12). Since the Almighty has covenanted that "not an hair of your head [should] perish" (Luke 21:18), then the killing of "one another" of this judgment by a "great sword" (6:4) indicates a great deal of death-- of the unelect.

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- "5 And when he had opened the Third Seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand."

The Third Seal Judgment reveals a rider of a black horse (6:5). Black indicates the suffering of famine, which is the general consequence of warfare (Second Seal Judgment). "Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine" (Lamentations 5:10). The fact that the rider of this black horse "had a pair of balances in his hand" (6:5) denotes that the weighing out of the food to feed or starve the population of the world is given into the hands of the Antichrist. "For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 21:10). Just as it is true, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), if God wills someone to be judged, who can withstand Him? "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him" (Nahum 1:6).

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- "6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

A "measure" (6:6) is translated from the Greek word choinix, which is a dry measure of less than a quart and closer to a liter. A "penny" (6:6) is used for the Latin word denarius, which was the Roman silver coin that was accepted as the equivalent of the ordinary pay for a day's wages. "2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard... 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" (Matthew 20:2-13).

A "measure of wheat" (6:6) weighs roughly between 7 and 8 ounces (approximately 1/2 pound), which would produce about 1/2 of a loaf to one complete loaf of bread. "15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever. 16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (Psalm 81:15-16). This would only be sufficient for the wage earner to feed himself for a day, but not enough wage left to buy anything else for himself, i.e., "see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (6:6). Only by economizing with a less expensive-- and less versatile-- grain such as barley, can there be a threefold increase in the availability of food to feed a small family of two more for one day, i.e., "three measures of barley for a penny" (6:6). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34).

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- "7 And when He had opened the Fourth Seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see."

The LORD Jesus Christ as Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25) opens the Fourth Seal Judgment, which is death. A warning: "31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the

world" (1Corinthians 11:31-32). [See our article, "Tribulation Timeline: When Shall These Things Be? (Part 2), The Seven Seal Judgments" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Timelin.Trib.Timeline.Pt.2.html> --, for an earlier, spirited analysis of the Seal Judgments-- with a chronology. Also, our Timeline Tribulation Chart (aka, "The Big Chart") ---, <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Big.Chart.Intro.html> -- may aid in visually placing events.]

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- "8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the Earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the Earth."

A pale horse is ridden by one named "Death"-- followed by "Hell" (6:8)-- in this Fourth Seal Judgment, which is hardly a good name for anyone but an emissary of Satan. As the Year 2000 (Y2K) approaches, the population of the planet is projected to be about 6 billion. The "fourth part of the Earth" (6:8) is prophesied to die in this one Seal Judgment alone-- about 1.5 billion people. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13). Death and Hell accomplish their Divinely allowed mission through killing with:

- (1) "sword" (6:8), i.e., warfare, extermination, murder, etc.,
- (2) "hunger" (6:8), i.e., famine-- such as seen in Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, and contemporary North Korea,
- (3) "death" (6:8), i.e., any of a vast number of other means of death-- "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26), and
- (4) "beasts of the Earth" (6:8), i.e., "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezekiel 5:17).

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- "9 And when he had opened the Fifth Seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:"

The Martyrs' Seal is the Fifth Seal Judgment. Death for the "Word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (6:9) is distinguished from simply dying as the unelect in the Fourth Seal Judgment. John the Beloved "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain" (6:9), indicating by their proximity to His throne, the friendship and endearment that the LORD especially has for those who die for Him. Remember, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Certainly not all of the Saints have been martyred, but those who have been martyred have been given special mention and honor. "35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of

whom the world was not worthy:)" (Hebrews 11:35-38).

Martyrs especially understand the power of their testimony for the Word of God-- as witnessed by Stephen's martyrdom. "6 [Stephen said] And God spake on this wise... 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God... 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:6,54-55,58). Though no one seeks martyrdom, i.e., "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29), our LORD will give clear indication to those who trust Him, if he expects you to witness for Him with your death. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11).

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- "10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?"

The martyred Saints cry out for vengeance, which the LORD has clearly promised. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19). Both God's Holiness and His Truth demand that He avenge His martyrs, i.e., "O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?" (6:10). For God to be true to His Word, His holiness is a hatred of sin, which demands judgment. "1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Hebrews 2:1-3).

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- "11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Both Isaiah and the Apostle Paul would appreciate the "white robes" (6:11) of righteousness described by the Apostle John. Isaiah described the "robe of righteousness" of the Saints. "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh Himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isaiah 61:10). Paul was confronted with the stark contrast of the "filth of the world" versus the cleanness that is the "righteousness of Saints", i.e., "And to her [the Bride of Christ] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints" (Revelation 19:8). "Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (1Corinthians 4:13).

Not only are the Martyred Saints given "white robes", but they are told to wait a "little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (6:11). How long is a "little season"? Less than 7 years-- the Tribulation Week. Also, Satan is loosed from the Bottomless Pit for a "little season" after the End of the Millennium. "And cast him [Satan] into the Bottomless Pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:3).

How are these Martyred Saints killed? They were evidently beheaded. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the Beast [the Antichrist], neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). Martyrs, like all Christians, can do whatever God has called us to do. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

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- "12 And I beheld when he had opened the Sixth Seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;"

The Sixth Seal Judgment is Heavenly Turmoil. God has used a "great earthquake" (6:12) before to announce or punctuate significant events:

(1) at the crucifixion of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54),

(2) after the Apostle Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi because they answered the Macedonian call to spread the Gospel to Europe, i.e., "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26), and

(3) after the Resurrection of the Two Witnesses and the Pre-Wrath Rapture, which is in addition to an earlier Pre-Tribulational Rapture [see our article, "The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture: Or, The Last Trump and the Pre-Wrath Rapture" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, for insight into this Rapture], i.e., "11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a Great Voice from Heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to Heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And the same hour was there a **great earthquake**, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven" (Revelation 11:11-13).

The "sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood" (6:12) describes the Word that was given to the prophet Joel. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into

blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come" (Joel 2:31). Also, the "sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 3:15). The "lights"-- sun and moon-- that God has placed in the heavens for "signs" (Genesis 1:14) will become "black as sackcloth of hair" and "as blood" (Revelation 6:12). "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs**, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Genesis 1:14).

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- "13 And the stars of Heaven fell unto the Earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

Ezekiel was given a prophecy concerning "Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Ezekiel 32:2) that corresponds to the Sixth Seal Judgment. "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the Heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light" (Ezekiel 32:7). "Shooting stars" are another name for the streak of light produced by a meteor as the small bits of space rock burn up when passing through our atmosphere. This could be what the LORD intended to convey to John, i.e., the "stars of Heaven fell unto the Earth" (6:13). Meteor showers that can generally be viewed in the Northern Hemisphere are the Perseid (August 12th) and the Leoneid (November 17th).

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- "14 And the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

A "scroll" is generally pictured as a parchment with rolled ends. For the Heaven to depart "as a scroll rolled together" (6:14), would imply that the atmospheric heavens have suddenly and rapidly cleared themselves-- as if in preparation for something or Someone. "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isaiah 34:4). Though this Sixth Seal Judgment does have an Apocalyptic sense of being the Last Judgment of God against the planet-- it is only the beginning. "There shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:8). Since the previous four Seal Judgments can be variously interpreted by ungodly men as "acts of men", this Judgment will leave little to the imagination-- this is an "act of God". "That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this" (Isaiah 41:20).

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- "15 And the kings of the Earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;"

God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). God will judge all men-- rich and poor, mighty and low, master and servant-- by the standard

of how much Truth and understanding did they reject. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Hiding in the "dens and in the rocks of the mountains" (6:15) is useless before the All Knowing God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

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- "16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"

As our Blessed LORD walked to His doom at Golgotha, He instructed the women that bewailed and lamented for Him with words from the prophet Hosea. "28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us [Hosea 10:8]. 31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:28-31).

Notice that they begin to notice and admit that the One doing the judging is Jesus Christ, i.e., the "face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (6:16). The very fact that these who are being judged cry out, "Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne," (6:16) indicates that **they have just seen the face of the LORD Jesus Christ** when the "Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (6:14). "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

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- "17 For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

These Seal Judgments encompass a period of 3 1/2 years-- the first half of the Tribulation Week; and, the "vials of the wrath of God" (Revelation 16:1) will not be poured out until the End of the Tribulation Week. Therefore, the exclamation of the ungodly that are being judged, "For the great day of His wrath is come," (16:17) indicates only the excited state of their hearts and minds-- not an exact assessment of the progress of the Tribulation Week. Correctly, they cry out, "Who shall be able to stand?" (6:17). The men of Bethshemesh, who looked into the Ark of the LORD, were slain by the LORD. The surviving Bethshemites exclaimed, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?" (1Samuel 6:20). No man can stand before God unless the Mighty God upholds him. "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous" (Psalm 37:17).

All Praise to the Long Suffering God for His goodness and forbearance! "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). Blessed be the Merciful Jehovah who still desires that men would be saved! "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth" (1Timothy 2:4). May the Holy Spirit yet reap a harvest of souls from the fields of men, who are still "crooked and perverse" (Philippians 2:15).

Chapter 7: 144,000 Sealed on Earth and a Throne Scene of Delivered Saints

- "1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the Earth, holding the four winds of the Earth, that the wind should not blow on the Earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."

The events of Revelation 7 take place about 12 days prior to the Middle of the Tribulation Week. [Print our Tribulation Timeline Chart-- for studying-- to see how we arrived at that conclusion.] "Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all Wisdom" (Proverbs 18:1). The "four corners of the Earth" (7:1) simply denote the compass points of North, South, East, and West of a spherical Earth, i.e., making reference to a complete or entire Earth. "It is He that sitteth upon the **circle of the Earth**, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:22).

The "four angels" restraining the "four winds of the Earth" (7:1) will receive the attention of Earth dwellers; and, it will probably coincide with the Seventh Seal's ominous Heavenly Silence of "about the space of half an hour" (8:1). This will be a miracle of the Tribulation Week. "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the Earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasures" (Psalm 135:7). Wind is the movement of air on the Earth's surface, which is effected by:

(1) the constant process of heating and cooling of the planet-- causing the low and high pressure areas, and

(2) the rotation of the planet. "Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in His fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the Earth? what is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Proverbs 30:4).

Therefore, preventing the wind from blowing may entail the LORD's circumvention of the heating and cooling of the planet; also, He may prevent the rotation of the planet. "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27). [See our article, "For the Elect's Sake" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html> --, to see how the LORD will miraculously shorten the Tribulation Week.] **Preparation for the opening of the Seventh Seal (Revelation 8:1) by sealing the 144,000 is part of the theme of Revelation 7.** "Stormy wind fulfilling His Word" (Psalm 148:8) is to be expected from the LORD.

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- "2 And I saw another angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the Living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the Earth and the sea,"

The "angel ascending from the **East**" (7:2) is consistent with the pattern of the Son of God's First and Second Advents. At the First Advent of our LORD, the Wise Men saw in the **East** the star that announced the LORD Jesus' birth. "1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came Wise Men from the **East** to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the **East**, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:1-2). Likewise, the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ is compared to lightning coming out of the **East**. "For as the lightning cometh out of the **East**, and shineth even unto the West; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27).

Preservation and deliverance of the Saints is the purpose of this angel out of the East "having the seal of the Living God" (7:2). God "knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9). The seal of the Almighty is sure and certain-- He knows those who are His, i.e., the ones who "depart from iniquity". "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The LORD knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2Timothy 2:19).

The "four angels" (7:2)-- "standing on the four corners of the Earth" (7:1)-- are appointed "to hurt the Earth and the sea" (7:2). Pain and hurt were appointed to man for the First Sin. "But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). But, pain and suffering has been intended by our God to instruct us, as well, i.e., "When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and enquired early after God" (Psalm 78:34). Pain which does not reform and instruct man, is meant by God to hurt and punish. "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Isaiah 13:11).

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- "3 Saying, Hurt not the Earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

The Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25) not only can, but will seal the "servants of our God in their foreheads" (7:3) to righteously preserve His Saints and judge His enemies. "And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 9:4). The sealing is to mark the Godly for preservation from His Judgments. "16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name. 17 And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth His own son that serveth Him. 18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not" (Malachi 3:16-18).

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- "4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

The emphasis of the first half of Revelation 7 is the sealing of the 144,000 of the Twelve Tribes of Israel; but, this does not preclude Gentile Believers from also receiving a similar sealing at this time. "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the Earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Revelation 9:4). Sealing protects the Righteous from the Judgments of God poured out upon the Earth; but, martyrdom at the hands of Antichrist may still be sovereignly allowed by the LORD-- or, disallowed, as in the case of the 144,000. "[Fifth Seal Judgment] And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, **until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled**" (6:11).

To be "sealed" (7:4) by God is to be given the Holy Spirit. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2Corinthians 1:22). This would indicate that the Jewish 144,000 and any Gentiles sealed at this time-- about 12 days before the Middle of the Tribulation Week-- **are newly converted**. "In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in Whom also **after that ye believed**, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise" (Ephesians 1:13). Remember, the martyrdom of Christians of the Fifth Seal Judgment (Revelation 6:9-11) began about 90 days before the Middle of the Tribulation Week. Even as our LORD marks His property, Satan will attempt to identify his property through the Mark of the Beast. "And he [the False Prophet] causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16).

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- "5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand."

The very fact that "all the tribes of the children of Israel" (7:4) are enumerated in verses 5 through 8, indicates that Israel always existed in the eyes of God; and, classifying the 144,000 by tribe at that time demonstrates that faith in Jesus as the Messiah has made them "servants of our God" (7:3). "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" (Numbers 23:23). Missing from this particular list of the twelve tribes of Israel is the tribe of Dan-- replaced by one of Joseph's sons, Manasses (Manasseh, Hebrew). Some account for this omission as an indication that the Antichrist will come from Dan. "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward" (Genesis 49:17).

The name of the tribe of Dan is connected to idolatry in the Book of Judges. "30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" (Judges 18:30-31). Definite punishment is promised for idolatry. "18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; 19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add

drunkenness to thirst: 20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under Heaven. 21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law" (Deuteronomy 29:18-21).

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- "6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand."

Why 12,000 from each tribe? Since 12 is the number of tribes of Old Testament Israel and the number of apostles of the New Testament Church, then 12 seems to imply the idea of "representative", i.e., of the whole of Israel and the Church. "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:29). Also, we know that Israel will be a secular nation with a Temple during the Tribulation Week. "When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" (Matthew 24:15).

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- "7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand."

What is the benefit of sealing, if the Antichrist will kill them anyway? It appears that the 144,000 sealed Jewish Believers will be delivered from the Antichrist, i.e., not killed, and will stand triumphantly before the Throne of God. "1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a New Song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the Earth" (Revelation 14:1-3).

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- "8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

But, why would the Only Wise God allow the sealed Gentile Believers to be protected from His judgments, only to be killed by the Antichrist? First, only a portion of the Tribulation Saints will be martyred-- not all. "For this we say unto you by the Word of the LORD, that we **which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD** shall not prevent [literally, precede] them which are asleep" (1Thessalonians 4:15). Second, those that are martyred by the Antichrist have been sovereignly selected by Jehovah to bear witness for the LORD Jesus Christ by their death, and will be privileged to receive the Martyrs' Crown, i.e., "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life" (Revelation 2:10). "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should **bear**

witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth My voice" (John 18:37).

- "9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a Great Multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

This "Great Multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (7:9) speaks primarily of the Gentile Believers that come out of the Second Half of the Tribulation Week, i.e., "out of Great Tribulation" (7:14). "15 When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation [at the Middle of the Tribulation Week], spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)... 21 For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:15,21).

But, how can this be stated prior to the opening of the Seventh Seal (Revelation 8:1), which occurs at the Middle of the Tribulation Week? Notice that this Great Multitude is standing "before the throne" (7:9) in Heaven-- apart from any clock or sense of time, i.e., in eternity. It is as if the LORD is giving us a look into eternity at the martyrs of the Second Half of the Tribulation Week, which makes this passage parenthetical or unchronological. The same unchronological discussion takes place when Israel is remembered as a woman, "being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (Revelation 12:2), immediately after the Seventh Trumpet Judgment is described (11:15).

- "10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

How do we know that these who are arrayed in "white robes, and palms in their hands" (7:9) have been martyred? First, in the Fifth Seal Judgment, we are told that those martyred under that Seal have been counseled to be patient until "their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (6:11), i.e., their brethren of the Great Multitude of chapter 7. Second, they are also given "white robes" (7:13), just as the martyrs of the Fifth Seal Judgment, i.e., "white robes were given unto every one of them" (6:11). And, third, the events of chapter 7 occur as the Mark of the Beast is ready to be implemented-- Middle of the Tribulation Week-- where it is promised that "as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (13:15).

This Great Multitude of glorified Saints enthusiastically worship and praise the Living God. "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (7:10). Evidently, one of the results of removing the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, working in the Pre-Tribulation Raptured Saints-- "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth [restrains] will let [continue to restrain], until He be taken out of the way [via the Pre-Tribulation Rapture]" (2Thessalonians 2:7)-- is the repentance of many that are left behind. That repentance is why there is a "Great Multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9) that "came out of Great Tribulation" (7:14), i.e., out of the Second Half of the Tribulation Week. "When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and enquired early after God" (Psalm 78:34). [See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture? Or, Taking Away the Restraining Influence" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy>

/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html -- , for an explanation of 2Thessalonians 2.]

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- "11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,"

The angels "round about the throne" (7:11) are:

(1) created beings, like man, i.e., "For by Him [Jesus Christ] were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things** were created by Him, and for Him" (Colossians 1:16),

(2) moral agents that can obey or disobey the Creator, like man, i.e., "Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word" (Psalm 103:20), and

(3) able to experience joy as the LORD executes His judgments on the Earth, i.e., "3 And again they [the Glorified Saints, v. 1] said, Alleluia. And her [Babylon the Great's] smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts [four seraphim (4:6)-- a six-winged angelic being (Isaiah 6:2)] fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia" (Revelation 19:3-4).

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- "12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

"All the angels... worshipped God" (7:11). What a majestic spectacle this would be, to see, hear, feel, and experience more than 100,000,000 angels-- "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (5:11)-- worshipping God! "**Thou art worthy, O LORD**, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (4:11). Why attribute to God "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might" (7:12)? Because the shoe **only** fits Him. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky" (Deuteronomy 33:26).

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- "13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"

These "elders" (7:13) refer to the 24 Elders (4:4), who seem to represent the entirety of the Saints of God, both Israel and the Church. Like us, they are intensely interested in the welfare and progress of their brethren, the Tribulation Saints, i.e., "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" (7:13). Again, the "white robes" (7:13) are brought up. And, we remark that the Fifth Seal Judgment describes the Martyred Saints in "white robes" (6:11), which is the clothing of the Bride of Christ. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints" (Revelation 19:8).

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- "14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of Great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Whence came they" (7:13), or, "where are they from?" This question is asked by one of the elders to the Apostle John; and, John responded like you or I, i.e., "Sir, thou knowest" (7:14), or, "[I don't know, but] Sir, you know." The elder graciously replies to John, "These are they which came out of Great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14). Normally blood will stain a garment, but the spiritual purity here described can only be achieved by washing away our sins through the blood of Christ shed in His sacrificial death on the Cross.

- (1) Blood symbolizes life, i.e., "For the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Leviticus 17:14),
- (2) Shed blood is necessary for forgiveness, i.e., "And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness]" (Hebrews 9:22),
- (3) Christ's blood makes possible our justification, i.e., "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9), and
- (4) The blood of His Cross is not a morbid thought, but our way to peace with God, i.e., "And, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven" (Colossians 1:20).

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- "15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

These martyred, but now glorified Saints now stand before the "throne of God", serving the LORD "day and night in His Temple" (7:15). "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psalm 23:6). Not only can we expect to be in God's presence forever, but **He desires to dwell with us!** "2 In My Father's house are many mansions [dwellings or abodes]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

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- "16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

What friend can we name that will cause us to **never** hunger, thirst, or be oppressed by so much as the harsh rays of the sun? Only Jesus can cause this to happen. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). How many people in this old world can truly number Jesus as their friend? "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a Friend that sticketh closer

than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Remember, friendship with the world, i.e., desiring the world's companionship more than Christ's companionship, is to count Jesus as an enemy. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

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- "17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

John the Baptist identified the LORD Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Picture a Little Pet Lamb. That is the image of what the LORD Jesus portrays Himself to be. But, instead of being the object of our care, He cares for us, i.e., the "Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them" (7:17). "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1Peter 5:7).

What are "living fountains of waters" (7:17)? Certainly these waters are more than ordinary fountains. "7 How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. 8 They shall be **abundantly satisfied** with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the **river of Thy pleasures**. 9 For **with Thee is the fountain of life**: in Thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 36:7-9). Abundant satisfaction and rivers of pleasure flow from His fountain of life. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (16:11).

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (7:17). How unlike the destiny of the Lost Sinner Who Dies in His Sins! "47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47-48). Contrast the suffering of the damned to the tender treatment of God personally wiping "away all tears" (7:17) from the eyes of the Redeemed. This picture of punishing the Sinner while tenderly treating the Righteous is unfair to the minds of those who reject the Little Pet Lamb. "For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1Corinthians 1:18). All glory to the Little Pet Lamb! For the tears that He shall wipe away will be forever banished. "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37)!

Chapter 8: Opening the Seventh Seal and Sounding the First Four Trumpets

- "1 And when He had opened the Seventh Seal, there was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour."

When the LORD Jesus Christ opens the Seventh Seal Judgment, the immediate effect is silence in

Heaven. "But the LORD is in His holy Temple: let all the Earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20). The "angels desire to look into" (1Peter 1:12) both the Gospel plan of man's Salvation and the righteous plan of God's Judgments. "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy Judgments are in the Earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

The presence of God is a naturally joyful place. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for Evermore" (Psalm 16:11). Therefore, any period of absolute "silence in Heaven" (8:1) must indicate the awful gravity of what is about to unfold. "As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

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- "2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

A picture of the Judgments of the Tribulation Week would begin with the Seal Judgments (6:1-17; 8:1) occupying the First Half of the Week. The Seventh Seal Judgment (8:1) contains the Trumpet Judgments (8:2-13; 9:1-21; 11:15-19), which dominate the Second Half of the Week. And, the Seventh Trumpet Judgment (11:15-19) contains the final seven Vial Judgments (16:1-21), which occupy the final handful of days of the Tribulation Week (after the Pre-Wrath Rapture). "And to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1Thessalonians 1:10).

The angels are God's messengers-- of the Gospel and of Judgment "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Trumpets are more than a musical instrument, but a means of announcing:

(1) Old Testament Israel's New Year, which is the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah), i.e., "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month [Tishri, e.g., September], in the first day of the month [e.g., September 11th 1999], shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation" (Leviticus 23:24),

(2) the time for Old Testament Israel to begin their march in their wilderness wanderings, i.e., "Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps" (Numbers 10:2), and

(3) the alarm for war, i.e., "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (Numbers 10:9).

- "3 And another angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar which was before the Throne."

The angel that "stood at the Altar" (8:3) would be one of the four divisions of Holy Angels described in Scripture:

(1) **Angels**, in general, are "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14), who are a numerous, i.e., "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11), but separate class of created beings, superior to man, i.e., man was made a "little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8:5), possessing greater Knowledge and Wisdom than man, i.e., "the Wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the Earth" (2Samuel 14:20), and having greater strength than man, i.e., "His angels, that excel in strength, that do His Commandments" (Psalm 103:20).

(2) **Cherubim** are commonly identified in the Old Testament as appearing around the person of the LORD of Hosts, i.e., "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" (Psalm 80:1), possibly guarding His Throne as they guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden, i.e., "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life" (Genesis 3:24), and aiding in the execution of the Almighty's will, i.e., "And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 18:9-10).

(3) **Seraphim** are briefly mentioned as directing Heaven's worship of the LORD of Hosts, i.e., "3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole Earth is full of His glory... 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the Altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:3, 6-7). And,

(4) **Archangels**, of which Michael (Jude 6) alone is named in the Scriptures, are represented as protecting and prospering Israel, i.e., "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (Daniel 12:1), and heralding the return of Jesus Christ, i.e., "For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the Trump of God" (1Thessalonians 4:16).

The angel at the "golden Altar" (8:3) before the Heavenly Throne of God holds a "golden censer" (8:3) to offer incense upon the Altar of incense, which is the Heavenly foreshadowing of the earthly anti-type used by the priesthood. "And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it" (Exodus 30:1). And, "Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it" (30:7). The incense of the earthly altar was composed equally of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense (30:34). It was forbidden to reproduce the incense for ordinary purposes, i.e., "whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people" (30:38). Certainly, the incense would perfume the air to

take away the smell of all the animals sacrificed; but more importantly, the incense represented the intercession of the appointed high priest, i.e., "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2).

The "prayers of all Saints" (Revelation 8:3) are the wonderful sacrifices offered upon that Heavenly Altar. We have been proffered a look at the very place that the God That Hearest Prayer (Psalm 65:2) receives our petitions as a sweet savour. Our praise of God has been declared a sacrifice to God. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). It is an important encouragement to our intercession that we understand and believe that God does not lose even one of our prayers. "And shall not God avenge His own Elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7).

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- "4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

The "smoke of the incense" (8:4) represents the sweet savour of the LORD's acceptance of the "prayers of all Saints" (8:3). Acceptance by God of ourselves and our prayers is the highest honor that mortal man can receive. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, **acceptable** unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Our voluntary presentation of ourselves to God enables Him to make us-- and our prayers-- well pleasing in His sight. "20 Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our LORD Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, **working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight**, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

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- "5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the Altar, and cast it into the Earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

Notice that the angel offered the incense with a "golden censer" (8:3)-- used to take the burning coals into the Holy of Holies once a year for the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:12)-- now uses the same censer to execute the answer to those prayers. The angel fills the censer with the "fire of the Altar" and casts "it into the Earth" with resulting "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Revelation 8:5). It appears that the Saints have been praying for the judgment of the Earth, as will be seen in the immediate sounding of the Trumpet Judgments. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?" (6:10).

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- "6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

The "seven angels" (8:6) were ready to sound their trumpets because they had "prepared themselves" (8:6). "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:40). If we will be ready, as the Apostle Paul was, i.e., "I am now ready to be offered, and the time

of my departure is at hand" (2Timothy 4:6), then the LORD will answer our prayers to take us Home to dwell in His presence. "LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: **Thou wilt prepare their heart**, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear" (Psalm 10:17).

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- "7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the Earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

1/3 of all "trees" and "green grass" will be "burnt up" (8:7), when the First Trumpet Judgment sounds. Combined with fire and smoke, the air will be difficult to breathe. But, God will make a difference between His Tribulation Saints and the world He is judging. "And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the Earth" (Exodus 8:22). "Hail and fire mingled with blood" (Revelation 8:7) are an unnatural combination; and therefore, would be supernaturally provided by the LORD to accomplish the First Trumpet Judgment. But, the "LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2Timothy 4:18). [See our article, "Tribulation Timeline: When Shall These Things Be? (Part 3), Or, The Seven Trumpet Judgments" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Timelin.Trib.Timeline.Pt.3.html> --, for additional discussion on the Trumpet Judgments.]

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

Again, 1/3 of something is affected-- this time by the Second Trumpet Judgment, i.e., the "third part of the sea became blood" (8:8). The LORD will wisely judge the Earth, e.g., incrementally affecting only 1/3 of the sea, giving space for repentance for those who remain. An example of God's Wisdom in Judgment is Solomon's Wisdom in calling for the dividing of the baby. "All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the **Wisdom** of God was in him, to do **Judgment**" (1Kings 3:28). Ultimately, the LORD will completely destroy the Nations of the Earth. But, first He will restore the Backslidden Church, then He will redeem Israel. "Fear thou not, O Jacob My servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished" (Jeremiah 46:28).

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- "9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

Additionally, in the Second Trumpet Judgment, 1/3 of sea creatures and ships will be destroyed by the "great mountain burning with fire" (8:8) that is cast into the sea. This approximates an asteroid striking the Earth, causing 1/3 of the sea to become blood (8:8). The destruction of 1/3 of sea creatures will provide the blood that the Apostle John describes here. "Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15). This Second Trumpet Judgment occurs approximately 4 prophetic years into the Tribulation Week, where the Seventh Seal Judgment coincides with the Abomination of Desolation at the Middle of the Week. [See

our Tribulation Chart for a projected timeline of the Judgments of the Tribulation Week.]

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- "10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from Heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;"

Aster is the Greek word for "star" (8:10). Our word asteroid is derived from this. In modern times, the "Tunguska Event" of June 30th 1908 at 7:40 AM in the remote region of central Siberia in Russia, is the closest thing to a "great star from Heaven" (8:10) falling to the Earth. Scientists theorized that a comet fragment-- dust and ice weighing between 100,000 and 1,000,000 tons-- collided with the upper atmosphere of the Earth at 62,000 miles per hour. An aerial explosion occurred, creating a fireball that was visible 500 miles away. The energy of the shock wave from the aerial explosion was estimated to be equivalent to 10 to 15 megatons. It shook buildings and flattened 500,000 acres of trees, but it left no crater or cometary fragments. Abnormally bright nighttime skies resulted in Europe and Siberia for some time after the event, from the gases of the vaporized object. "9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; **but the end is not by and by**. 10 Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from Heaven" (Luke 21:9-11).

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- "11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

This Third Trumpet Judgment is an act of God, resulting from the impact of a star "called Wormwood" (8:11). The bitterness of the water kills many, just as bitterness of soul inclines us to iniquity and death. "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23), were the words of warning spoken to Simon the Sorcerer, after he attempted to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit. Bitterness is a state of discontentedness with God. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). But, during the Second Half of the Tribulation Week, God will repay the world's discontent with His vengeance, i.e., "Therefore thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink" (Jeremiah 9:15).

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- "12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

In our article, "For the Elect's Sake", we hypothesized that the Almighty would speed up the rotation of the planet by 50% during the Fourth Trumpet Judgment to cause night and day to come quicker and be shorter by 1/3. [To see this idea developed in detail, please read "For the Elect's Sake, Or, That a Merciful God Will Shorten the Tribulation Week" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html> --.] "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14). The overall effect of this Fourth Trumpet Judgment is a shifting of man's perception of time, as well as, utter chaos and confusion; while not breaking His

Word that He gave in the Noahic Covenant. "While the Earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (8:22). As we approach the end of this age, the very weather we experience in our different localities will continually vary to the extreme, while technically not breaking His Word about the divinely appointed pattern of "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night" (8:22). "The Earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalms 24:1). Our God is still a Sovereign God. And, "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own?" (Matthew 20:15). Unfortunately, our tendency is to underestimate just what the LORD will do to fulfill the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars by 1/3 in the Fourth Trumpet Judgment. But, the prophet Jeremiah had the right idea. "Ah LORD GOD! behold, Thou hast made the Heaven and the Earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).

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- "13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of Heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the Earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

If the LORD was only designing to annihilate mankind at this time, why would He warn the wicked, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the Earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (8:13)? Though these are the "days of vengeance" (Luke 21:22), God still is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9). Multitudes will perish, "but for the Elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). When was the last time that an angel from the LORD was seen "flying through the midst of Heaven", much less, warning mankind? How can anyone **not** believe that God is judging the Earth, and that these days are unique, i.e., "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21)?

Chapter 9: Sounding the Fifth and Sixth Trumpets-- Demonic Locusts and Demonic Horsemen

- "1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from Heaven unto the Earth: and to him was given the key of the Bottomless Pit."

As the Second Half of the Tribulation Week progresses from the Seal Judgments to the Trumpet Judgments, the intensity of God's dealing increases by at least a third, i.e., the First Trumpet burns up 1/3 of trees and green grass (Revelation 8:7), the Second Trumpet turns 1/3 of the sea to blood (8:8), the Third Trumpet poisons 1/3 of fresh water (8:10-11), and the Fourth Trumpet darkens 1/3 of light from the sun, moon, and stars (8:12-13). I believe that the Fifth Trumpet Judgment sounds about 5 1/2 years into the prophetic week. [See "Tribulation Timeline: When Shall These Things Be? (Part 3)" for more on the Trumpet Judgments.]

This chapter begins with the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet Judgment, where a "star" falls "from

Heaven unto the Earth" (Revelation 9:1). Satan is that fallen star. In the Book of Job, the stars refer to the angels. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:7). Commentators point out that the Greek word for "fall" (Revelation 9:1) is in the perfect tense, which signifies completed action. But, when was that action completed? At the Middle of the Tribulation Week. Why? Revelation 12 describes the Woman in the Wilderness-- elect-but-still-lost Israel-- during the last half (1,260 days) of the Tribulation Week, i.e., "where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days [1,260 days]" (12:6). Israel is described, in the context of Revelation 12, immediately before Satan's final ejection from Heaven, i.e., "neither was their place found any more in Heaven" (12:8). Though the "fall" (9:1) will be completed 3 1/2 years into the Week, Satan will be "given the key of the Bottomless Pit" (9:1), i.e., to have his cohorts released, about 2 years later-- at the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet.

Those 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6) begin-- after a war in the Heavens, where Satan is permanently banned from accusing the brethren-- with the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15) at the Middle of the Tribulation Week. "7 And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come Salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:7-10). Satan has historically accused all the Saints before God, as depicted in the ancient Book of Job. "6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. 7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it... 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1:6-7, 9).

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- "2 And he opened the Bottomless Pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

The "Bottomless Pit" (9:2) is the Abyss. This place cannot be a physical confine, but a spiritual cage for demons. Legion, the collective name of the demons that possessed the man of the Gadarenes (Luke 8:30), begged Jesus Christ not to "command them to go out into the deep [literally, the abyss]" (8:31). In other words, the demons asked permission of the Son of God to remain at large-- until their Final Judgment, i.e., "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29). May we forever remember the transcendent authority of our LORD Jesus Christ over all things-- especially Satan. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All Power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (28:18).

The "smoke out of the pit" (9:2) represents the vastness of the numbers of the demons, i.e., fallen angels, that darken the sky. A third of the angels of Heaven fell with Satan at the original rebellion. "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the Earth: and the dragon

stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (12:4). We are revealed that there are more than 100 million angels thronging the Almighty's Heavenly Throne in a scene following the Pre-Tribulational Rapture-- described as the First "Come Up Hither" (4:1). "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (5:11). This meant that there must have been at least 150 million total angels before the rebellion.

Notice that the "sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (9:2). Angels and demons are not normally visible to human physical perception, except as allowed by God. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (14:6). Even when men are allowed to see angels, it is not always apparent that they are angels. "16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD... 20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward Heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground" (Judges 13:16, 20). Just as the Almighty gave permission to Legion (Matthew 8:29) to not be confined in the Abyss, the Omnipotent God orders these demons to be unleashed in a visible form upon deserving humanity. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

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- "3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the Earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the Earth have power."

Ants, bees, and termites are the most numerous and prevalent of insects upon the planet; but, possibly, the locusts are best known for their destructive plagues. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left" (Exodus 10:12). The locust is a species of short-horned grasshopper found throughout the world, known to increase greatly in number and migrate long distances. Periodically, swarms appear, then disappear. In 1869, desert locust swarms reached England from probably West Africa. In 1889, a swarm of locust crossed the Red Sea-- whose flight was estimated to cover a 2,000 square mile area. Swarms are known to fly as high as 5,000 feet. A developed locust plague is almost impossible to control with even modern measures. "And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt" (10:19).

The scorpion is a species of arachnids with a segmented tail, tipped with a venomous stinger. Possessing six pairs of appendages-- four for walking, two for grasping, and two for tearing apart their prey-- this "lobster-like" insect usually paralyzes its large prey with a venomous neurotoxin before feeding upon them. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, LORD, **only** makest me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8). A milder hemotoxin is also injected by scorpions, resulting in great pain. "Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked" (Jeremiah 30:23). These are more than a mutant locust-scorpion.

They are the demons that God has divinely appointed to terrorize godless, rebellious man. "Thine heart shall meditate terror" (Isaiah 33:18). While to the righteous, the LORD promises, "In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee" (54:14).

- "4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the Earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

"It was commanded them" (9:4) by the Judge of the Tribulation Week that they should not hurt the grass or trees, but only the ungodly, i.e., "which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (9:4). Why would the demons torment their own? We know that Satan hates the godly and can receive permission for limited tempting of the Righteous. "4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life" (Job 2:4-6). The demons torment the ungodly, because:

(1) God has commanded it, i.e., "That at the Name of Jesus **every** knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth" (Philippians 2:10), and

(2) the fear that torments them causes them to torment others, i.e., "fear hath torment" (1John 4:18) and "19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred**, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, **murders**, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

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

Torment without death would include the classic symptoms of scorpion bites, i.e., edema (swelling), discoloration, pain, convulsions, paralysis, and cardiac irregularities. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21). Ice compresses and limited antivenins may have proven beneficial to conventional scorpion bites, but these are unconventional. The Holy Spirit designates a five month window of affliction for these Demonic Locusts, which means that the pain of one scorpion bite may give way to the next bite, until the five months have elapsed. "When He slew them, then they sought Him" (Psalm 78:34).

- "6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

To these, suicide is preferable to the pain of living; but, God does not allow the afflicted rebels the luxury of death-- "death shall flee from them" (9:6). Both temporal punishment, as well as possible repentance, are reasons for the All Wise God to prevent success to the rebels' desired suicide. Sin will be punished. "Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). But, repentance will be visited with mercy. "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13).

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- "7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men."

This will be the Fifth Trumpet Judgment, not conventional times. "Howl ye; for the Day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isaiah 13:6). At this point, it is obvious that these are not ordinary locusts; but, in fact, they are Demonic Locusts.

(1) They are shaped like "horses prepared unto battle" (9:7), but they may be only the size of your thumb (2 1/2 inches or 65 mm).

(2) They appear, as it were, wearing "crowns like gold" (9:7), just as the gregarious locusts may appear golden when they swarm-- from their previously green coloration in their solitary phase. And,

(3) They appear-- to the horror of the Tribulation Week ungodly-- with the "faces of men" (9:7), but they may be capable of traveling as far as 30 miles (48 km) in one day's time-- if they are restricted to the range of conventional locusts. "Horror shall cover them" (Ezekiel 7:18).

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- "8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions."

A woman's glory is her hair. "If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1Corinthians 11:15). But, Demonic Locusts-- having human-like faces-- with the "hair of a women" (Revelation 9:8), are nightmarish! The sleep of the Righteous is blessed, for "He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2). But, the impenitent of the Tribulation Week will experience the nightmare of these Demonic Locusts, whose teeth will be "as the teeth of lions" (Revelation 9:8). The plague of demonic, nightmarish Hollywood movies is an effort of Satan to desensitize the world to the upcoming Tribulation plagues; thus, making it less probable that the hardened Earth dwellers will repent. "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:19).

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- "9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."

The Christian puts on the "breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14) as defensive armor in the spiritual battle against our "adversary the devil" (1Peter 5:8). Just so, these Demonic Locusts have "breastplates of iron" (Revelation 9:9), indicating that these "hoppers" will not be defeated like a grasshopper under a gardener's shoe. Sound will first assault the Tribulation Week impenitents, who "have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (9:4). The horrific sound of "many horses running to battle" (9:9) will be the sound of the tormentors' wings approaching their victims. And, the only thing that will stop the torment of these Demonic Locusts will be the penitent's cry for God's mercy. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

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- "10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."

Ever since the Fall of Man, pain has been the LORD God's means of attracting man's attention so that we might be turned to righteousness. "17 And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17-19). Likewise, pain from the tails of these Demonic Locusts will punish or convert men for "five months" (Revelation 9:10). What an imagination the Creator has, to produce such judgments! "And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 25:11).

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- "11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the Bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."

"Abaddon" (9:11), in the Hebrew, means destruction. "Apollyon" (9:11), in the Greek, means destroyer. Satan is that destroyer, who is the "angel of the Bottomless Pit" (9:11). The Almighty is alone, the True Creator. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding" (Isaiah 40:28). Satan cannot truly create, so he must resort to destroying God's creation. "8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1Peter 5:8-9). The Saints do now and will then overcome Satan by faith. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4).

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- "12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."

The Fifth Trumpet Judgment is the first of the last three woes pronounced by the angel previously. "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe,

woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the Earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (8:13). The "two woes more hereafter" (9:12) are the Sixth and Seventh Trumpet Judgments (9:13-21; 11:15-19). "11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him... 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isaiah 3:11; 5:20-21).

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- "13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,"

At the sounding of the Second Woe (8:13) or the Sixth Trumpet Judgment (9:13), the very voice of the Living God comes forth "from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (9:13). This verse speaks of the Presence of God, without saying it outright. "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy Name: the upright shall dwell in Thy presence" (Psalms 140:13). And, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psalm 89:7). The "golden altar" (9:13) indicates that the "sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15) is offered in the presence of God, and that the "prayers of all Saints" (Revelation 8:3) are mixed with praise before the throne of God. The "four horns of the golden altar" (9:13) are the fixtures to which the sacrifices of prayer and praise are bound. "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us Light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar" (Psalm 118:27).

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- "14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."

The angel, who sounds the Sixth Trumpet Judgment, is divinely commanded to set free "four angels" (9:14). These four angels must be evil angels, because God never imprisons the righteous angels--only the evil. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day" (Jude 6). Just as there are righteous angels, who were assigned to each of the Seven Churches of Revelation 2 and 3, i.e., the "angel of the church in Philadelphia" (3:7), there are evil angels confined to significant locations, i.e., "which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (9:14) for the very purpose of fulfilling these prophetic functions. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

The "great river Euphrates" (9:14) is the largest river of western Asia, and it was one of the four chief principal rivers that flowed from Paradise. "10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads... 14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates" (Genesis 2:10, 14). Originating in the Armenian plateau of Turkey, it flows 1,700 miles (2,700 km) through Syria and southern Iraq, joining with the Tigris River, before it empties into the Persian Gulf. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (15:18). Jehovah appointed it as Israel's northeasterly boundary. "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours:

from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be" (Deuteronomy 11:24). The Euphrates was regarded as the eastern limit of the Roman Empire; and thus, it identified the powers from the East. "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him" (2Chronicles 35:20).

- "15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men."

The "four angels were loosed" (9:15), who "were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" (9:15), or for a period of 391.042 days in duration. Certainly, the preparation for the appropriate moment is indicated, but it seems more appropriate that the period of 391.042 days may be required for terrorizing and slaying the "third part of men" (9:15). The combination of the Fourth Seal Judgment (6:7-8) and the Sixth Trumpet judgment would accomplish the deaths of a half of mankind. If the Tribulation Week began with 6 billion people, then the Fourth Seal Judgment would slay a "fourth part of the Earth" (6:8)-- or, 1.5 billion dead-- leaving 4.5 billion. A "third part of men" (9:15)-- or, 1.5 billion men-- are slain in the Sixth Trumpet Judgment. The combination of both judgments yields 3 billion dead, which is half of the initial number to enter the Tribulation Week. "For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Isaiah 66:16).

- "16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

An army of 200 million-- "two hundred thousand thousand" (9:16)-- horsemen are described. It can be seen that these are not mere human soldiers, but Demonic Horsemen, because they are released from confinement, just as the Demonic Locusts of the previous Trumpet Judgment (9:1-2). Also, it would be a mistake to confuse the Sixth Vial Judgment's invading army of the "kings of the east" (16:12) with the events of this Sixth Trumpet Judgment. Since these are demons and not humans, it is unnecessary to speculate where such a sizable army could be presently found. But still, it is interesting to note that the People's Republic of China (PRC) claimed to have had a man-and-woman militia of 200 million, as far back as 1965 (from "Time" magazine, May 21, 1965, p. 35).

- "17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."

The Apostle John reminds us that we are receiving a faithful account of the "vision" (9:17), which he received on the Isle of Patmos (1:9). God bless him! "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips" (Proverbs 27:2). With the horses, he saw their riders. His only description of the riders is that they had "breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone" (9:17). Armored with protective breastplates with a fiery appearance ("fire"), having a red color

bordering on black ("jacinth"), and smelling like burning sulfur ("brimstone"), these riders appear as Horsemen from Hell. "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:29). The demons and the damned are characterized by the filling of their cup with fire and brimstone. "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6).

Though the riders are Demonic Horsemen, it is their horses that receive the Apostle John's attention, i.e., the "heads of the horses were as the heads of lions" (9:17). The ferocity of the horses' heads compounds the frightfulness of the riders. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8). With "fire and smoke and brimstone" (9:17) issuing forth from the horses' mouths, they act like the dragon that their master is. "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:2). The Demonic Horsemen guide their steeds, much like a fighter pilot guides his craft, with the attack issuing forth from their mounts, i.e., from their fire-breathing horses with lions' heads. "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9).

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- "18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths."

Every third person that remains alive on planet Earth will be killed by these Demonic Horsemen, or more specifically, will be killed by their horses. And, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Scripture specifies the "fire", "smoke", and "brimstone" as "these three" (9:18) by which a third of mankind is killed. "Shall not the Judge of All the Earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). Essentially, **every third person in the world will be burned alive**. The "brimstone" is the fuel, the "fire" is the combustion process, and the "smoke" is the exhaust; but, wicked men are the targets of the flame. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). How significant that the LORD speaks of plucking the brands from the burning, when describing rescuing men from hell by the power of the Gospel! "22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

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- "19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

And, lest we conclude that these horses are vulnerable from behind, "their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt" (9:19). Greek mythology proposed its own monster figure of a winged woman with a head of hair consisting of snakes-- Medusa-- and, we understand such descriptions to be that of demons. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He [the Holy Spirit] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1John 4:4). The text does not reveal that death takes place by the bite of the serpent's head in the horse's tail, but pain will come to the afflicted, i.e., "and with them they do hurt" (9:19).

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- "20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:"

As the Sixth Trumpet Judgment proceeds toward the last few months of the Tribulation Week, the men that will repent, have done so; and, those who will not repent, are hardened. "But the heavens and the Earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2Peter 3:7). Except for the amazing feat of reclaiming Israel-- along with an assortment of Gentiles-- on the very day of our LORD's Second Coming, i.e., "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth **in one day**? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8)-- *no one repents*. Instead, they continue to "worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk" (9:20).

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- "21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

This is the sad description of the Universal Depravity of Lost Men. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). There is not a good argument that men need not a Saviour. "2 The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:2-3). Those who foolishly defend the idea of the innate goodness of man, have their own conscience to reproach them. "So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). Without a statement of hope for the penitent, there would remain nothing but a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:27). "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57).

Chapter 10: A Little Book and the Seven Thunders

- "1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:"

The Book of Revelation is a book of angels, since about a fourth of all mention of angels in Scripture, occurs in the Apocalypse. God's purpose for the Revelation is "to shew unto [Jesus Christ's] servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). Angels have been appointed to deliver messages of comfort, warning, and judgment throughout this disclosure of future events, i.e., "He sent and signified it **by His angel** unto His servant John" (1:1). The "mighty angel" (10:1) described here

is "another" (Greek, *allon*) angel of the same kind previously described around the Throne of the Almighty, i.e., "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (5:2). This "mighty angel [came] down from Heaven" (10:1), which is the presence of God-- known in the Apostle Paul's epistles as the "Third Heaven" (2Corinthians 12:2) of which "eye hath not seen" (1Corinthians 2:9). The Earth's atmosphere would correspond to the First Heaven; and, the planets, stars, and beyond would correspond to the Second Heaven. "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Genesis 15:5).

This angel is "clothed with a cloud" (10:1), indicating the *presence of God*, i.e., "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man" (14:14). The "rainbow [that] was upon his head" (10:1) speaks of the *glory of God*. "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD" (Ezekiel 1:28). "His face was as it were the sun" (10:1) symbolizes the *authority* of the angel. "And God made two great lights; the greater light [the sun] to **rule** the day" (Genesis 1:16). "And his feet as pillars of fire" (10:1) alludes to the *strength* of the angel. Pillars are central and foundational to supporting a structure. "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars [literally, supports], perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9).

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- "2 And he had in his hand a Little Book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the Earth,"

The "mighty angel" (10:1) holds a "Little Book open" (10:2), indicating that the information contained therein is from God and that the Apostle John was given access to the "open" Book. "Surely the LORD GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Both "sea, and... Earth" (10:2) are under his feet, indicating that the angel has been given dominion over the entire Earth, i.e., with his message. The same idea of dominion is portrayed by the One Hundred Tenth Psalm, concerning the LORD Jesus Christ. "The LORD said unto my LORD, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1).

The Apostle John's vision of this angel must have had the "larger-than-life" feeling of seeing an exaggeratedly large angel straddling the sea and Earth. "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14). When the LORD speaks to us by His Word, by His Providence (our circumstances), through a dream, or a vision, He knows exactly what things to emphasize to make His point. "And [Jesus] needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man" (John 2:25). Providence, dreams, and visions are subject to be interpreted by the Word of God. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). The True Saints have the Infallible Holy Spirit to direct them in interpreting the Word of God; and, they have the Word of God to evaluate all dreams, visions, or prophecies. "But the Anointing [literally, *Uction*-- which is the Holy Spirit] which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as It hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27). And,

these Last Days are prophesied by the prophet Joel to be a time that the Saints will prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

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- "3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, Seven Thunders uttered their voices."

In Scripture and in the common vernacular, the lion is associated with kingly, regal power. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass" (Proverbs 19:12). Only days before our LORD's crucifixion, He prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name" (John 12:28). The response from the Father was a voice from Heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (12:28). "The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it **thundered**: others said, An angel spake to Him" (12:29). The response to the roaring of the "mighty angel" (10:1) was the uttering of the voices of **the Seven Thunders (10:3), which seems to be another series of judgments like the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials**. John's bitterness-- "as soon as I had eaten it [the Little Book], my belly was bitter" (10:10)-- caused by the Tribulation Week Impenitents' rejection of the LORD's judgments, supports the position that the Seven Thunders are another series of Tribulation judgments.

Seven times in the Twenty-Ninth Psalm does the Psalmist mention the Voice of Jehovah. This is a clue to the identity of the Seven Thunders. "3 The **voice of the LORD** is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. 4 The **voice of the LORD** is powerful; the **voice of the LORD** is full of majesty. 5 The **voice of the LORD** breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. 7 The **voice of the LORD** divideth the flames of fire. 8 The **voice of the LORD** shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. 9 The **voice of the LORD** maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in His temple doth every one speak of His glory" (Psalm 29:3-9). How the Voice of the LORD will be manifested, will reveal the identity of the Seven Thunders.

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- "4 And when the Seven Thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the Seven Thunders uttered, and write them not."

The Apostle John was instructed, like Daniel to not reveal the vision that he had been shown, i.e., "Seal up those things which the Seven Thunders uttered, and write them not" (10:4)-- probably because, like Daniel, the visions were intended for those who lived at the "time of the end" (Daniel 12:9). "26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 8:26; 12:4, 9).

- "5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the Earth lifted up his hand to Heaven,"

The drama of this scene involves only three elements-- the angel, the Earth, and the sea. Lifting "up his hand to Heaven" (10:5), the angel positions himself upon the sea and the Earth to make a pronouncement unto all. "22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of Heaven and Earth, 23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (Genesis 14:22-23).

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- "6 And sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created Heaven, and the things that therein are, and the Earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:"

Christians are instructed not to make rash oaths nor to profanely swear, i.e., "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12). But, this does not preclude a True Saint or this "mighty angel" (10:1) from making an affirmation "by Him that liveth for ever and ever" (10:6). The Third Commandment of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). To vainly use the name of God is the wicked and profane swearing of the godless, who use the name of God to damn one another, or when the worldly punctuate their speech and rants with exclamations of the name of Jesus Christ, with no thought of Christ's holiness or exaltation, i.e., "who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 9:5).

What does it mean that "there should be time no longer" (10:6)? It appears that the angel is saying that time is concluded for certain events to be completed, i.e., "Time is up"-- much as a teacher would tell the test takers to put down their pencils at the end of a standardized test. The concept of eternity is founded upon the nature of God. "For thus saith the High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). The phrase describing the LORD God, "that liveth for ever and ever" (10:6), literally means, 'that lives to the ages of the ages'. Eternity is not the cessation of time, but that time proceeds without ceasing. "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (Deuteronomy 33:27). Time is up, but for what?

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- "7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the Mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

The expression "the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound" (10:7) refers specifically to the Seventh Trumpet Judgment (11:15), which sounds approximately 8-9 days before the End of the Tribulation Week. [See our Tribulation Chart for a graphic representation of events.] At the Seventh Trumpet Judgment, the "Mystery of God should be finished" (10:7). But, what is the Mystery

of God? "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5:32). The Church of the Living God (1Timothy 3:15) is the Mystery of God, that is made known by the preaching of the "mystery of the Gospel" (Ephesians 6:19), and is revealed when the Pre-Wrath Rapture and Resurrection of the Just takes place toward the End of the Tribulation Week. "51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1Corinthians 15:51-53). [See our article, "The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture: Or, The Last Trump and the Pre-Wrath Rapture" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, to see an attempt to reconcile the Pre-Tribulational and Pre-Wrath Raptures.] Sometime between the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet Judgment (9:9-21) and the Seventh Trumpet Judgment (11:15), the Seven Thunders (10:3-4) are revealed.

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- "8 And the voice which I heard from Heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the Little Book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the Earth."

God instructed John to "take the Little Book which is open" (10:8), signifying that the Apostle John was being given a private viewing of the Seven Thunders. John was especially set apart for the privilege of fulfilling the words of the Resurrected Saviour. "22 Jesus saith unto him [Peter], If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple [John] should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John 21:22-23). Knowledge is granted to those who abide in loving obedience to the LORD Jesus. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (14:21). The Apostle John was known as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:20), and was evidently granted this preview of the Seven Thunders. But, why?

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- "9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the Little Book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey."

In obedience, John goes to the angel and makes his request, "Give me the Little Book" (10:9). The angel responds to John with further instructions. "Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey" (10:9). This is reminiscent of the prophet Ezekiel's experience. "1 Moreover He said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that roll. 3 And He said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. 14 So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me" (Ezekiel 3:1-3, 14). Ezekiel's "bitterness" (3:14), like John's (10:9), was not bitterness against God or His Providence, but was against sin and the impenitence of his hearers. Any other kind of bitterness is against God, and is sin. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31).

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- "10 And I took the Little Book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

True to the angel's words, the Little Book was "sweet as honey" (10:10) in John's mouth, but it "was bitter" (10:10) in his belly. Like all of God's Word to His Children, it is the choicest sweetness to the soul. "9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:9-10). The Promises of God are "exceeding great and precious" (2Peter 1:4), the Grace of God is more than "abundant" (2Corinthians 4:15), and the Love of Christ "passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:19).

But, the results of the Ministered Word are bitter in their effect upon unwilling hearers-- such as these whom the Seven Thunders will judge during this last part of the Tribulation Week-- because they speak to them of judgment. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34). Even the Apostle John, who will return toward the End of the Tribulation Week to administer the Seven Thunders (10:11) and deliver this message to unwilling hearers, will be faced with the bitterness of their rejection and impenitence. "15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His Words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2Chronicles 36:15-16).

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- "11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Some have said that this promise, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (10:11), has already been fulfilled by the spread of the New Testament Scriptures, including the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and the Revelation. Certainly, the promise has been fulfilled in some measure. But, the fact that the Apostle John was shown the contents of the Little Book and was told not to divulge it to the readers of this Apocalypse (10:4), indicates that John will be back at a future time in the Tribulation Week to make plain to all exactly what he was shown. "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant" (Psalm 25:14).

The Seven Thunders represent the powerful Voice of the LORD (Psalm 29) through the mouth of His prophet John the Beloved. The Seven Thunders are also a powerful series of judgments, purposefully left undescribed in the Apocalypse, to make the secret judgments of the Almighty even more weighty. "Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:4). God will always most wisely and judiciously mete out His judgments for the maximum effect. "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the Earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9). With this unexpected series of judgments of the Seven Thunders, the "terror of God" (Genesis 35:5) will be

upon the world.

Chapter 11: The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet

- "1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

Four times in the Revelation does the Apostle John use the expression, "in the Spirit" (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Each of these instances signifies a vision that John was given to "shew unto [Christ's] servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1). The four visions divide the structure of the Revelation as follows:

- (1) Vision One: Christ Among His Church (1:9-3:22),
- (2) Vision Two: Christ Judging the World (4:1-16:21),
- (3) Vision Three: Christ Climaxing His Judgment of the World (17:1-21:8), and
- (4) Vision Four: Christ and the New Heaven and New Earth (21:9-22:5).

Not only did John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20), have the special privilege of receiving the Revelation in its entirety; but, in this Second Vision (4:1-16:21), he was given the privilege and honor of measuring the Temple, altar, and worshippers, i.e., "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (11:1). And, what is the significance of this measuring? God's measuring demonstrates His dominion over His property. "12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the Earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 22 It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the Earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:12, 22). The Apostle John's measuring, coupled with the promise to the Apostle John that he "must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11), points to the dominion that John will manifest when he returns to administer the Seven Thunders. [See our comments on Chapter 10-- especially verses 7 through 11-- of the Revelation Commentary for background concerning the concept that John will return in conjunction with the Seven Thunders.]

The "reed like unto a rod" (11:1) that John used to measure the Temple, the altar, and the worshippers, was probably similar in length and weight to the reeds that grow in the Jordan Valley. Similarly, Ezekiel was given a vision of the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40:1-47:12), where the LORD Jesus Christ-- most probably-- appeared as a "man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in His hand" (Ezekiel 40:3), to delineate the dimensions of the coming Millennial Temple. Zechariah was also given a vision of a "man with a measuring line in his hand" (Zechariah

2:1), who was to "measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof" (2:2). This, too, was in preparation for the building of the Millennial Temple, i.e., "Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (1:16). Finally, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21) is measured by a "golden reed" (Revelation 21:15), to describe the enormity of the eternal dwelling of the Saints, which is "twelve thousand furlongs" in "length", "breadth", and "height" (21:16)-- 1,342 miles [2,159 kilometers] in each direction. "And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:18).

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- "2 But the court which is without the Temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

The Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church marks the beginning of the process of lifting the "blindness" (Romans 11:25) of Israel, where that process culminates in the conversion of Israel at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a Nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this Mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25). [See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --, to examine the Scripturality of our position that there is a Pre-Tribulational Rapture.]

Modern Israel's recapture of Jerusalem's Temple Mount, during the Six Day War with Israel's Arab neighbours in June of 1967, began the period known as the "fulness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25). At that time, Israel sprouted "leaves" when she acquired the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Sinai, and the Gaza Strip, which marked the beginning of the Fig Tree Generation or the Terminal Generation. "32 Now learn a parable of the Fig Tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:32-34). Also, the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) will end at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (21:24).

"Forty and two months" (11:2) is the equivalent of three years and six months (or, 1,260 days) of the second half of the Tribulation Week. The second half of the Tribulation Week is the Great Tribulation, during which Jerusalem is "[trodden] under foot" (11:2) of the Gentiles, after the Abomination of Desolation. "15 When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand: 21 For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:15, 21). Also, because the ministry of the Two Witnesses in the very next verse (Revelation 11:3) concludes with the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet Judgment (11:7-15), which sounds only 8-9 days before the End of the Tribulation Week, these 42 months must coincide with the second half of the Tribulation Week.

- "3 And I will give power unto my Two Witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

A "thousand two hundred and threescore days" (11:3) is the total length of the Two Witnesses' ministry. Again, this is the same as a period of three years and six months (1,260 divided by 360 equals 3 1/2). But, when does the 1,260 days begin? **It is the belief of this writer that the ministry of the Two Witnesses begins 11 1/2 days prior to the Middle of the Tribulation Week.** A number of assumptions are necessary to support this conclusion:

(1) More than one Rapture will occur, i.e., two Come Up Hithers (Revelation 4:1 and 11:12) point to a Pre-Tribulational Rapture and a Pre-Wrath Rapture. [See our article, "The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, for a development of this thought.]

(2) The Seven Feasts of Israel (Leviticus 23) were given as a "shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17):

- (a) The Feast of the Passover (Leviticus 23:5) foreshadowed Christ being "sacrificed for us" (1Corinthians 5:7) on the Cross.
- (b) The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) foreshadowed the Burial of Christ, the Living Bread (John 6:51), Who was made to be leaven (symbolic of sin) "for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Corinthians 5:21).
- (c) The Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:10) foreshadowed the Resurrection of Christ, who is the "firstfruits" (1Corinthians 15:23) from the dead.
- (d) Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16) or the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16) foreshadowed the promised Holy Spirit's pouring out upon the Church (Acts 2).
- (e) The Feast of Trumpets or Rosh HaShannah (Leviticus 23:24)-- celebrated on Tishri 1-- foreshadows the Pre-Wrath Rapture, when, also, the Seventh and Last Trump "shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1Corinthians 15:52).
- (f) The Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27)-- celebrated on Tishri 10-- foreshadows the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, when Israel repents and is regathered to the Messiah, i.e., "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26). And,
- (g) the Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot (Leviticus 23:34)-- celebrated on Tishri 15 to 21-- foreshadows the beginning of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ on Earth when the Redeemed will dwell with their LORD, i.e., "Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). [See our article, "The Appointed Times" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, explaining the prophetic significance of the Seven Feasts of Israel.]

(3) The "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10) is equivalent to 15 days, if Daniel's Seventieth Week (1 week) equals 2,520 days. One hour would be 1/168 of a week or .0059523 of a week, which is 15 days. This would be the time equivalent to Tishri 1 to Tishri 15. If the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church occurs at perhaps the midnight hour on Tishri 1, then approximately 8 to 9 days (depending on how you count it) would be left in the Tribulation Week, which would then extend through Tishri 9. This would allow for the pouring out of about one vial a day during the Seven Vial Judgments. Armageddon lasts 5 days from Tishri 10 (the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ) to Tishri 14-- the day before Tishri 15 (the Inauguration of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ on Earth). 9 days (for the Vial Judgments) plus 5 days (for Armageddon) equals 14 days, which lacks only one day to complete the "Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10). That one day lacking is Tishri 15.

(4) Since the Pre-Wrath Rapture occurs with the Seventh and Last Trumpet on the 1st of Tishri, i.e., "16 For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD" (1Thessalonians 4:16-17), the Resurrection of the Two Witnesses must occur at the same time. "11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from Heaven saying unto them, **Come Up Hither**. And they ascended up to Heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And the **same hour** was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven. 14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe **cometh quickly**. 15 **And the seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:11-15). And,

(5) If 8 to 9 days are left in the Tribulation Week after the contemporaneous event of the Pre-Wrath Rapture and the Resurrection of the Two Witnesses, and if the Two Witnesses are dead for the previous 3 1/2 days (11:9), then the end of the Two Witnesses' 1,260 day ministry (11:3) must occur 11 1/2 days (8 days plus 3 1/2 days) before the End of the Tribulation Week. Therefore, 1,260 days earlier would begin the Two Witnesses' ministry 11 1/2 days before the Middle of the Tribulation Week. [See our Tribulation Chart for a pictorial depiction of the above discussion.] "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts" (Isaiah 28:9).

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- "4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the Earth."

The Two Witnesses-- Moses and Elijah-- are identified as the "two olive trees, and the two candlesticks" (11:4). A vision given to the prophet Zechariah indicates that the Two Witnesses will be supernaturally indwelt, supplied, and sustained by the LORD Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for their 1,260 day Tribulation Week ministry. "1 And the angel that talked with me [Zechariah] came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I

said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold [like the seven branched candlestick of Exodus 25:31,32,37], with a bowl upon the top of it [however, Moses' candlestick did not have this bowl or reservoir to supply the oil on top of it], and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes [neither did Moses' candlestick have these feed pipes connecting to an oil supply] to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: 3 And Two Olive Trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? 5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts. 7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. 8 Moreover the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house [the Second Temple]; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of Hosts hath sent me unto you. 10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole Earth. 11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these Two Olive Trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? [the LORD Jesus Christ, who is the Messiah or the Anointed One, and His Holy Spirit are indicated] 12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these Two Olive Branches which through the Two Golden Pipes empty the Golden Oil out of themselves? [the 'Golden Oil' of the grace, power, and help of God flows from Christ and His Spirit by faith to the reservoir of the Church, i.e., as also depicted by the LORD Jesus' presence 'in the midst of the seven candlesticks' (Revelation 1:13) of the Church] 13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 14 Then said he, These are the Two Anointed Ones [Zechariah's vision depicts Christ and His Spirit, while the Apostle John's vision in Revelation 11 depicts the Two Witnesses that are indwelt by Christ and His Spirit], that stand by the LORD of the Whole Earth" (Zechariah 4:1-14).

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- "5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

The Revelation is a book that reveals the LORD Jesus Christ as:

(1) the Deliverer of the Faithful, i.e., "Because thou hast kept the Word of My Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (3:10),

(2) the Chastener of the Backslidden, i.e., "4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy First Love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (2:4-5),

(3) the Unrealized Opportunity for the Elect-But-Lost, i.e., "6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven,

and Earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (14:6-7), and

(4) the Everlasting Tormentor of the Damned, i.e., "9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (14:9-11).

Through His Two Witnesses, the LORD Jesus Christ reveals Himself as a Fierce Opponent that devours, hurts, and kills His enemies. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed" (11:5). The prophet Elijah is remembered for calling down fire upon the enemies of Jehovah. "9 Then the king [Ahaziah, the wicked son of Ahab] sent unto [Elijah] a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. 10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from Heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from Heaven, and consumed him and his fifty" (2Kings 1:9-10). God's prophets have been known to have used extreme measures towards those that have lifted their hand against them. "23 And [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children [but, old enough to conduct themselves outside the city and mock God's prophet] out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. 24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them [God approved of Elisha's cursing]" (2Kings 2:23-24). Even the Ordinary Saints of this Church Age have been elevated to dispense or withhold blessing to the world at large. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 18:18).

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- "6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the Earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

Again, Moses and Elijah are most probably the Two Witnesses indicated in this verse because of the similarity of their previous earthly ministries to the deeds of these Two Witnesses. Elijah "shut heaven, that it rain[ed] not" (11:6), i.e., "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1Kings 17:1). Moses had "power over [the] waters to turn them to blood" (11:6), i.e., "[Moses] turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish" (Psalm 105:29). Moses is remembered for the multitude of plagues that he called down upon Egypt, i.e., "And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Exodus 7:1), while Elijah is remembered for calling down fire on the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. "37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and

consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1Kings 18:37-38).

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- "7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the Beast that ascendeth out of the Bottomless Pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

Both Moses and Elijah met with the LORD Jesus at His Transfiguration, which depicts their importance to our LORD's program for the future salvation of Israel. "30 And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30-31). Though the Revelation tells us that the ministry of the Two Witnesses will be cut short by their death, i.e., the "Beast that ascendeth out of the Bottomless Pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (11:7), in the case of Moses, it will not be the first time that someone died, was resurrected, and (presumably) died again, i.e., Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. "43 And when [Jesus] thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:43-44). If Jesus truly is the "Resurrection, and the Life" (11:25), then it would not be too difficult for Him to treat His Witnesses in this fashion. "Ah LORD GOD! behold, Thou hast made the Heaven and the Earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).

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- "8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified."

Jerusalem, "where also our LORD was crucified" (11:8), is the "great city" that "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt". "33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:33-34).

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- "9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

The "people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies" (11:9), intimates that the Apostle John was given to understand the fact of the worldwide viewing of the Two Witnesses' bodies-- possible now by satellite broadcast-- without an explanation of how this could be possible. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). Whenever our LORD tells us that He will do something, He will-- even if we do not understand how He will accomplish it. "9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the Faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack

to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face" (Deuteronomy 7:9-10).

Christ's enemies attempted to make Him a public spectacle of suffering and humiliation-- much like they will leave the Two Witnesses' dead bodies in the street for 3 1/2 days-- and, with as much success. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15). The Almighty will allow the spectacle in order to make His triumph over His enemies that much greater when the Two Witnesses are resurrected (11:11). "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them" (Psalm 68:18).

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- "10 And they that dwell upon the Earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the Earth."

The wickedness of those "that dwell upon the Earth" (11:10) is seen by their rejoicing over the death of the Two Witnesses. "For they have shed the blood of Saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (16:6). Mourning over the death of these two good men would have been more appropriate, but not for these evil Earth dwellers. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). The All Wise God (Jude 25) is merely filling up the iniquity of the Wicked. "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matthew 23:32). And, the "iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15:16). Why does God give even the Unelect the opportunity to reject Him yet again? To justify His love, wisdom, grace, and mercy in offering them space for repentance, and seeking their salvation, even though He knows these will never repent, is God's purpose of offering His Salvation to the world (John 3:16). "3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth... 6 Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1Timothy 2:3-4, 6). [See our article, "Is Faith the Only Condition for Eternal Salvation?" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Is.Faith.the.Only.Conditio.html> --, for a Scriptural analysis of the Way of Salvation.]

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- "11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

The Moral Insanity of the Wicked, i.e., the "heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live" (Ecclesiastes 9:3), is evidenced by their opposition to the LORD Jesus and His Two Witnesses. But, the miraculous resurrection of the Two Witnesses "after three days and an half" (11:11) of laying dead in the streets of Jerusalem, causes "great fear" (11:11) to fall upon them. Remember, the world, that has been watching the spectacle of their dead bodies crumpled in the streets of Jerusalem, now will see the Omnipotent, Resurrection Power of the Almighty at work in the resurrection of the Two Witnesses. "And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him" (Mark 16:6).

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- "12 And they heard a great voice from Heaven saying unto them, Come Up Hither. And they

ascended up to Heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

Just as the Pre-Tribulational Rapture will be announced by the First "Come Up Hither" (Revelation 4:1), the Pre-Wrath Rapture will be announced by this Second "Come Up Hither" (11:12). Why call this Rapture a Pre-Wrath Rapture? You will notice that the Seventh Trumpet Judgment sounds in the adjacent verse, i.e., the "seventh angel sounded" (11:15). The "vials of the wrath of God" (16:1) are poured out upon the Earth following the sounding of the Seventh and Last Trump (1Corinthians 15:52). Also, this eleventh chapter of Revelation declares that the LORD God Almighty's "wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the Saints" (11:18). At this point, those Tribulation Week Saints who are "alive and remain shall be caught up" (1Thessalonians 4:17) immediately following the Resurrection of **all** the Righteous Dead, i.e., the "dead in Christ shall rise first" (4:16). Thus, again, the LORD will fulfill His promises of delivering His Saints from the "wrath to come" (1:10). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our LORD Jesus Christ" (5:9). "17 Notwithstanding the LORD stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2Timothy 4:17-18). "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2Corinthians 1:10). "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9). "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29).

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- "13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven."

One sign of the end, Jesus said, would be earthquakes. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:8). Scientists agree that the plate tectonics that produce earthquakes are evidence that the planet is not dead. The heat in the core of the Earth is released slowly in the form of molten rock from volcanoes. The Earth's tectonic plates are forced to move by the heat; thus, it moves rock like a conveyor belt, as well as recycles the Earth's crust each day. This overall dynamism of the Earth has helped to produce the oceans, atmosphere, continents, and fertile soil. So, even secular scientists would have to concur with the LORD Jesus that there certainly "shall be earthquakes" (13:8). But, unlike the pagan's concept of Mother Earth, the Christian understands that the Almighty is separate from His creation. "He looketh on the Earth, and it trembleth: He toucheth the hills, and they smoke" (Psalm 104:32).

By modern standards, an earthquake that destroys a tenth of a major city and kills 7,000 people (11:13) is significant. Combine that with the entire world watching (probably by satellite) the spectacle of the Resurrection of the Two Witnesses (11:11-12), and, in prophetic retrospect, the "remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven" (11:13). The Creator must sometimes resort to extreme measures to get the attention of mankind, e.g., confounding the languages of the builders' of the Tower of Babel. "7 Go to, let Us [the Godhead] go down, and there confound their

language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the Earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of **all** the Earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of **all** the Earth" (Genesis 11:7-9). Further, momentary fright and glorification of the God of Heaven (Revelation 11:13) is not Gospel Salvation, for even the "devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

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- "14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

The woes expressed in Scripture testify to the seriousness of God's pronouncements, e.g., "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isaiah 3:11), because "upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6). The "second woe" (Revelation 11:14) refers to the Demonic Horsemen of the Sixth Trumpet Judgment (9:13-21), while the Demonic Locusts of the Fifth Trumpet Judgment (9:1-12) are the first woe of the final three Trumpet Judgments. "And I beheld [following the Fourth Trumpet Judgment], and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the Earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Revelation 8:13). The "third woe" (11:14) is the Seventh Trumpet Judgment that "cometh quickly" (11:14) in the following verse.

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- "15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Just as the Seventh Day of the Creation Week symbolized the completion of God's creative work (Genesis 2:2-3), the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet is both the completion of this series of Seven Trumpet Judgments, as well as the Last Trump to sound before the Resurrection of all the Saints of all time. "51 Behold, I shew you a Mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Corinthians 15:51-52). Completion of some significant event seems to be the LORD's intent in the timing of the Seventh Judgments:

(1) The Seventh Seal Judgment (Revelation 8:1) signifies the completion of the first half of the Tribulation Week, coinciding with the "midst of the week" (Daniel 9:27) and the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15) on Earth, while Heaven is so awed by the gravity of the Almighty's judgments yet to unfold that there is silence in Heaven for "half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

(2) The Seventh Trumpet Judgment (11:15) represents the completion of the Church Age, 8-9 days before the End of the Tribulation Week, when the "dead in Christ" (1Thessalonians 4:16) rise and the Saints who are "alive and remain" (4:17) are Pre-Wrath Raptured. And,

(3) the Seventh Vial Judgment (16:17) at the End of the Tribulation Week portrays the

completion of the judgments of God, i.e., "It is done" (16:17).

The statements of the "great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15) indicate that the Seventh Trumpet Judgment is the time that the LORD officially reinstates the kingdoms of the world as now belonging again to Him-- about to forcibly take back absolute control. When Adam was created, he was given the dominion or rule of the Earth, but he lost that dominion to Satan when he sinned. "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and **over all the Earth**, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:26). Satan is now the "god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4), the "prince of this world" (John 12:31), the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), because he caused Adam to yield his dominion to him by obeying his enticement to make Adam to sin. "Know ye not, that **to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are** to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). The Seventh Trumpet Judgment marks the point at which the LORD refuses to allow Satan the opportunity to treat the Earth as Satan's dominion. Shortly thereafter, it will no longer be necessary to say: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

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- "16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,"

The 24 Elders respond to the official proclamation (11:15) reinstating the kingdoms of the world as the principalities of the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords, by hearty agreement, praise, and worship of God (11:16). This worship was predicted by the LORD Jesus during His Earthly ministry. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:24). True worship is simply acknowledging the attributes of God, i.e., who He is, and bending voice and life to be in agreement. "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1Peter 1:15).

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- "17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned."

Continuing with their worship of the Almighty, the 24 Elders thank the Eternal God for the exercise of His omnipotence in taking back the rulership of the "kingdoms of this world" (11:15). The very fact that the LORD of All the Earth (Joshua 3:11) would tolerate Satan to usurp rulership of the Earth through rebellious man, indicates that the Almighty will not use His sovereignty to overpower the moral choice of angel, Satan, or man. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). But, the end of this phase of God's manifestation of Himself to His moral creation has been divinely concluded. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). "The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the Earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isaiah 52:10). Finally, He will show Himself to be, in His good time, the "Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of

Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:15).

- "18 And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the Earth."

That this is the time of the Pre-Wrath Rapture, can be seen by:

- (1) The "vials of the wrath of God" (16:1) are now to be poured out, i.e., "Thy wrath is come" (11:18).
 - (2) The Bema Seat Judgment (2Corinthians 5:10) of all the Saints occurs at this time, i.e., "that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the Saints" (11:18). And,
 - (3) The destruction of the Wicked "which destroy the Earth" (11:18) is accomplished by wave after wave of the "vials of the wrath of God" (16:1), by the slaughter at Armageddon (16:16), and by the Judgment of the Nations-- "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" (11:18)-- where the Judge of All the Earth separates the "sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32), resulting in the "everlasting punishment" (25:46) of the Wicked.
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- "19 And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the Ark of His Testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

The "Temple of God" (11:19), here, refers to the Heavenly Temple, and not the Tribulational or Millennial Temples. Both the priesthood and the Temple were patterned "unto the example and shadow of Heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5), after our Great High Priest-- "Jesus the Son of God" (Hebrews 4:14)-- and His Heavenly Temple. The Lost Ark-- the "Ark of His Testament" (11:19) or the "Ark of the Covenant" (Hebrews 9:4)-- had not been seen since Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's Temple (about 587 BC). The prophet Ezekiel prophesied about Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the departed glory. "18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house [Solomon's Temple], and stood over the cherubims. 19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the Earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above" (Ezekiel 10:18-19). [See our article, "1998: Year of the Apocalypse (Part 2), Or, Ezekiel Predicted the 1967 Recapture of Jerusalem" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/1998.Year.of.Apocalypse.2.html> --, for a perspective on Ezekiel's prophecy.] The "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (11:19) are a momentous indication that God's presence-- symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant-- will, shortly, be seen on Earth and in His Temple. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so,

Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

Chapter 12: The Woman in the Wilderness

- "1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:"

A "great wonder in heaven" (12:1) appears. The Greek word *semeion*, which is translated as wonder, sign, or miracle, is used to describe a "woman clothed with the sun". Six other times in the Revelation *semeion* is used to describe signs or wonders:

(1) a "great red dragon" (12:3), i.e., Satan,

(2) the "great wonders" (13:13) performed by the False Prophet, making "fire come down from heaven" (13:13),

(3) deceptive "miracles" (13:14) performed by the False Prophet "in the sight of the Beast" (13:14),

(4) a "sign in Heaven" (15:1) of the seven angels with the Vials of the Wrath of God,

(5) the "spirits of devils, working miracles" (16:14) drawing the kings of the Earth to Armageddon, and

(6) the False Prophet that "wrought miracles" (19:20) and the Antichrist being cast into the Lake of Fire.

Joseph, the "Dreamer" (Genesis 37:19), reported a dream that described his father (Jacob), mother (Rachel), and eleven brothers (the patriarchs of the future nation of Israel) as the sun, moon, and stars, just as the Revelation describes the Woman as "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (12:1). "And he [Joseph] dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me" (Genesis 37:9). Thus, the Woman Clothed With the Sun may be identified as the Nation of Israel. "17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him?" (Genesis 18:17-18).

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- "2 And she being with Child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

The "Mystery of Godliness" (1Timothy 3:16) has ordained that Israel, the "woman clothed with the

sun" (12:1), would be the means by which the Almighty would bless the world. "Now if the fall of them [Israel] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (Romans 11:12). Yes, Israel rejected their True Messiah; and accordingly, the Gentile world was then offered the same Salvation that Israel rejected. "I say then, Have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [Israel] to jealousy" (11:11). And, the Woman, "being with Child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (12:2), describes the Nation of Israel in general, and Mary in particular. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law" (Galatians 4:4). The same type of deliverance will be granted to Israel at the Second Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ, when Israel will turn to Jesus the Messiah in one day. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). Even though Israel's final repentance and turning in faith to Jesus the Messiah will most definitely occur at the Second Coming of Christ, we must not forget to pray for it. "Thus saith the LORD GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock" (Ezekiel 36:37).

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- "3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."

The tapestry of this 12th chapter of the Revelation first introduces the Woman that produces the Messiah (12:1-2). Then, the old "adversary the devil" (1Peter 5:8) is put forth as "another wonder in heaven" (12:3). Later, in this same chapter, the "Great Dragon" (12:9) is specifically identified as Satan. "Red" (12:3) is the color of the blood spilled by the Great Dragon, often through the very human governments that God originally ordained to not bear the "sword in vain" (Romans 13:4). The "seven heads" (12:3) of the Dragon signify seven governments, kingdoms, or empires, from which the "ten horns" (12:3) or ten different rulers reign, i.e., "ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (Daniel 7:24). That the Wicked One would offer to the LORD Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" (Matthew 4:8) during His Wilderness Temptations, indicates Satan's willingness to buy the subservience of his intended victims by offering them the attraction and power of earthly crowns. But, "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Though human government has been specifically ordained of God, i.e., "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the Image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6), and Christians are called upon to uphold the right functioning of human government through personal obedience, i.e., "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1), and through intercession, i.e., "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and honesty" (1Timothy 2:1-2), human government, when turned from its original intent, often finds itself pitted against the Saints. But, even the curse of evil rulers, controlled by the Great Red Dragon (12:3), should not cause the Godly undue alarm. "9 Because thou hast made the LORD, Which is my Refuge, even the Most High, thy Habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalm 91:9-10).

- "4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the Earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her Child as soon as It was born."

At this point in the chapter's narrative, looking back upon the history of the "dragon" (12:4), we consider that time in antiquity that Lucifer's "tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the Earth" (12:4).

First, Lucifer was the Original Sinner, who was a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44), and the ringleader of the rebellion in the Heavens, i.e., "his tail drew" (12:4).

Second, inspiration records that a "third part of the stars of Heaven" (12:4)-- the angels being the "stars [that] sang" (Job 38:7) at the Creation of the Earth-- rebelled against the Almighty.

Third, Lucifer was the cause of himself and his cohorts being ejected from Heaven, so much so that the Apostle John records that the Murderer "did cast them to the Earth" (12:4). To the surprise of himself and his legions, the "devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41) not only failed to wrest control of Heaven away from the Almighty, but they were forever banished from their "First Estate" (Jude 6). "4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 9 [Then] the LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:4, 9).

It must have greatly consternated Satan that he did not kill the LORD Jesus when He was but a Baby, i.e., "and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her Child as soon as It was born" (12:4). "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the LORD appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the Young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the Young Child to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13). God's people are likewise immortal to the Serpent until the time that the Almighty chooses our exit. "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). Herod's subsequent killing of the children of Bethlehem-- "two years old and under" (Matthew 2:16)-- only served to fulfil the prophecy of Jeremiah. "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not" (Jeremiah 31:15).

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- "5 And she brought forth a Man Child, Who was to rule all nations with a Rod of Iron: and her Child was caught up unto God, and to His Throne."

With a sweep of His fingers over the pages of history, the Holy Spirit recalls how Israel "brought forth a Man Child" (12:5), Whose purpose was and is, prophetically, "to rule all nations with a Rod of Iron" (12:5). "7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. 8 Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for Thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a Rod of Iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:7-9). Of interest, the King Messiah, Who we

know to be the "Carpenter, the Son of Mary" (Mark 6:3), was anticipated by the ancient Jewish commentators to be one of the "four carpenters" to deliver Israel from her enemies-- as noted in John Gill's "Exposition of the Old and New Testament", commenting on Mark 6:3. "20 And the LORD shewed me four carpenters. 21 Then said I, What come these to do? And He spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these [i.e., 'four carpenters'] are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it" (Zechariah 1:20-21).

It is a fact of sacred history that Jesus Christ "was caught up unto God, and to His Throne" (12:5). "9 And when He [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as He went up, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, **shall so come** in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). *Blessed thought! The certainty of the ascension of the LORD Jesus Christ into Heaven, assures us that He will return.* "And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Additionally, the ordinance of the LORD's Supper was intended by the LORD Jesus to remind us of the certainty of His return. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the LORD's death till He come" (1Corinthians 11:26).

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- "6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

The previous verse describes the ascension of the LORD Jesus Christ, while a period over 1,900 years elapses until this sixth verse. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Peter 3:8). Now, the skeptics have been troubled by the thought that the LORD Jesus Christ, Who said, "I come quickly" (Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20), has yet to return. "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). Can we engage in the day-to-day affairs of work and living, while actively looking for the return of our LORD? We must. "For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the LORD Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). *It is imperative that we understand that our profession of faith in the LORD Jesus Christ as our Saviour and LORD*, means that we have changed our hearts and minds from a worldly culture of self-seeking to that of seeking "first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), and counting "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:8). Therefore, **our confidence that we are laboring for a soon returning Saviour, must outweigh any worldly consideration of earthly gain that calls us away from our "patient waiting for Christ"** (2Thessalonians 3:5). Yes, He is coming quickly. And, as C. H. Spurgeon wrote in his "Faith's Checkbook", "When the LORD hastens, His speed is glorious." "Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

This verse records that Israel, the "woman", "fled into the wilderness" (12:6). But, when? Following the Abomination of Desolation at the Middle of the Tribulation Week, Israel flees from the betrayal of the Antichrist, with whom she had confirmed a treaty or covenant at the Beginning of Daniel's Seventieth Week (Daniel 9:27). "15 When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation,

spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (Matthew 24:15-16). How long will be the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness? Israel will remain hidden in the wilderness "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (12:6) from the time of the Abomination of Desolation until the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah. Then, the Apostle Paul's prayer will be answered. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1 cf. Isaiah 66:8).

Where can Israel flee from the Antichrist? The Gospel of Matthew indicates that Israel will "flee into the mountains" (24:16). Many have speculated that the ancient city of Petra, the Greek name of the Edomite city of Selah (2Kings 14:7) located towards the southwestern end of the Dead Sea, will be the refuge for these future Tribulation refugees. Petra is an essentially deserted city built into the sandstone cliffs along the Wadi Musa (Valley of Moses). 19th-century English Biblical scholar John William Burgon labelled the cliff city of Petra, a "rose-red city--half as old as Time'." Once a prominent city along the trade routes, its magnificent buildings are carved into the face of the cliffs, and may be reached through passages so narrow that two horsemen may scarcely ride abreast. Josephus seems to indicate Bozrah to be the city of Petra. "Who is this that cometh from Edom [i.e., Jesus the Messiah at His Second Coming], with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (Isaiah 63:1).

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- "7 And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,"

It is strange to think that there ever could be "war in Heaven" (12:7), but we are prophetically previewed of a future conflict in which "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon", reciprocating the combat of Satan, who "fought [along with] his angels" (12:7). When Lucifer first "drew the third part" (12:4) of God's angels into the Original Rebellion, he and his cohorts were "cast down to hell" (2Peter 2:4), i.e., they became persona non grata (unwelcome), no longer having the credentials or privileges of the "sons of God" (Job 1:6). However, the Wisdom of God has allowed Satan the opportunity to temporarily continue coming "before the LORD" (1:6) to accuse the Brethren. "Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1:9). But, why would the LORD allow Satan to tempt man, for any length of time? "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory" (Revelation 4:11). To glorify His choice of giving man moral agency, He has allowed the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden, the testing of Job, and the Son of Man to be "tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1) in the wilderness.

Since mankind is still in a probationary period-- being still able to "refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7:16)-- man's First Sin was not only punished, i.e., "cursed is the ground" (Genesis 3:17) on account of his disobedience, but he was also mercifully allowed to be reformed through his sufferings, i.e., "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (3:17). Thus, the temptations that the Almighty carefully allows Satan to hurl at the Saints, are actually opportunities to perfect our faith. "2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

When will this heavenly warfare take place between Michael the Archangel and Satan? "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the Book" (Daniel 12:1). The warfare will occur immediately before the Middle of the Tribulation Week. It will be followed by the 3 1/2 year period known as the Great Tribulation or the Time of Jacob's Trouble. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7). "For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

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- "8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven."

And, Satan "prevailed not" (12:8). Hallelujah! Let us fervently pray for the defeat of Satan, that he can no longer trouble our Brethren, especially of the Tribulation Week. "Deliver us from evil [or, the Evil One]" (Matthew 6:13). Though we cannot yet say that Satan can no more be found "in Heaven" (12:8), we do pray for ourselves and our Brethren, that our faith would fail not. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). May God give us and our Tribulation Brethren the grace to stand. "But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Dear LORD, "deliver the Godly out of temptations" (2Peter 2:9). "O God: command deliverances" (Psalm 44:4) for all Thy people. "Lift up Thyself, Thou Judge of the Earth" (94:2) by Thy deliverance of the Faithful, and "destroy the works of the devil" (1John 3:8). Amen.

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- "9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

The "great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil" (12:9). Casting out Satan from Heaven will be a great boon to the Godly, because as the chief antagonist of the Saints, he will no longer have access to God to accuse the Brethren. "And the LORD said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31). What sin this Malignant Adversary, "which deceiveth the whole world" (12:9), must have caused! But, imagine what blessed relief will be given to the Tribulation Saints, when he and "his angels [will be] cast out" (12:9) of Heaven! "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Perhaps, this blessed relief will graciously redound to the preservation of many a Tribulation Saint during the Great Tribulation. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Peter 1:13).

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- "10 And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come Salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

Because the "accuser of our brethren [will be] cast down" (12:10) at the Middle of the Tribulation Week, we have it on good authority, i.e., a "loud voice saying in Heaven" (12:10), that "now is come" (12:10):

(1) "Salvation" (12:10), i.e., when Satanic resistance is diminished, even greater numbers may be ushered into the Kingdom of God-- "And the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47),

(2) "strength" (12:10), i.e., Divine help will become more available to the Godly-- "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10),

(3) the "Kingdom of our God" (12:10), i.e., a powerful sense of the presence of the Spirit of God will be felt, and especially His power-- "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6), and

(4) the "power of His Christ" (12:10), i.e., this represents the omnipotence of the KING of Kings making Himself felt and known during the troublous Second Half of the Tribulation Week-- "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him" (Revelation 1:7).

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- "11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Every Christian is to be a living "epistle... known and read of all men" (2Corinthians 3:2), thus fulfilling the Great Commission of being "witnesses unto [Christ]... unto the uttermost part of the Earth" (Acts 1:8). Likewise, all Believers who resist the Devil "stedfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9) overcome him "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (12:11). It is the totality of the Body of Believers, who bring down Satan, through the LORD Jesus Christ-- the "Head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:23). The Saints witness to the efficacy and superiority of the LORD Jesus Christ over all, but especially over Satan. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He [Christ Jesus] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world" (1John 4:4). Realizing that our lives are of secondary importance to the greater purpose of magnifying Jesus Christ, death by martyrdom may serve the cause of Christ more than by our continued living, i.e., "they loved not their lives unto the death" (12:11). Only by such selfless conduct did the Church grow, and will it again thrive. "32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the LORD Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:32-33). [See our article, "Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto the Death" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html> --, for a discussion of this subject.]

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- "12 Therefore rejoice, ye Heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth

that he hath but a short time."

As much as there will be rejoicing in Heaven, there will be woe for the "inhabiters of the Earth and of the sea" (12:12). Satan, as a cruel and uncaring parent, i.e., "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44), ultimately leads his children into the Lake of Fire. "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Revelation 20:15). Meanwhile, he expends the lives of his deceived offspring in a manifestation of his "great wrath" (12:12) and vicious hate. As a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44), Satan gladly disposes of his abused progeny, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8), knowing "that he hath but a short time" (12:12). In contrast, the Father will fortify His Children with a special "grace to help" (Hebrews 4:16), i.e., "Salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ" (12:10).

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- "13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the Earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the Man Child."

As the Apostle Paul had an especial desire for Israel, "that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1); even more so, does Jehovah desire their metamorphosis. "He that toucheth you [Israel] toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zechariah 2:8). So, when the Dragon is "cast unto the Earth" (12:13) at the Middle of the Tribulation Week, he vents his rage upon Israel in a desperate attempt to maul the LORD. "He [Satan] persecuted the woman which brought forth the Man Child" (12:13). As usual, the Wicked One plays into the masterful hands of God. Through his persecution of Israel, Satan aids the Almighty in driving Elect-But-Still-Lost Israel to the extreme of admitting that the Crucified Jesus is truly the Messiah of Israel-- as well as, being the "Saviour of the World" (John 4:42)-- by the time of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Surely the wrath of man [and certainly, the wrath of Satan] shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). Satan, at this time, will come closer to being seen as weak and finite as any mere creature. "All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?" (Isaiah 14:10).

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

The Woman, who is Elect-But-Still-Lost Israel, is "given two wings of a great eagle" to be supernaturally preserved "from the face of the serpent [Satan]" (12:14) until the End of the Tribulation Week, when she is finally and gloriously saved. "9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of My mountains: and Mine elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:9, 22). Though the Unserved Elect **do not have the luxury of claiming themselves** to be the future inheritors of Heaven, i.e., "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34), **we, their intercessors in prayer, may make such claim** for them by faith. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them,

and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

Earlier in this chapter, it is said that the "Woman fled into the wilderness" for a period of a "thousand two hundred and threescore days" (12:6) to be fed of God. Verse 14 refers to this time in which the Woman is nourished as a "time, and times, and half a time" (12:14). "25 And he [the Antichrist] shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time... 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto Heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (Daniel 7:25; 12:7).

If "time" (in the singular) is the equivalent of one, "times" (in the plural) is the equivalent of two, and "half a time" denotes one-half, then one plus two plus one-half equals three and one-half. Since the Jewish calendar is calculated upon a year of twelve months of thirty days (a lunar cycle), i.e., 360 days, then 3 1/2 years is the equivalent of 1,260 days (3 1/2 x 360). The Scriptures, using the ancient Hebrew calendar, described the increase of the waters-- additional flood water beyond the initial "forty days and forty nights" (Genesis 7:12) of rain-- of the Genesis Flood, as encompassing a period of an "hundred and fifty days" (7:24), beginning on the "second month [Iyar, according to the sacred calendar], the seventeenth day of the month" (7:11), and prevailing or increasing upon the Earth until the "seventh month [Tishri], on the seventeenth day of the month" (8:4). Therefore, 150 days covered a five month period, which would make a month the equivalent of thirty days.

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- "15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."

The "serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman" (12:15) demonstrates that the Adversary:

- (1) Desires to thwart God's plan of redeeming Israel, i.e., "They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Psalm 83:4), and
- (2) Would have killed all of us long before we ever repented and believed the Gospel, but for the preservation of God, i.e., "And except those days [i.e., the Second Half of the Tribulation Week-- the Great Tribulation] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

And, of what significance is the "water as a flood" (12:15) that the Serpent sends against the Woman? Certainly, metaphorically, Satan will attempt to sweep away Israel "as a flood" (12:15), i.e., "1 If it had not been the LORD Who was on our side, now may Israel say; 2 If it had not been the LORD Who was on our side, when men rose up against us: 3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul" (Psalm 124:1-4). But, only time will tell whether or not the Antichrist will employ some kind of actual flood to destroy Elect-But-Still-Lost Israel. "And after threescore and two weeks shall

Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" (Daniel 9:26).

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- "16 And the Earth helped the woman, and the Earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

Though the ancient pagans looked upon our planet as an Earth Mother, and it has become the Mother Earth of the equally pagan New Age movement, the Revelation tells us that the "Earth opened **her** mouth" (12:16), i.e., referring to the Earth in the feminine. The Greek word *ga*, which means Earth, is a noun in the feminine gender. However, the Saints are simply pleased that the Almighty should choose to depict the Earth as nurturing and aiding the Godly, while fighting and resisting the ungodly. "24 [Moses] Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram... 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the Earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them" (Numbers 16:24, 30-31).

Remembering that the Devil, at this time in the Tribulation, has been denied access to God to accuse the Still-Living-Tribulation Brethren (12:10), he will now address more of his attention to persecuting the Elect-But-Still-Lost Earth dwellers, and especially Israel, i.e., the "flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (12:16), will be against the Woman. Not to belittle the ferocity or formidability of the Roaring Lion, against whom Michael the Archangel "durst not bring against him a railing accusation" (Jude 9), but the Devil will appear more and more toothless-- in comparison to the increasingly powerful manifestations of the LORD Jesus Christ's Trumpet (8:7-11:19) and Vial Judgments (16:1-21)-- as the Tribulation draws to a conclusion. The Saints of this present day may and should experience victory over the Adversary, by simply standing our ground in faith. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Though, presently, our victory requires the afflictions that accompany our warfare against the Devil, we have been promised that we "shall be able to quench **all** the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16). "8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1Peter 5:8-9).

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- "17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The "dragon was wroth with the woman" (12:17), but his attempts to destroy the Woman will be foiled. The Roaring Lion will again look about "seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8), and will decide "to make war with the remnant of her seed" (12:17), specifically, the Jewish Tribulation Believers, who "keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (12:17). "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try

them as gold is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zechariah 13:9). These Jewish Tribulation Believers, who are called the "remnant of her seed" (12:17), are:

(1) the 144,000 of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (7:4), who are Sealed Believers in Christ (Revelation 7:4 cf. 2Corinthians 1:22), which we believe will be divinely protected from the Antichrist,

(2) Jewish Tribulation Believers-- not of the 144,000-- who will be martyred by the Antichrist, i.e., "they loved not their lives unto the death" (12:11), and

(3) Jewish Tribulation Believers-- again, not of the 144,000-- that are also delivered from the Antichrist, i.e., "33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:33-34).

Chapter 13: The Antichrist and the False Prophet

- "1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."

The New Testament word "antichrist" comes from the Greek *antichristos*, meaning in opposition to Christ or in substitution for Christ; and, is found only in the epistles of the Apostle John, e.g., "Little children, it is the Last Time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the Last Time" (1John 2:18). Here, in an apocalyptic vision, John stands "upon the sand of the sea" (13:1), where the "sea" depicts the Gentile nations, i.e., the "isles of the Gentiles" (Genesis 10:5). "Sing unto the LORD a new song, and His praise from the end of the Earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof" (Isaiah 42:10). The "beast" that rises up "out of the sea" (13:1) has been traditionally understood to be the Antichrist. Victorinus (circa 3rd-4th century) remarked about the "beast" (13:1): "This signifies the kingdom of that time of Antichrist, and the people mingled with the variety of nations" (from Victorinus' "Commentary on the Apocalypse").

The Antichrist or the Beast is described as "having seven heads and ten horns" (13:1)-- calling to mind Daniel's description of the Roman Empire, that ultimately brings forth the "Man of Sin" (2Thessalonians 2:3) from its revived form. "7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast [the Roman Empire], dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had **ten horns**. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold,

there came up among them another Little Horn [the Antichrist], before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Daniel 7:7-8). The "seven heads" (13:1) represent seven successive phases of governmental history (cp. Revelation 17:10-12), while the "ten horns" (13:1) signify ten simultaneously reigning rulers, who will be contemporaries with the Antichrist (cp. 17:12). In the Book of Revelation, both the "horns" and "crowns" (13:1) are symbols of governmental authority; and in this instance, they are used to blasphemously supplant or usurp the true authority of the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords, i.e., "and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (13:1). Though human government was instituted by God "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4), it will ultimately be perverted to blaspheme and war against the return of the LORD Jesus Christ, "Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate" (1Timothy 6:15), to establish His earthly Kingdom "wherein dwelleth [good and] righteousness" (2Peter 3:13).

Seven successive stages of Gentile world power-- out of which the Antichrist will come-- are represented by the "seven heads and ten horns" (13:1). The difficulty of interpretation is the honest bias of each commentator, who is impressed that he is one "upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1Corinthians 10:11). As we approach the conclusion of the matter, the Infallible Commentator, which is the Holy Spirit, will drop the scales from our eyes to teach us the wonderful secret of His infallible interpretation. "For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but His secret is with the righteous" (Proverbs 3:32). Of the seven stages of Gentile world power, six are historical, and the seventh is a revived form of the sixth (the Roman Empire):

(1) Egypt (1600-1200 BC),

(2) Assyria (900-600 BC),

(3) Babylon (606-536 BC),

(4) Medo-Persia (536-330 BC),

(5) Greece (330-146 BC),

(6) Rome (200 BC-400 AD), and

(7) the Revived Roman Empire, which seems to be the European Union, that was formed from the older European Economic Community (1957-1958) through the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), which was enacted on November 1st 1993.

How do we arrive at identifying the Beast "out of the sea" (13:1) with the Roman Empire? To answer that question, we must read the prophecies of the second chapter of Daniel. There, we are given a description of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a "great image" (Daniel 2:31), whose "head was of fine gold [Babylon], his breast and his arms of silver [Medo-Persia], his belly and his thighs of brass [Greece], 33 His legs of iron [Rome], his feet part of iron and part of clay [the Revived Roman Empire]" (2:32-33). The Almighty gave Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to Daniel in response to believing prayer, i.e., they desired "mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret... Then was the secret revealed" (Daniel 2:18, 19). "Thou, O king [Nebuchadnezzar]... art this head of

gold [the Babylonian Empire]" (2:37-38). As it was with Daniel, so it is true with the Saints throughout time, divinely revealed prophecy is merely history in its yet to be fulfilled form. "39 And after thee [Nebuchadnezzar] shall arise another kingdom [the Medo-Persian Empire of Darius and Cyrus] inferior to thee, and another third kingdom [the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great] of brass, which shall bear rule over all the Earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom [the Roman Empire] shall be strong as iron" (2:39-40).

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- "2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

John the Beloved Apostle describes his vision of the "beast" as "like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion" (13:2). Similarly, the Old Testament prophet Daniel was given a vision of "four great beasts [of prey, which] came up from the sea" (Daniel 7:3). Daniel described the Babylonian Empire as a "lion, [that] had eagle's wings" (7:4). A second kingdom, the Medo-Persian Empire, was represented as a bear, i.e., "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs [i.e., dominating Media, Persia, Babylonia] in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh [i.e., subduing Lydia, Egypt, etc.]" (7:5). A third world empire, Greece, was depicted as a leopard, which speaks of the swiftness of Alexander the Great's conquests, i.e., "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (7:6). Finally, the Roman Empire was likened to a dreadful beast with ten horns, i.e., "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (7:7). And so, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a "great image" (2:31) agrees with both Daniel's vision of "four great beasts" (7:3) and John's vision of the "beast which... was like unto a leopard... a bear... [and] a lion" (Revelation 13:2).

It is said that the "dragon [Satan] gave him [the Antichrist] his power, and his seat, and great authority" (13:2). But, how could the devil give governmental power and authority to the Antichrist, when God never placed them in Satan's hands? "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18). Sadly, however, when the children of this world give obedience to the devil, then they acknowledge his illegal seizure of that power. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and the "god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4) *only* because he has been crowned as such through the willful surrender of obedience of any and every moral agent, when they demonstrate themselves to be "lovers of their own selves" (2Timothy 3:2) and not of God. Antichrist will be the human epitome of the self-love promoted by Lucifer, when he attempted to seize the heavenly throne of the High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity (Isaiah 57:15). "13 For thou [Lucifer] hast said in thine heart, **I will** ascend into Heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High" (Isaiah

14:13-14).

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- "3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

Understanding that the Beast with "seven heads" (13:1) represents Gentile world power, the Apostle John "saw one of [the Beast's] heads as it were wounded to death" (13:3). This referred to the eventual collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, when the Vandals plundered the city of Rome (455 AD) and the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, abdicated (476 AD). The Beast's "deadly wound was healed" (13:3) indicates that the Lamb of the Revelation anticipated Satan's attempt to revive the power of the Roman Empire. "I [Christ, the Lamb of God] am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (22:13). What is known as the Holy Roman Empire-- originally including what is now Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, eastern France, the Low Countries, and parts of northern and central Italy-- was the attempt of the papacy to enlarge its power through the control of secular governments, beginning with the coronation of Charlemagne, king of the Franks, in 800 AD by Pope Leo III, to the resigning of the imperial title of Holy Roman emperor by Francis II, emperor of Austria, in 1806. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

The imperial title of Holy Roman emperor was virtually hereditary to the Austrian House of Habsburg, beginning in the fifteenth century. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Exodus 23:2). Alluding to Otto von Bismarck's German Empire (1871-1918)-- where the equivalents of *caesar* and *empire* are the German, *kaiser* and *reich*, respectively-- as the Second Holy Roman Empire (or, Second Reich), Adolph Hitler referred to Nazi Germany as the Third Reich. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered" (Proverbs 11:21). Each attempt to revive the power of the Roman Empire has failed-- until (possibly) now, with the burgeoning political and economic strength of the modern European Union (2000). But, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that Power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11).

Since the Beast "out of the sea" (13:1) is both a system, i.e., Gentile world power in the form of a Revived Roman Empire, **and** a man that is called the Antichrist, who comes out of that system, then the "deadly wound" (13:3), most likely will **also** refer to an actual wound to Antichrist's head. The Greek word for "wound" (13:3) is *plege*, which is also translated as *plague*. Just as the LORD Jesus Christ was "wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5) and "by His stripes we are healed" (53:5), the Antichrist will falsely simulate a resurrection from what appears to be a mortal head wound. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect" (Matthew 24:24). Because the power to create life or resurrect from the dead belong **only** to the Living God, i.e., "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25), Antichrist's *resurrection* will only be a "lying wonder". "8 And then shall that Wicked [the Antichrist] be revealed, whom the LORD shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: 9 Even him [the Antichrist], whose coming is after the

working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2Thessalonians 2:8-9).

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- "4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

Worship is directed to the Father by the Son. "21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:21, 23). In a false imitation of the relationship of Christ to the Father of Mercies (2Corinthians 1:3), the Antichrist will be instrumental in directing worship to Satan, i.e., "And they worshipped the dragon [Satan] which gave power unto the beast [Antichrist]" (13:4). Satan would have no interest in giving power to the Antichrist, if it would not somehow come back to him in worship. "And [Satan] saith unto Him [the LORD Jesus Christ], All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9). What the LORD Jesus refused, Antichrist will gladly receive. "Again, the devil taketh Him [Jesus] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (4:8,10).

Who "worshipped the dragon... and... the beast" (13:4)? "All the world" (13:3), who "wondered after the beast" (13:3), are the "they" of verse four, who are deceived into worshipping Satan and the Antichrist. Before modern times, when global communications and the Internet have now intimately linked the far reaches of the planet, it would have been difficult for any man or devil to have achieved the feat of gaining the worship and admiration of not merely a nation or continent, but of "all the world" (13:3). "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them" (1John 4:5). This is the climactic act of the world system, to worship the devil and his false Christ. "15 Love not the world [system], neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (2:15-17).

"Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (13:4) will be the adulation of the world for the Antichrist. The strength of human government is measured by how its might maintains rule within its borders, and how it successfully defends against foreign enemies. "For he [human government, as intended by God] is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4). In keeping with Antichrist's praise, i.e., "who is able to make war with him?" (13:4), Antichrist will be a man of military and political power, for he will be responsible for the "covenant with many" (Daniel 9:27) that takes place at the beginning of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. This usurper will be a minister of Satan against the Saints for evil, who will be known for his execution of wrath in the martyrdom of the Godly, who practice righteousness. "And he [Antichrist] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

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- "5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

Blasphemia is the Greek word for *blasphemy*, which means *evil speaking*, especially in the sense of speaking evil of God. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory" (16:9). Anyone who would falsely claim to be the Son of God, speaks blasphemy; and, ironically, the LORD Jesus was attacked as a blasphemer because He truly said that He was the Son of God. "33 The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a Man, makest thyself God... 36 Say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:33, 36). Yet, the very fact that the Antichrist (prophetically) "sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4) is the ultimate blasphemy. "And there was given unto him [Antichrist] a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (13:5).

It may be initially strange to the minds of the Godly that "power was given unto" (13:5) Antichrist by Jehovah to return blasphemy against Jehovah; but, God allows Antichrist and the unelect "to fill up their sins" (1Thessalonians 2:16) through this blaspheming, which justifies the Almighty's granting of their free moral agency **and** their subsequent "eternal damnation [Greek, *krisis*, or judgment]" (Mark 3:29). "4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment... 9 [then] The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:4, 9). And, Antichrist's "power" (13:5) or liberty to "continue" (13:5) sitting in the reconstructed Jerusalem Temple "as God" (2Thessalonians 2:4) is for "forty and two months" (13:5)--or, 3 1/2 prophetic years, which is 1,260 days. This period will begin at the Middle of the Tribulation Week, which is the "Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15). The forty-two month period, which follows the Abomination of Desolation, is commonly known as the Great Tribulation. "For then shall be Great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (24:21). [See our article, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html> -- which outlines "The Wisdom of God in All of the Seventy Weeks".]

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- "6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven."

Again, the hallmark of Antichrist's short career is his blasphemy of all that concerns the Living God, i.e., "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His Tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven" (13:6). The profane use of the Name of God to damn whoever and whatever, is common to mankind; and, it is this loose but perverse speech that qualifies as blasphemy. "1 This know also, that in the Last Days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, **blasphemers**, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2Timothy 3:1-2). We, in this closing Laodicean Age of Church History, have seen a greater than ever degeneration of evil speaking, that will culminate in the Antichrist's blasphemy. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (3:13). Consider the following,

to benchmark how much worse the present blasphemy has become. During the Philadelphian Age of the Church (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), when the Church was still characterized as having "a little strength" (Revelation 3:8), the evangelist Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) described the blasphemy he encountered in the little New York village of Antwerp of the early 1800's.

"In passing around the village I heard a vast amount of profanity. I thought I had never heard so much in any place that I had ever visited. It seemed as if the men, in playing ball upon the green, and in every business place that I stepped into, were all cursing and swearing and damning each other. I felt as if I had arrived upon the borders of hell. I had a kind of awful feeling, I recollect, as I passed around the village on Saturday. The very atmosphere seemed to me to be poison; and a kind of terror took possession of me. I gave myself to prayer on Saturday, and finally urged my petition till this answer came: 'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee. For I have much people in this city' [Acts 18:9-10]" (from Chapter 8, "Revival at Antwerp", of "An Autobiography" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.html> -- by Charles G. Finney).

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- "7 And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Bunyan.Pilgrims.Progress.html> -- describes CHRISTIAN's approach to the Palace Beautiful, where he encounters two lions on either side of the narrow approach to the palace. While reconsidering his need to enter the palace, WATCHFUL, the porter of the palace, calls out to Christian, "Is thy strength so small? fear not the lions; for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is; and for discovery of those that have none: keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee!" "And [Jesus] said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40). Though the Almighty has made us immortal until our work on Earth is done, "If there is no more work for you to do for your Master, it cannot distress you that He is about to take you Home [through martyrdom] and put you where you will be beyond the reach of adversaries" (from C. H. Spurgeon's "Faith's Checkbook" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spurgeon/Faith.Checkbook/Faiths.Checkbook.Preface.html> -- April 8th entry, "Preserved to Work's End"). "And the night following the LORD stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). But, the All Wise God has chosen that some of His Saints will give the ultimate confession and witness of their faith in the LORD Jesus Christ through their martyrdom, i.e., "And it was given unto [Antichrist] to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them" (13:7). "Jesus answered, Thou [Pontius Pilate] couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from Above" (John 19:11). And, power to hurt the Saints, indicates that the Antichrist has had the restraint removed to give him power "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (13:7). "For the Mystery of Iniquity doth already work: only He [the Holy Spirit indwelling the Saints] Who now letteth [i.e., restrains Satan and sin] will let [continue to restrain], until He [the Holy Spirit] be taken out of the way [at the Pre-Tribulational Rapture]" (2Thessalonians 2:7). [See our article, "Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto the Death" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html> -- , to explore further the concept of Christian martyrdom.]

- "8 And all that dwell upon the Earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Those who are not Heavenly minded, are described as "all [those] that dwell upon the Earth" (13:8), i.e., Earth dwellers. "He that cometh from Above is above all [i.e., Jesus Christ]: he that is of the Earth is earthly, and speaketh of the Earth [i.e., Antichrist, and his followers]" (John 3:31). Scripture tells us that "all that dwell upon the Earth shall worship" (13:8) the Antichrist; but, later in this chapter, we will find the reason for this universal worship, i.e., coercion based upon the threat of death. "And he [the False Prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast [image of the Antichrist], that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (13:15). These Earth dwellers, "whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (13:8), are the unelect, who never will repent. However, it is important to note that a commandment to leave Babylon the Great, i.e., "And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4), comes towards the End of the Tribulation Week, indicating that some of the Earth dwellers must have repented. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me" (Isaiah 49:16). Therefore, it appears that some that worshipped the Beast, will repent; but, Scripture gives no one the slightest chance of Heaven, who thinks to preserve himself through aforethought and premeditation to bow down to the Beast. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a **liar**, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:4). And, the "fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and **all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death" (Revelation 21:8).

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- "9 If any man have an ear, let him hear."

The voice of the Holy Spirit is only to those who "have an ear" (13:9). In keeping with the Creator's original plan of a "perfect man" who measures up unto the "stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13), the Spirit of Christ is constantly watching for any man "whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9). That perfection occurs the moment a man repents of sin, for it is the perfection of intention (where opportunity allows) that always manifests itself in the "fruits meet for [literally, worthy of] repentance" (Matthew 3:8). "22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Who will this Antichrist be? Periodically, each generation has had its own Antiochus Epiphanes, Caligula, Pontifex Maximus, Hitler, or Mussolini that must be the Antichrist. But, why? The appearance of the Antichrist will precede the Second Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ for the counterfeit to properly work its deception. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2Thessalonians 2:3). The fact that the LORD Jesus informed His people that He would return, must be a large part of the reason for the Saints' anticipation that "Antichrist shall come" (1John 2:18). [See our article, "Antichrist Shall Come" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Antichrist.Shall.Come.html> -- , for a development of the Scripture concerning the Antichrist.] "2 In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were

not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). Coupled with the Saviour's Promise that He would return, is His assurance that He would return *speedily*. Most certainly, this has inflamed the Saints' desire for His return and their departure. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7). [See our editorial, "Behold, I Come Quickly" --- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Behold.I.Come.Quickly.html -- , to review the merits of this Promise.] Remembering that the Restraining Influence, which is the Holy Spirit dwelling in His Saints, must first "be taken out of the way" (2Thessalonians 2:7), **only** "then shall that Wicked [the Antichrist] be revealed" (2:8). So, the Pre-Tribulational Rapture will remove the Watching and Waiting Saints **before** the revelation of the "man of sin" (2:3). [See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> -- , for a brief exposition of 2Thessalonians 2.]

The Protestant Reformation, which was marked by a return from an infallible pope to the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures and the concurrent right and necessity that every man should be his own priest, typically saw the Roman pontiff as the Antichrist. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous Light" (1Peter 2:9). Even before Martin Luther (1520) wrote, "I know that the Papacy is none other than the kingdom of Babylon, and the violence of Nimrod the mighty hunter"; John Milicius (1294-1374), Archdeacon and Canon of the Archiepiscopal Cathedral of the Hradschin, Prague, was so shocked at the moral scandals of the Rome that he served, that on his visit to the Pontifical city, "he wrote over the door of one of the cardinals, 'Antichrist is now come, and sitteth in the Church,' and [then] departed" (from James A. Wylie's "The History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 3 --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/History.Protestant.v1.b3.html> --).

Scripture gives many clues to the identity of the Antichrist:

(1) He will arise from the Revived Roman Empire. "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up **among** them another Little Horn [the Antichrist], before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Daniel 7:8). [See our comments on Revelation 13:1 for a development of Daniel 7:8.] Also, "26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [which was accomplished by the Roman general Titus in 70 AD]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he [Antichrist, who shall arise from the 'people of the prince that shall come' (v. 26)] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:26-27).

(2) He will counterfeit himself as the True Christ, sitting "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4); thus, he may exhibit many of the characteristics of the LORD Jesus Christ. For example, like Jesus, he *may* be about thirty years old, when he begins his brief career, i.e., "Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23).

(3) He will be well connected to the power structure of the world system, i.e., the religious, economic, political, military power of the world. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

(4) He will be instrumental in establishing a covenant or treaty "with many" (Daniel 9:27), including Israel, at the Beginning of the Tribulation Week; thus, he may already be functioning as a politician or power broker at the time of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. **But**,

(5) He will not be allowed to be revealed "as God [sitting] in the temple" (2Thessalonians 2:4) until the Middle of the Tribulation Week; thus, Antichrist will not be *obvious* as Antichrist until he is demanding the worship of the world to himself as God, on penalty of death. "And [the False Prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13:15).

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- "10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints."

This verse begins with a Promise of Divine retribution, i.e., "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity" (13:10). "And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deuteronomy 19:21). The gravity of God's Divine Law necessitates a justice that "he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (13:10). "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19). Even in these Gospel times, God is still a "just God and a Saviour" (Isaiah 45:21); and, the Godly still rejoice that the Almighty performs His judgments, when the impenitent place themselves beyond His forgiveness. "1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God: 2 For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the Great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Revelation 19:1-3).

Why does this verse of Divine vengeance speak of the "patience and the faith of the Saints" (13:10)? Since "it was given unto [Antichrist] to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them" (13:7) just previously, this Promise of retribution, most assuredly, is to those whom the Almighty asks to lay down their lives in witness of His presence, superiority, and Truth. "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (12:11). This Promise-- "faith" (13:10)-- encourages the Tribulation Martyrs to stay their course to the end-- "patience" (13:10)-- because those who will never repent, will be judged with the same certainty that the Penitent will be forgiven. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). And, the Penitent, God will glorify. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Corinthians 2:9).

- "11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the Earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

The Greek word *therion* is translated as *beast* in both verse one and this verse; and, *another* comes from the Greek word *allos*, which means *another of the same kind*, i.e., "And I beheld another beast" (13:11). Since verse one refers to the Antichrist, then verse eleven must be describing another savage creature of the same kind. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). This Beast comes "up out of the Earth" (13:11), indicating that he is a creature of the Earth and not of Heaven. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). One feature of this Beast is that "he had two horns like a lamb" (13:11), meaning that he had the outward characteristics of a meek and mild lamb. This implies that this Beast will attempt to appear like the LORD Jesus Christ, who is truly the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). But, the true nature of this Beast is betrayed by the fact that "he spake as a dragon" (13:11). "And he [the heavenly angel] laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:2). Therefore, we can be assured that the Beast "out of the Earth" (13:11) must be another savage creature like the Antichrist, who attempts to shield his ferocious character with a lamb-like mask. "And He [Jesus] said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them" (Luke 21:8).

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- "12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the Earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

Possibly, the Godly have mistaken this Beast "out of the Earth" (13:11) as the Antichrist; but, this Beast is clearly another personage than the Antichrist. "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him" (13:12). Since the Beast "out of the Earth" (13:11) is equal in power and authority to the Beast "out of the sea" (13:1), it must be by mutual consent that this second Beast chooses to make the "Earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" (13:12). A mark of distinguishment for the Antichrist will be that his "deadly [head] wound was healed" (13:12 cp. 13:3). Many commentators, including this one, believe that this Beast "out of the Earth" (13:11) describes the Endtime personality that is commonly referred to as the False Prophet, i.e., he "causeth the Earth and them which dwell therein to **worship** the first beast" (13:12). The worship that the False Prophet directs toward the Antichrist will ultimately be received by Satan, i.e., "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the [Antichrist]: and they worshipped the [Antichrist], saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (13:4). And, Satan is willing to trade the riches and power of the world to buy himself the worship that he does not deserve. "And [Satan] saith unto Him [Jesus], All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9).

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- "13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the Earth in the sight of men,"

Both Antichrist and his False Prophet are liars, like their "father the devil" (John 8:44). As such, the only kind of "great wonders" (13:13) that they perform, are lies. "Even him [Antichrist], whose

coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and **lying wonders** [performed by the False Prophet]" (2Thessalonians 2:9). We must go back to the Old Testament to recall that even a false prophet can make predictions that come to pass, just as some have thought that the astrological quatrains of Nostradamus (1503-1566) accurately predicted certain details of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century. "1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). [See our article, "How to Identify a False Prophet" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophets/How.To.ID.False.Prophet.html> -- , for a Scriptural survey of how to identify any false prophet.]

Magicians and illusionists perform their feats for entertainment or diversion. But, at what point are their tricks and illusions actually "lying wonders" (2Thessalonians 2:9) masquerading "as only a trick"? When the conjuring of their magical act seeks to draw men away from the Living God, i.e., "And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them" (Deuteronomy 13:2), then they are performing "lying wonders". Traditionally, men such as Simon the Sorcerer used their craft to deceive people into believing that they possessed the power of God, and were, thus, His representatives. "9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God" (Acts 8:9-10). Though magic often uses mechanical props to trick the mind, the supernatural power of Satan may be illicitly employed to allow the prestidigitator to go beyond the mere "slight of hand" to accomplish what science cannot explain. "9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a **miracle** for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Exodus 7:9-12).

When the False Prophet makes "fire [to] come down from heaven on the Earth in the sight of men" (13:13), he may have the connivance of some of the best scientific minds to aid him in impressing the great mass of mankind; but, regardless of any assistance from man, the False Prophet will have the supernatural aid of Lucifer the fallen angel. "And the Beast [Antichrist] was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20). Satan's power is greater than any man. "4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him **a little lower than the angels**, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:4-5). But, lest the Saints should become exceedingly impressed or intimidated with the power of the Satanic trinity-- Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet-- *God is greater*. "3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [Antichrist, etc.]: because greater is He that is in you [the Holy Spirit], than he [Satan]"

that is in the world" (1John 4:3-4).

- "14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the Earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Just as blasphemy is the hallmark of Antichrist's career-- speaking "blasphemy against God" (13:6)-- deception is the main feature of the False Prophet's ministry, i.e., he "deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth" (13:14). After all, without the False Prophet's deception, who would care to worship the Antichrist, if they truly believed that on account of their worship, God would damn them forever? "9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (14:9-11).

It will be difficult for those "that dwell on the Earth" (13:14) not to be deceived by the False Prophet's miracles, "which he had power to do in the sight of the beast" (13:14). Why? To the unelect, the miracles will speak more loudly than any previously rejected Scriptures. God will send them "strong delusion" (2Thessalonians 2:11), specifically, because "they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved" (2:10). And, the elect-but-still-lost will not yet have any foundation upon the Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10:21)-- though they may be uneasy about the False Prophet's miracles-- to resist the deception. It is only by the "shield of faith" that we can "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]" (Ephesians 6:16). The charlatanism of the False Prophet will make the pitch to the world that "they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (13:14). In other words, the False Prophet will convince the world that **they** should make the "image of the beast" (13:14); or, at least, it should be built by popular demand. "9 They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. 17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god" (Isaiah 44:9, 17).

- "15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

The False Prophet will be especially acclaimed for two miracles or wonders:

(1) calling fire down from heaven, i.e., "he maketh fire come down from heaven on the Earth in the sight of men" (13:13), and

(2) giving "life unto the image of the beast" (13:15).

He will "cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (13:15). And, this ought to remind us of what Jesus said during His earthly ministry, i.e., "4 And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12:4-5). *Pneuma* is the Greek word that the Authorized Version (KJV) has translated as "life" (13:15); but, it is more commonly translated as *spirit* or *ghost*, and even as *wind*, i.e., "The wind [Greek, pneuma] bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit [Greek, pneuma]" (John 3:8). "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life [Greek, zoe], and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). Therefore, the "life [Greek, pneuma]" (13:15) that the False Prophet gives to the "image of the beast" (13:15) will not be the same kind of "life [Greek, zoe]" (Acts 17:25) that only the Almighty bestows.

Does the Scripture give us any clue to the identity of this False Prophet? Yes. By analysis, if the Beast "out of the Earth" (13:11) is the False Prophet, and the Great Whore (17:1) is the Church of Rome, then the Pope would be the False Prophet. We are told that the Great Whore sits "upon many waters" (17:1), i.e., upon many nations, just as the Antichrist rises "up out of the sea" (13:1). BABYLON THE GREAT is the name of the Great Whore, "with whom the kings of the Earth have committed fornication [Greek, porneia]" (17:2). "17 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city [papal Rome], which reigneth over the kings of the Earth" (17:5-18). The spiritual fornication of the Church of Rome eminently qualifies her as the spiritual offspring of MYSTERY BABYLON, making her the quintessence of harlotry, and appropriately, "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:17).

Though the Protestant Reformers most commonly referred to the Roman pontiff as the Antichrist, more accurately, he is best qualified to be the False Prophet, because he "exerciseth **all the power** of the first beast [the Antichrist] before him" (13:12). Church history entered the Worldly Church phase of the Thyatiran Age (2:18-29) after the fall of Rome, and continued in it through the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages until the Protestant Reformation, for nearly a millennium (500-1500 AD). This period of world and Church history was dominated by the presence of the Bishop of Rome and the power of the Roman Catholic Church. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel [the harlotry of Rome], which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Revelation 2:20). Presently, we have yet to see when or whether the Pope will declare himself favorable or available to such attempts as the United Religions (2000), the official religious counterpart of the United Nations; but, the United Religions (presently) appears to be the most viable vehicle for the False Prophet. "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; He will render unto her a recompence" (Jeremiah 51:6). [See our series, "Babylon the Great" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --, for the history of Babylon, the Church of Rome, and ecumenism. Also, further analysis of the United Religions may be found in our editorial, "United Religions (2000): A Tower Unto Heaven" --- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_United.Religions.html -- .]

- "16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:"

Verse sixteen is the first mention of the Mark of the Beast, which even the nominally thoughtful may presently detest. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed [literally, registered or enrolled, i.e., in the public records, the names of all people, for the purpose of taxing their estates or property]" (Luke 2:1). Notice that the False Prophet instrumentally "causeth all" to "receive a mark" (13:16), meaning that, the False Prophet, **not** the Antichrist, is the chief promoter of the Mark of the Beast. If the Antichrist were to solely promote the reception of the Mark of the Beast, it would be by raw force, i.e., "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up" (Daniel 8:23). But, if the False Prophet is the prime promoter for the reception of the Mark of the Beast-- which he will-- then it will be accomplished by deceptively causing the world to desire to receive it. "[The False Prophet] deceiveth them that dwell on the Earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (13:14). Negatively, refusal to worship the Antichrist will be punishable by death (13:15), while on the other hand, the ability to live, i.e., "buy or sell" (13:17), will be controlled by the willingness to "receive a mark" (13:16).

Three pairs are enumerated for the Mark of the Beast, showing the totality of those marked:

- (1) "small and great" (13:16), refers to recognized *status* in society,
- (2) "rich and poor" (13:16), refers to net worth of *possessions*, and
- (3) "free and bond" (13:16), refers to degree of *liberty* for human action.

In contrast to the Mark of the Beast, the LORD marks His own. "4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5 And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house" (Ezekiel 9:4-6). In all, no segment of the world will be excluded from receiving the Mark of the Beast, for it will be Satan's brand upon his possessions, as much as cattle are branded by ranchers, i.e., "his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

Much prophetic discussion surrounds the technology of the Mark of the Beast, i.e., the "mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16). The use of the Social Security Number (SSN)-- employed in some form by most modern countries as a registration of its citizens, to provide a societal safety net for sickness, disability, retirement, etc.-- is most often necessary for employment, as well as the payment of income taxes. "15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth... 18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: 19

Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. 20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's" (Genesis 47:15, 19-20).

The proliferation of computers, databases, credit and debit cards, scannable bar codes (UPC), and wireless satellite Internet, data, and telecommunications-- they all facilitate the tracking of the movements and activity of much of the developed world, in addition to the myriad of records traditionally kept by all governments. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the Words, and seal the Book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). Possibly, all that would remain, would be the employment of a type of programmable, scannable "smart chip" that would be implanted under the skin of "their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16)-- as has been done with pets and livestock-- that would enable a cashless society, as well as for identification and tracking, i.e., medical information, military status, immigration records, criminal records, etc. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come [quickly], LORD Jesus" (22:20). Amen, and Amen.

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- "17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

Even if one were to evade the death penalty for not worshipping the Antichrist, still, he would not be able to "buy or sell, save that he had the mark" (13:17). The Almighty will finally allow Satan the use of this mark to force the issue with all the inhabitants of the world-- "Who is on the LORD'S side?" (Exodus 32:26). As in the end game of a chess match, the LORD of the Harvest (Luke 10:2) must skillfully position His game pieces to harvest **all** the Elect, while carefully punishing only the wicked. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). When the LORD Jesus Christ returns at His Second Coming, and "every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7), He will carefully separate for judgment and damnation (cp. 14:9-11), the "tares", which are the recipients of the Mark of the Beast. "28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto Him, Wilt Thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But He said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares [a kind of darnel, which is a poisonous grass], ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn" (Matthew 13:28-30). Thus, the Almighty's use of the "wrath of man" (Psalm 76:10) in the form of the Mark of the Beast, will "praise" (76:10) Himself, when He separates for judgment the wicked, and preserves all the remaining Righteous ones. "[Jesus prayed immediately before the Garden of Gethsemane:] While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12).

The "mark [Greek, charagma, or imprint], or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (13:17) connects the *mark* with the *name* and the *number* of the Beast. If the Mark of the Beast is initially sold to the world as a helpful or convenient identifier of the recipient, then the Scriptures

reveal the true motivation for the device-- to brand every human being as the personal property of the devil. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). In other words, the Antichrist's name will be digitally expressed and encoded into the mark, which will also uniquely identify and control the recipient. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (8:34).

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- "18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

Some have explained the "Six hundred threescore and six [666]" (13:18) as an adding of the numerical equivalents of the Hebrew, Greek, or Latin letters of the Antichrist's name. For instance, it is said that Caesar Nero is spelled Kaisar Neron, if written with Hebrew endings. Accordingly, the sum of the letters that would be Hebrew consonants, would total 666, i.e., K equals 100, S equals 60, R equals 200, N equals 50, R equals 200, O equals 6, and N equals 50. But, the verse begins with the expression, "Here is wisdom" (13:18); and, wisdom or "knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" (Proverbs 14:6). Biblical numerics are appropriate for the Saints to study; but, like all lawful endeavours, Biblical numerics can only be properly understood when they are submitted to the guidance of the Spirit of God through His God Breathed Word. "16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2Timothy 3:16-17).

This writer has found satisfaction with the understanding that the number 666 represents the "number of a man" (13:18). Since man was created on the sixth day (Genesis 1:26-31), the number six represents man. When it is repeated three times, it is the LORD emphatically stating that the Antichrist is not God, but merely a man... a man... a man. Nebuchadnezzar, who finally came to the "knowledge of the Truth" (1Timothy 2:4), would undoubtedly vouch for the position that *the Antichrist is nothing but a mere man*. He suffered the humiliation of being treated as a beast, because of his pride and arrogance. "32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will... 34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are Truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4:32, 34-37).

Chapter 14: The 144,000 and the Victorious Judgment of the Lamb

- "1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's Name written in their foreheads."

It must be remembered that the Spirit of Prophecy (19:10) that inspired the Apostle John to write the Apocalypse, intended the imagery of the Revelation to be understood in a conversational manner, "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:11). But, in the narrative of Chapter 14, like our own conversations, not every event described is in a rigidly chronological order. Thus, this chapter depicts a heavenly scene with the "hundred forty and four thousand" (14:1) "before the throne of God" (14:5) after the Pre-Wrath Rapture (about 9 days prior to the End of the Tribulation Week). [See our Tribulation Chart (aka, "The Big Chart") -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Big.Chart.Intro.html> --.] It then speaks of three angels preaching to the Earth (14:6-13). A statement follows, that "Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth" (14:13), which this commentator believes to be a *retrospective* statement of the blessedness of the death of Saints *prior* to the Pre-Wrath Rapture (11:15). Concluding the chapter, another three angels act in concert with the Son of Man, Who is judging the Earth (14:14-20), finishing the Tribulation Week.

The Lamb (14:1) of God "which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), is Jesus. In this vision, John sees the LORD Jesus Christ on "mount Sion" (14:1), which in this instance, refers to a heavenly scene. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Hebrews 12:22). It has become more apparent that much of what God has directed man to *do*, i.e., "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth" (Luke 11:2), and *build* upon Earth, has been modeled upon what exists in Heaven, i.e., earthly Jerusalem was based upon heavenly Jerusalem. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

The 144,000 (14:1)-- the same 144,000 Jewish Believers, who were sealed in Chapter 7 shortly before the Middle of the Tribulation Week-- are standing *with Christ in Heaven*. [See our comments on "Chapter 7: 144,000 Sealed on Earth and a Throne Scene of Delivered Saints" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.7.html> -- for more background on the 144,000.] This triumphal scene in Heaven indicates that *the 144,000 were preserved from the Antichrist and were Pre-Wrath Raptured*, i.e., "Hurt not the Earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (7:3). Again, why the trouble to seal the 144,000 from the effects of the Divine Judgments, only to be killed by the Antichrist? "3 O LORD, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit... 9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy Truth?" (Psalm 30:3, 9).

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- "2 And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:"

The "voice from Heaven" (14:2) that John heard was that of the Almighty God, i.e., "as the Voice of many waters" (14:2). "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and His voice was like a noise of many waters: and the Earth shined with His glory" (Ezekiel 43:2). God's awesome Voice was heard as a mighty Niagara, and His Speech was punctuated with the "Voice of a great thunder" (14:2). "The LORD thundered from Heaven, and the Most High uttered His Voice" (2Samuel 22:14). As mortals, we often forget that this God of power and majesty has condescended to make a covenant with us-- His presence in exchange for our trust-- i.e., "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, **I will be with thee**; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:1, 2).

Throughout the ages, the Saints have been enjoined to sound their praises of God with "all manner of instruments" (2Samuel 6:5), even as David and all Israel used harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and cymbals. Both men and angels are seen before the Throne praising God with harps, i.e., "And when He had taken the Book, the four beasts [angelic seraphim] and four and twenty elders [glorified Saints] fell down before the Lamb, **having every one of them harps**, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints" (Revelation 5:8). "Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings" (Psalm 33:2). Who are the "harpers harping with their harps" (14:2)? Most probably the harpers are the 144,000 Jewish Believers, who have been Pre-Wrath Raptured-- for they would have much to celebrate! "1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of Our Salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms" (Psalm 95:1-2). [See our article, "The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture: Or, The Last Trump and the Pre-Wrath Rapture" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, to Biblically explore the concept of *more than one Rapture*.]

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- "3 And they sung as it were a New Song before the Throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that Song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the Earth."

Jehovah Jesus, Who is the Lamb (14:1) before the Throne, will teach His people their New Song, because He personally will serenade us after we come into His presence. "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, **He will joy over thee with singing**" (Zephaniah 3:17). Likewise, the 144,000 will sing a "New Song before the Throne" (14:3) of God. The Creator alone is truly the Author of "all things new" (Revelation 21:5). "And have put on the New Man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). In Salvation, Jehovah "hath put a New Song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3). [See our comments on "Chapter 5: The Worthy Lamb Prepares to Open the Seven Seals" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.5.html> -- to see both the Seraphim and Elders further described.] "No man could learn" (14:3) the song of the 144,000, because God has covenanted His secret personally and only to those that fear Him. "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant" (Psalm 25:14). [Read our series, "Keeping Covenant" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#Keeping Covenant> --, for instruction and encouragement to be faithful to God, even as He is the "Faithful God, Which keepeth Covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9).] The 144,000 "were redeemed [Greek, agorazo] from the Earth" (14:3) by a miraculous Rapture. The Father, Who purchased us "with the precious Blood of Christ" (1Peter 1:19), will simply take delivery on His purchased possessions, i.e., the

Tribulation Week Saints at that Rapture. "Ye are bought [Greek, agorazo] with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1Corinthians 7:23).

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- "4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul speaks of the entire Body of Believers as a "chaste virgin", i.e., "For I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to One Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin [Greek, parthenos] to Christ" (2Corinthians 11:2). The Apostle John also uses the Greek word *parthenos*, in describing the 144,000 as "virgins" (14:4). Virginity, though it most often describes a woman who has not known a man sexually, was also used to identify both the men and women of Israel, i.e., "This is the Word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him [Sennacherib king of Assyria]; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee" (Isaiah 37:22). However, the "virgins" (14:4) here described, "were not defiled with women" (14:4), seems to indicate that the 144,000 are unmarried and chaste men, who will abstain from marriage during the difficult days of the Tribulation Week. Even the married Saints of these Last Days, as much as possible, should dedicate themselves more to the LORD than their devotion to their cherished spouses. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none" (1Corinthians 7:29).

To "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (14:4) describes the 144,000; but, should no less characterize the Saints of these Last Days. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). Consequently, the 144,000 have simply followed their Master home to Heaven, with His blessing and at His Command, i.e., "Come Up Hither" (Revelation 11:12). Just as the 24 Elders, who represent the entirety of both Old and New Testament Saints, were bought, purchased, and redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, i.e., "And they [24 Elders] sung a New Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed [Greek, agorazo] us to God by Thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (5:9), the 144,000 will also be "redeemed from among men" (14:4). "And from Jesus Christ, Who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood" (1:5). These 144,000 male virgins represent the first of the eventual harvest of Elect Israel at the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ; therefore, they are called the "firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (14:4). "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). [See the section, "Feast of Firstfruits: The Resurrection of Our LORD Jesus Christ" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html#3-Feast of Firstfruits](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html#3-Feast%20of%20Firstfruits) --, of our article, "The Appointed Times: Or, How the Seven Feasts of Israel Represent God's Timeline for the Ages" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, for more background on the firstfruits concept.]

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- "5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of God."

In completing the description of the 144,000, John records that "in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the Throne of God" (14:5). Guile is the willful deceit of heart that cannot be separated from a man without the cleansing that comes from the forgiveness of God. "If we confess our sins, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). Salvation under both the Old and New Covenants has always been by the LORD imputing His righteousness to man, in response to faith and repentance. "Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:2). It will take the miraculous preservation of the Almighty to keep alive these 144,000 during the Second Half of the Tribulation Week, for they imitate their LORD's guileless conduct before His persecutors. "22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: 23 Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1Peter 2:22-23). Their position is "before the Throne of God" (14:5), meaning that they have been translated from their earthly position to the joyousness of Heaven, where Jesus is. "2 In My Father's House are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

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- "6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"

Three angels preach to the Earth (14:6-11), much like a team of evangelists:

- (1) The First Angel (14:6-7) *universally* declares the necessity and opportunity of embracing the fear, glory, and worship of God.
- (2) A warning is given by the Second Angel (14:8) that the worship system of Babylon the Great is *collectively* dead. And,
- (3) *individually*, the Third Angel (14:9-11) warns his hearers against their personal participation in the worship of the Beast.

Since "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), the Everlasting Gospel (14:6) is not limited to any specific location or group of people, but it will be preached, as it was always intended, to "them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (14:6). "19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

What a compelling event! Three angels canvas the globe, assaulting the senses of all Earth dwellers with the sight and sound of the preaching of the Gospel (14:6-11). "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). This is akin to giving the Earth dwellers one last chance before the Almighty returns for the Final Judgment of the Earth, which occurs only a few days hence. "Who hath heard such a thing?" (Isaiah 66:8). Though the term Gospel has many connotations today, it specifically describes the Good News of man's opportunity to turn away from his selfishness and return to trusting God. "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel [Greek, *euaggelion*, or Good News]"

(Mark 1:15). As the Gospel announces man's opportunity for repentance and Salvation, the Law of God simply declares what God justly requires of man, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... and... thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). The Gospel understands that man has transgressed that Law, thus, requiring his death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). "2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect So Great Salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Hebrews 2:2-3).

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- "7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His Judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and Earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

The Gospel message preached by the First Angel is a righteous command to "fear God", "give glory to Him", and "worship Him" (14:7). Though the Gospel offers the opportunity of repentance for Eternal Salvation, it requires, then as well as now, obedience to the commands of the Gospel, i.e., "But they have not all obeyed the Gospel" (Romans 10:16). When the First Angel preaches the Everlasting Gospel (14:6) with a "loud voice" (14:7), the impression is that all the inhabitants of the Earth are constrained to hear his command to respond to the Gospel. This has always been the case with the preaching of the Gospel, that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). The command to "fear God" (14:7) is the "beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). To "give glory to Him" (14:7) is God's demand to return to the original purpose of man, i.e., "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (4:11). And, to "worship Him" (14:7) is the clarion call whereby God requires man to return to True Worship, i.e., "True Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23).

The phrase, "the hour of His Judgment is come" (14:7), similarly refers to the "hour of temptation" (3:10), which is a period of 15 days from the Pre-Wrath Rapture (the Second "Come Up Hither" [11:12]) to the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ. [See our comments on "Chapter 3: Letters to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.3.html> -- for a discussion of how we arrived at 15 days.] Though the Promise to the Church of Philadelphia, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation" (3:10), is commonly appropriated as a Promise for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture (the First "Come Up Hither" [4:1])-- which this writer believes to be spiritually true, since *there is more than one Rapture*-- but, it more specifically applies to the last 8-9 days of the Tribulation Week following the Pre-Wrath Rapture, as well as the approximately 6 days following the Tribulation Week, i.e., Armageddon and the Second Coming, up to the beginning of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ. An appropriate Scripture of encouragement for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture would be Luke 21:36, which promises escape from **all** the events of the Tribulation Week for those who watch and pray, thus, necessitating a Pre-Tribulational deliverance. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

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- "8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because

she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Advising all Earth dwellers that "Babylon is fallen" (14:8) is appropriate, because at this point Babylon has already fallen. By this, it is meant that the judgment of "Babylon the Great" (18:2), the Harlot Religious System that seats itself in that "great city" (14:8) of Rome, must have already occurred at the beginning of the "hour of [Jehovah's] Judgment" (14:7) upon the world. It appears that this judgment of Religious-Economic Babylon, as described in Revelation 17 and 18 occurs immediately after the Pre-Wrath Rapture, which takes place about 8-9 days before the End of the Tribulation Week. [See our series of articles, "Babylon the Great" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --, for an historical, contemporary, and prophetic look at this formidable foe of our LORD Jesus Christ.] Few cities have ever had the infamy of representing the wickedness of the world system than Babylon and Rome. "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon" (Acts 7:43). Babylon the Great is primarily *the Harlot Religious System* that makes "all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (14:8) through an ecumenical sharing of her *false religious practices*; however, she exerts inordinately large influence through her *enormous economic power* throughout the Earth. "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1Timothy 6:10).

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- "9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,"

Thus far, the preaching of the Everlasting Gospel (14:6-7) and a powerful reminder of the deadness of the Harlot's Religious System, i.e., "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (14:8), have been given to all Earth dwellers by the first two angels; but, the third angel's warning is even more personal to his audience of entirely unregenerate mankind. Since the Pre-Wrath Rapture has just removed all the remaining Tribulation Saints, only a portion of lost humanity that remains is "elect-but-still-lost"-- to be saved at the appearance of Messiah Jesus. "Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (Isaiah 49:22). The third angel begins a loud warning to all that remains of mankind on the planet-- unshushed by Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and their minions-- saying, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand..." (14:10). Worship of the Antichrist and reception of the Mark of the Beast (13:11-18) have already been a stark fact of life for nearly 3 1/2 years. When the Faithful God tires of warning humanity of the eternal perils of their present course of actions, then all hope has been removed. "And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). After the warning stops, only Judgment remains. "God is a Consuming Fire" (Hebrews 12:29). "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

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- "10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:"

Question? With only 8-9 days left in the Tribulation Week, all of the regenerate of mankind

Pre-Tribulationally and Pre-Wrath Raptured from the Earth, and only the horrors of the Vial Judgments (16:1-21) remaining, why now would the angel warn those who have received the Mark of the Beast, about the consequences of receiving that mark? Evidently, the All Wise God expects to see the very Last Fruits to be finally and certainly harvested, for He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9). But, how so?

First, the Almighty never gives anyone the impression that they can continue in present sin, without a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" (Hebrews 10:27), i.e., the "same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (14:10). Even our witness that we are His, is based upon our present loving obedience to Him; whereas, a present disobedience can only be given God's anger, fearful displeasure, and threatening of Eternal Judgment. "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a LIAR, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:3-4). "ALL LIARS, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death" (Revelation 21:8).

Second, the certain consequences of worshipping the Beast and receiving his mark (14:9) is Eternal Damnation, i.e., "he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (14:10). No one ought to doubt the sincerity of this threat from the God "that cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

Third, this threat, bulwarking the Doctrine of the Justice of the Endless Punishment and Misery of the Wicked, however, does not diminish mercy from the character of the Almighty, especially to those who may yet repent. "I will proclaim the Name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Exodus 33:19). God delights in mercy, for which His people rightly exalt Him. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18).

And, finally, the "just-in-time" repentance of the "elect-but-still-lost" Jews and Gentiles will take place as the LORD Jesus Christ begins His descent in the clouds to the Faithless Earth, i.e., "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8). These "just-in-time" penitents will be the seed population and citizenry of the Millennial Earth, while all others will simply wail and cry without True Repentance or Faith. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

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- "11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The enormity of the reprobate Earth dwellers' rejection of the True Christ for the Substitute Christ is measured by the "smoke of their torment [that] ascendeth up for ever and ever" (14:11). "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). Because man has such a low estimation of the value of God's Law, they would necessarily esteem His Judgments as nonsense or excessive; but, the Judge of All the Earth "will render to every man according to his deeds" (2:6). "8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (2:8, 9).

Those who "have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (14:11), are reprobated by God for their foreseen iniquities from which the Omniscient God knows they will never repent. Charles G. Finney --

<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- addressed these reprobated Earth dwellers in 1851.

"Do you ask how I know that the reason why God does not make you willing is, that he sees that it would be unwise in him to do so? I answer, that it is an irresistible inference, from these two facts, that he is infinitely benevolent, and that he does not actually make you willing. I do not believe that God would neglect anything that he saw to be wise and benevolent, in the great matter of man's salvation. Who can believe that he could give his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die for sinners, and then neglect any wise and benevolent means for their salvation? No, sinner, if you are a reprobate, it is because God foresaw that you would do just as you are doing; that you would be so wicked as to defeat all the efforts that he could wisely, make for your salvation. What a variety of means he has used with you. At one time he has thrown you into the furnace of affliction; and when this has not softened you, he has turned round and loaded you with favours. He has sent you his word, he has striven by his Spirit, he has allured you by the cross; he has tried to melt you by the groanings of Calvary; and tried to drive you back from the way to death, by rolling in your ears the thunders of damnation. At one time clouds and darkness have been round about you; the heavens have thundered over your head; divine vengeance has hung out, all around your horizon, the portentous clouds of coming wrath. At another time mercy has smiled upon you from above like the noon-day sun, breaking through an ocean of storms. He urges every motive; he lays heaven, earth and hell, under perpetual contributions for considerations to move your stony heart. But you deafen your ears, and close your eyes, and harden your heart, and say, 'Cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us [Isaiah 30:11].' And what is the inference from all this? How must all this end? 'Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord has rejected them [Jeremiah 6:30]'" (from Chapter 75 "Reprobation" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.9.html#LECTURE 75](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.9.html#LECTURE%2075) -- of Charles G. Finney's "Systematic Theology" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> --).

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- "12 Here is the patience of the Saints: here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Verse 12 introduces verse 13, both of which are an interlude of peace between the warnings and threatenings to those who "worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark" (14:9-11) and the Final Judgments of the "great winepress of the wrath of God" (14:14-20). Three words stand out in verse 13-- patience, Commandments, and faith.

First, the "patience of the Saints" (14:12) is that attribute of love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1Corinthians 13:7). Patience comes only from the "trying of your faith" (James 1:3), which will be greatly needed by the Tribulation Saints to complete their appointed course of trying, testing, and suffering, that they "may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4)-- in preparation for Heaven.

Second, keeping the "Commandments of God" (14:12) is not simply the hallmark of a True Saint, i.e., "My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27); but, it represents our joyful opportunity to demonstrate our love for Him, i.e., "Thy Law do I love" (Psalm 119:163). Resisting fidelity to the Antichrist by refusing his mark is an act of the Tribulation Saints' loving obedience to the Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

And, finally, the "faith of Jesus" (14:12) is the Saints' supreme confidence in our LORD and Saviour, Whose Name "is above every name" (Philippians 2:9)-- especially above the name of the Antichrist-- that Jesus will "yet deliver us" (2Corinthians 1:10) from the Antichrist or from dishonoring Him by yielding to temptation. "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9).

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- "13 And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Normally, we speak about events in a chronological fashion, but we may also need to regress in order to emphasize and develop thoughts that need additional explanation. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1Corinthians 14:40). Verse 13 speaks of a retrospective, referring to a time *before* the Pre-Wrath Rapture, where there are still Tribulation Saints awaiting martyrdom or Rapture. "Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth" (14:13) makes special reference to the Martyred Tribulation Saints, giving the Apostle John a third personal message from the Father (10:4, 8), i.e., a "Voice from Heaven saying unto me" (14:13). The encouragement is true for all Saints throughout history, but is especially necessary for those who will be martyred, reminding them of the Eternal Blessedness of those that "resist stedfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9). Later, we are told that those Martyred Tribulation Saints will be numbered among those who will rule and reign with Christ during the Millennium. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (20:4).

A fugitive knows no rest; and, those Tribulation Saints who are not caught after they are converted, will be Pre-Wrath Raptured. "And they heard a Great Voice from Heaven saying unto them, Come Up Hither. And they ascended up to Heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (Revelation 11:12). [See our comments concerning the Pre-Wrath Rapture in "Chapter 11: The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.11.html> --, especially verse 12.] However, the Tribulation Saints that will not be Pre-Wrath Raptured, may not be simply caught at the outset of their conversion to the LORD Jesus Christ, making flight a reasonable alternative before they are caught and executed. "Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto" (Luke 21:21). Rest is a luxury that belongs only to those who are beyond the reach of their pursuers. These martyred "dead which die in the LORD" (14:13) will ultimately, successfully evade the enemy and will cheat the Second Death of its prey. "55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:55-57). Not simply rest, but "great recompence of reward" (Hebrews 10:35) awaits the Martyred Tribulation Saints, i.e., they "rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (14:13). "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). [See our article, "Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto The Death" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html> --, which discusses the plight of the Tribulation Saints, when physical escape is no longer an issue.]

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- "14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle."

Christ Jesus, Who is the "LORD of the Harvest" (Luke 10:2), i.e., "in His hand a sharp sickle" (14:14), is also the "Judge of All the Earth" (Genesis 18:25), to Whom the Father "hath committed all judgment" (John 5:22). Here, the Apostle John is directed to gaze upon a white cloud, and "upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man" (14:14). Painters often depict God surrounded with clouds. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of His Throne" (Psalm 97:2). Scripture describes the Almighty as:

- (1) the "High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity" (Isaiah 57:15),
- (2) flying "upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 18:10),
- (3) the "Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:15), and
- (4) coming again "with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7).

The "golden crown" (14:14) on the head of the LORD Jesus, can only be seen by the eyes of faith, until the time will come that all must admit-- willingly or unwillingly-- that Jesus "ONLY hath immortality, dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1Timothy 6:16). "9 Wherefore God also

hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: 10 that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

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- "15 And another angel came out of the Temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the Earth is ripe."

The Apocalyptic "Harvest of the Earth" (14:15) will be both a gathering of the Righteous and a separating out of the Wicked. "10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I [John the Baptist] indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He [the LORD Jesus Christ] that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat [the Righteous] into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff [the Wicked] with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:10-12). A repeated theme of the Gospels is that the LORD Jesus Christ is the King of Glory (Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10) that will sit upon His Throne, making His enemies His "footstool" (110:1). "31 When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His glory: 32 And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats" (25:31-32).

Harvest festivals in Old Testament Israel took place in both the spring and fall. Leviticus 23 outlines Seven Feasts that Jehovah declared which Old Testament Israel was to observe. "The feasts are the foreshadowing-- of events that were yet to come. The Seven Feasts of Israel prophetically forecast and outline the main events of Israel's relation to Jehovah" (from our article, "The Appointed Times" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, which describes the festivals, their relationship to past and future prophetic events, and boldly asserted a now past May 31, 1998 Rapture date.) "16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17). The fall feasts yet point to the fulfillment of the Pre-Wrath Rapture (Feast of Trumpets a.k.a. Rosh HaShanah), the Second Coming of Christ (Day of Atonement a.k.a. Yom Kippur), and the Inauguration of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ (Feast of Tabernacles), making the harvest festivals a time of anticipation. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her Appointed Times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the LORD" (Jeremiah 8:7).

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- "16 And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the Earth; and the Earth was reaped."

The following is taken from our editorial series "From the Editor's Desktop" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/W.S.t.S.Fellowship.html#From the Editors Desk> --, "Love and Vengeance" (in its entirety):

John the Beloved informs us that "He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the Earth; and the Earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:16). It may be difficult for the human mind to imagine, but the Almighty's judgment of the Earth is in keeping with the Eternal Law of Love. "If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). Not so strange to say, but the Eternal God only demands of man what He is willing to give Himself. And, the righteous demand of God's Moral Law has always been supreme love and consideration for God (for it is only right and fitting) and an equal love of our neighbour as ourselves. "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... and... thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). So then, when Christ the Judge harvests the Earth, He may, without divorcing Himself of Perfect Love, say, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay" (Romans 12:19).

A great failure of Professed Christianity, is not to properly distinguish between the two kinds of love-- *disinterested benevolence* and *complacent love*-- that God employs in the administration of His vast Moral Government. The nineteenth century American evangelist Charles G. Finney used the terms *disinterested benevolence* and the *love of complacency* to make the distinction. [See Finney's "Lectures on Systematic Theology" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- for a thorough discussion of these two terms.] *Disinterested benevolence* would be represented in the Scriptures with the love that God demonstrates to all men, regardless of their character-- evil or good. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). The good will of God towards man is *disinterested* (free of bias or self-interest) *benevolence* in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Further, the term *complacent love* or the *love of complacency* has virtually lost its meaning in the 21st Century. *Complacent* or *complacency* now has the negative connotation of being self-satisfied or unconcerned, while the nineteenth century used the term *complacent* to encompass the **positive** idea of resting in a satisfied way upon something. Scripturally, God manifests *complacent love* towards *only* the Godly, i.e., He rests in a satisfied way upon the right character of the righteous. "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). And, when man demonstrates True Obedience to God, it is the *love of complacency*, for man is then demonstrating his satisfaction with the character of the God that he obeyed. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (14:15). It is appropriate, then, to say that God *loves complacently* only those who love and obey Him. "23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth Me not keepeth not My Sayings: and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John 14:23-24). Then, to equate the love of God, i.e., the love man ought to have toward God, with our obedience to God, is to describe why God can approve and rest in our character, which is *complacent love*. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [i.e., unbearably burdensome]" (1John 5:3).

So then, how can the God of Love be also the "LORD God to Whom Vengeance Belongeth" (Psalm 94:1), reaping the Earth in the Apocalypse? Since the Almighty has manifested Himself in His Son as the "Saviour of the World" (1John 4:14), it is unequivocal that "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) with a *disinterested benevolence*, giving to the good and to the evil the Gift of His Son. But, since "all men have not faith" (2Thessalonians 3:2) and "many" (Matthew 7:13), ultimately, will be cast "into outer darkness" (22:13), then God *does not cease* to love the damned with a *disinterested benevolence*. **But**, He *never did* love these finally damned with the *love of complacency*, because there was never anything in them, in which He could approve of their character, i.e., these wicked never repented. "37 But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed NOT on Him: 38 that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, LORD, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:37-40).

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- "17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle."

"Another [Greek, allos, another of the same kind] angel" (14:17), again, refers to another angel of the same kind as verse 15, i.e., the angel which said to the Son of Man to thrust in His sickle and reap. Multiple angels are described as having a part in the Final Harvest of the Earth, because they are messengers [Greek, aggelos, translated as angel or messenger], transporting a message of judgment, which translates into their execution of the command to judge the Earth. "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels... The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:39, 41). Since God's Word is depicted as a "sharp sword" (Revelation 19:15) proceeding out of the mouth of the Son of Man, Whose "Name is called The Word of God" (19:13), and "with it He should smite the nations" (19:15), then the angelic bearers of that message become the effective tools of the execution of that judgment. "1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. 2 And, behold, six men [i.e., angels] came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. 3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And He called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; 4 and the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5 And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house" (Ezekiel 9:1-6).

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- "18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the Earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."

Verse 18 describes "another angel", which had "power over fire". Jehovah is a "Consuming Fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24), and "His angels spirits, and His ministers [i.e., angels] a flame of fire" (Hebrews 1:7). Just as the Angel of the LORD, which was the Pre-Incarnate Christ, ascended into Heaven with the flame from off the altar, i.e., "For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward Heaven from off the altar, that the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar" (Judges 13:20), this angel of the Apocalypse (14:18) deals with the holiness of the sacrifices to God, i.e., he "had power over fire" (14:18). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Fire represents the cleansing, purging, and acceptance of the sacrifice by God. "And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces" (Leviticus 9:24). The Bema Seat Judgment of the Saints will not reveal the sinfulness of the Saints' works, but the worth of all that is done by the Saints, while in the flesh, for the purpose of reward-- not punishment. "13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1Corinthians 3:13-15). [See our article, "The Judgment Seat of Christ" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> --, for an explanation of the Bema Seat Judgment of the Saints, at the end of the Church Age.]

This angel "from the altar" (14:18) instructs the angel previously described in verse 17, "that had the sharp sickle" (14:18), saying, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the Earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (14:18). The Almighty must be instructing the angel as to the appropriateness of the timing of this Judgment, for it would take a Mind of Omniscience to know how to deal with the ungodly and wicked, without destroying the Godly, at the same time. "27 So the servants of the Householder came and said unto Him, Sir, didst not Thou sow good seed in Thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto Him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares [i.e., the ungodly], ye root up also the wheat [i.e., the Godly] with them. 30 Let both grow together until the Harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn" (Matthew 13:27-30). For the comfort of the Godly in these Last Days, the "LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9).

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- "19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the Earth, and gathered the vine of the Earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

It may be viewed by the modern reader as very poetic or figurative that the Apostle John records that the "angel thrust in his sickle into the Earth, and gathered the vine of the Earth" (14:19), but it is most

certainly a more accurate description than any attempt by an uninspired writer of a humanly unimaginable event. "8 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). Negatively, the "vine of the Earth" (14:19) describes the world with its interconnected groupings of wicked man together with his evil fruit. "31 For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. 32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter" (Deuteronomy 32:31-32). Even the righteous are described as part of the Living Vine of the LORD Jesus Christ, but have no part in this "vine of the Earth" (14:19). "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

The very fact that the harvested vines with their fruit are cast "into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (14:19) indicates that the harvest does not expect to produce the excellency of the "wine of Lebanon" (Hosea 14:7); but instead, it knows that it will yield the "wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation" (14:10). This is also known as the "wine of astonishment" (Psalm 60:3), the "wine of violence" (Proverbs 4:17), and the "wine of the condemned" (Amos 2:8). Asaph the Psalmist declared that the dregs of the winepress would be consumed by the wicked (as well as themselves being pressed for the yield). "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the Earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Psalm 75:8). The close of chapter 14 of the Apocalypse is the definitive picture of the Judgment of the Lamb as viewed from the winepress of His Wrath. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:12).

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- "20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

The "city" (14:20) undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem, for it and its Godly inhabitants will again make it the "apple of [Jehovah's] eye" (Lamentations 2:18). "And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth" (Isaiah 62:7). The "blood of the grapes" (Genesis 49:11) has figuratively described the pressed juice of the grapes, but here it actually describes the blood of formerly living human beings, who have been slain in the judgments surrounding the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isaiah 63:3). The LORD God has never taken pleasure in the death of the wicked. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

However, at this time (14:20), the death of the wicked will purge humanity of sin; and, the Almighty will defend the purity and integrity of the City or the Great House that He has invited all men to dwell in-- which invitation, only His children have accepted. "24 Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a

rock: 25 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27). Blood will come out of the winepress "even unto the horse bridles" (14:20). Some speculate that the blood of slain men at Armageddon will yield a flow of blood deep enough to come up to the bridle of a horse, while others conjecture that it represents only a liberal splattering of blood. However the LORD brings His Word to pass, we are assured that the life of humanity will be liberally dissipated in this Judgment, for the "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11).

A "thousand and six hundred furlongs" (14:20) is the distance in which the blood will flow "unto the horse bridles" (14:20). A furlong, according to "Easton's Bible Dictionary" (1897), is "a stadium, a Greek measure of distance equal to 606 feet and 9 inches [or, 606.75 feet]". 1,600 furlongs would then be the equivalent of 183.86 miles. What do we believe to be the manner of the LORD Jesus Christ's Second Coming?

(1) Christ will descend to the Mount of Olives, just as He previously ascended from it. "11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey [i.e., approximately 2,250 feet, or less than half a mile]" (Acts 1:11-12). "3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. 4 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:3-4).

(2) Christ will then pursue His enemies, slaying them, down to Bozrah. Bozrah lies approximately 18 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in the mountain district of Petra, according to the "Davis Dictionary of the Bible", and it is approximately 58 miles southeast of the Mount of Olives. "6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. 7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness" (Isaiah 34:6-7). And,

(3) Christ will then continue His pursuit and slaying of His enemies from Bozrah to Megiddo-- Megiddo being the ancient city close by the final conflict at Armageddon-- traveling approximately another 128 miles. "1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will

tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought Salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. 6 And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth" (Isaiah 63:1-6). Combining the distances from the Mount of Olives to Bozrah of 58 miles with the distance from Bozrah to Megiddo of 128 miles, is a distance of 186 miles, which is approximately the same as 1,600 furlongs (14:20).

Chapter 15: A Glorious Heavenly Scene Preceding the Vial Judgments

- "1 And I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

After noting "another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous" (14:1), this chapter, the shortest of the Apocalypse, sees both a Heavenly scene of triumphant praise by those who will overcome the Antichrist (14:2-4) and a description of the final preparations for the pouring out of the final Vial Judgments (14:5-8). John describes the "seven angels having the seven last plagues" (15:1) as "another sign" (Greek, semeion), making a connection of significance between the signs of the First and Second Advents of the Messiah. If the Star of Bethlehem was seen by the Wise Men at the first Christmas, then this "sign in Heaven" (16:1) will most likely manifest itself as an observable celestial phenomenon. "1 And there appeared a great wonder [Greek, semeion] in Heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered [i.e., First Advent of the Messiah]. 3 And there appeared another wonder [Greek, semeion] in Heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the Earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Revelation 12:1-4).

Though the Seal Judgments (6:1-17; 8:1) and Trumpet Judgments (8:1-9:21; 11:15-19) demonstrate the displeasure of God with man, the Vial Judgments (16:1-21), which are the "seven last plagues" (15:1), are especially noted to be full of the "wrath of God" (15:1). "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). But here, Jehovah's anger is focused into Judgmental Wrath, resulting in the last plagues before the return of the LORD Jesus Christ. When the Almighty ceases to strive with man over their sin, then only the "fierceness of His great wrath" (2Kings 23:26) is left. The Therapeutic Anger of God is found only by the Elect, because they respond with repentance and faith to the mercy of God. "7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8 In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7-8).

Those who refuse to acknowledge the righteousness of the LORD's anger toward their sin, must ultimately "fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31). And, He has promised Fearful Retribution to those who have had "their conscience seared [i.e., by their own hand] with a hot iron" (1Timothy 4:2). "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22).

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- "2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

The "sea of glass" (15:2), described previously in Chapter 4, is "before the throne" (4:6) of God. Thalassa is the Greek word used for "sea", which indicates a continuous body of water, as the ocean. The emphasis in this verse is that the Saints "**stand** on the sea of glass" (15:2). They are supported by the vastness of the High and Lofty One That Inhabith Eternity (Isaiah 57:15)-- indicating His serene and powerful control of all things. "Alleluia: for the LORD God Omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6). Perfect peace is portrayed by this imagery of a smooth and placid sea. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3). We are told that that the "sea of glass" is "mingled with fire" (15:2). Fire is indicative of God's Judgment. "But the heavens and the Earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2Peter 3:7).

Standing around the throne of God are those "that had gotten the victory over the Beast [the Antichrist], and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (15:2). This scene anticipates the "seven last plagues" (15:1) of the Tribulation Week. Specified in this Heavenly picture are all the Tribulation Saints (martyred or raptured), who have triumphed over the Antichrist-- having been collected from the immediately preceding Pre-Wrath Rapture ["Come up hither... the seventh angel sounded" (11:12, 15)] and its attendant Resurrection of the Just [the "dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1Corinthians 15:52)]. Though all of the Redeemed Elect have already been translated into the presence of God through:

(1) death, i.e., the Resurrected Saints from all ages will be resurrected immediately before the Pre-Wrath Rapture ["we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD shall not prevent <literally, precede> them which are asleep" (1Thessalonians 4:15)],

(2) the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, i.e., "Come up hither" (Revelation 4:1), or

(3) the Pre-Wrath Rapture, i.e., "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1Corinthians 15:51);

this gathering around the throne emphasizes the deliverance and victory of the Tribulational Saints through Pre-Wrath Rapture or Faithful Martyrdom, for which all of Heaven rejoices. "But let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy Name be joyful in Thee" (Psalm 5:11).

- "3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

The Heavenly Harpers have their mouths free to "sing the song of Moses" (15:3), as they accompany themselves on their harps. Let us pause to consider the significance of their "song of Moses" (15:3). Twice in the Pentateuch are we given the understanding that Moses composed and sang a "song unto the LORD" (Exodus 15:1). The first instance of any song recorded in the Scriptures was occasioned by Jehovah's deliverance of the children of Israel from the chariots of Pharaoh by His miraculous parting of the Red Sea for Israel, while drowning the pursuing Egyptians. The Song of Moses can be divided into four parts:

(1) the enemy's evil intent, i.e., "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them" (Exodus 15:9),

(2) the LORD's magnificent faithfulness, i.e., "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (15:11),

(3) the Judgment's devastating consequence, i.e., "10 Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters... 12 Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the Earth swallowed them" (15:10, 12), and

(4) the deliverance's joyful result, i.e., "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation" (15:13).

Outside of the Psalm of Moses (Psalm 91), which is a song of deliverance, i.e., "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence" (91:3), the only other song attributed to Moses in the Pentateuch is Moses' Farewell Song of Deuteronomy 32. Sadly, this parting song for Moses to Israel is:

(1) a complaint of Israel's stiffneckedness, i.e., "And [the LORD] said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" (32:20),

(2) a reminder of Jehovah's mercy, i.e., "[Jehovah] made [Jacob] ride on the high places of the Earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields" (32:13),

(3) a warning to avoid Israel's future anguish, i.e., "29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! 30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?" (32:29-30), and

(4) a prophecy of Israel's future repentance, i.e., "For the LORD shall judge His people,

and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left" (32:36).

The difference between the Song of Moses (Exodus 15) and Moses' Farewell Song (Deuteronomy 32) is the difference between joyful deliverance, i.e., "[Egypt] shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased" (Exodus 15:16), and woeful unbelief, i.e., "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deuteronomy 32:18). For this reason, Revelation 15:3 must refer to the theme of deliverance found in the Song of Moses (Exodus 15); because, it is more akin to the Pre-Wrath Rapture and Deliverance of the Tribulation Saints. "For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea" (Exodus 15:19). Antichrist like Pharaoh will be utterly defeated, i.e., "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20). The Tribulation Saints like Israel will be thoroughly delivered, i.e., they shall have "victory over the Beast" (15:2). Again, Revelation 15:3 is more reminiscent of a triumphal gathering of Pre-Wrath Raptured Tribulation Saints, than simply and only an assembly of Martyred Tribulation Saints.

As the Song of Moses speaks loudly of deliverance, the "song of the Lamb" (15:3) gives worshipful praise to the Deliverer. "Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD God Almighty" (15:3). Thanksgiving without naming God as the object of our gratitude is making ourselves our own deliverer and benefactor. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, unholy" (2Timothy 3:2). Jesus, who is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6), is the Just One, i.e., "just and true are Thy ways" (Revelation 15:3). "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the Coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). Jesus will soon definitively and everlastingly demonstrate that He is the "King of Saints" (Revelation 15:3). "Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:15).

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- "4 Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy Judgments are made manifest."

The Song of the Lamb (15:3) is sung by these Triumphant Tribulation Saints. They sing, "Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name?" (15:4). The "fear" spoken of here is from the Greek word phobeo, meaning fear, reverence, or awe. The Saints stand in holy reverence and awe of God. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His Commandments: His praise endureth for ever" (Psalm 111:10). If man does not voluntarily surrender himself to fear the Living God, then he can only have anxiety, agitation, and dread of the Judgment of God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31). The godly willingly "glorify [the] Name" (15:4) of the LORD, for they understand that He is "worthy" (4:11), but the godless unwillingly glorify the LORD through the Judgment that Jehovah brings upon their sin, i.e., "for Thy Judgments are made manifest" (15:4). "22 And I will plead against him with

pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23 **Thus will I magnify Myself**, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 38:22-23).

How shall all nations "come and worship before" (15:4) the LORD, if not all nations will be converted? "And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). Isaiah prophesied the salvation of the Gentiles from the nations of the world, i.e., "ye that are escaped of the nations" (Isaiah 45:20). "22 Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the Earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 23 I have sworn by Myself, the Word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (45:22-23). Not only would Gentiles be saved from among the nations; but ultimately, every single human being would willingly or unwillingly bow their knee and confess that Jesus is LORD. "9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: 10 that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

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- "5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven was opened:"

The second half of chapter 15 begins with a look at the "Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven [as it] was opened" (15:5). In chapter 11, immediately following the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet Judgment, it was said that the "Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the Ark of His Testament" (11:19). Both of these Temples are the same. Both reside in Heaven, and are, of course, not to be confused with an earthly Jerusalem Temple. It must be remembered that the Jerusalem Temple was patterned after the "example and shadow of Heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5). Comparing the earthly Jerusalem Temple to the "Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony" (15:5), the most significant feature of both Temples is the Law of God-- also known as, the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:4), the Covenant of the LORD (4:23), the Testimony (Exodus 25:21), the Royal Law (James 2:8), the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). The "two Tables of Testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18) in the Jerusalem Temple's Holy of Holies are copies of the "Testimony in Heaven" (Revelation 15:5). And, the pre-eminent feature of the Law is Love, which "is the fulfilling of the Law" (Romans 13:10).

Though the Lost Ark of the Covenant, "wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the Covenant" (Hebrews 9:4), has been traditionally reported to have been hidden by the rabbis under the Temple Mount or by Jeremiah in a nearby cave to avoid capture by the Babylonians, the grand significance of this apocalyptic mention of the Testimony (15:5)-- of which the Moral Law of Love is its essence-- is that even the "seven last plagues" (15:1) of the Tribulation Week flow from the "God [Who] is love" (1John 4:16). It is an inescapable attribute of the Love of God, that opposition to sin is an essential characteristic of True Love to God. "I hate and abhor lying: but Thy Law do I love" (Psalm 119:163). For this reason, Jehovah chastens His wayward

children, i.e., "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD Jesus" (1Corinthians 5:5). "For whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). And, God's final Judgments of the wicked at the end of the Tribulation Week reflect that though He does not take "pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11), His love for the well-being of Himself and His creation necessitate that He must judge sin and halt its blighting influence, lest the universe be ruined. "The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psalm 145:9). "14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of His Saints, 15 to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

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- "6 And the seven angels came out of the Temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."

"Seven angels" (15:6) are described. They come "out of the Temple" (15:6), indicating that they are sent by God. "Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire" (Psalm 104:4). These seven have been commissioned to carry out the Judgments of the "seven plagues" (15:6), i.e., the Vial Judgments outlined in chapter 16. Their clothing is "pure and white linen" (15:6), which indicates that their purpose is righteous, just as white linen speaks of the "righteousness of Saints" (19:8). And, their readiness, willingness, and agreement with the Almighty to carry out the Vial Judgments is portrayed in that they have "their breasts girded with golden girdles" (15:6), i.e., "wherefore gird up [Greek, anazonnumi, meaning prepare or ready] the loins of your mind" (1Peter 1:13). "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the Judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

If the "seven plagues" (15:6) to be executed by the "seven angels" (15:6) defied the Universal Law of Love, i.e., the Moral Law, then the angels would be under no obligation to perform such an unrighteous command. But, because "God is love" (1John 4:8) and "He cannot deny Himself" (2Timothy 2:13), then His commands must always be obeyed, for His Judgments would only be an expression of His Love, unlike the often perverse and contradictory laws of man. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). God demands the obedience of angels and man because He has discovered Himself to us to be altogether worthy of love, faith, and obedience. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). No law is law that sets aside the Moral Law of Love, but it is for this very reason that holy angels and godly men joyfully carry out the Judgments of God, because His Judgments are expressions of His Love. "I the LORD love Judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering" (Isaiah 61:8).

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- "7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever."

These are the same "four beasts" (15:7) that appear around the throne of God (4:6, 8; 5:6, 8; 6:1, 6;

7:11; 14:3), earlier. They are the same angelic seraphim that Isaiah saw crying to the LORD, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:3), and that Ezekiel saw in his visions as "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5). Holiness is the theme of their adoration of the LORD God, because they stand in His presence continually and "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2). May we, the living, salute our Creator even now with our own worship of the Holy Jehovah, "Who liveth for ever and ever" (15:7), consecrating our lives in holiness to Him, who is worthy. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect" (Matthew 5:48). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14).

One of the seraphim gives "unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God" (15:7). This means that the wrath of the Vial Judgments is not an expression of their anger, but of the wrath of God Almighty. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little" (Psalm 2:12). Not simply the wrath of a fabled pagan angel or god, but it is the fury of the Omnipotent Judge. "3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine **anger**, and trample them in My **fury**; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. 4 For the day of **vengeance** is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My **fury**, it upheld Me. 6 And I will tread down the people in Mine **anger**, and make them drunk in My **fury**, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth" (Isaiah 63:3-6).

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- "8 And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the Temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

Smoke "from the glory of God, and from His power" (15:8) filling the Heavenly Temple is reminiscent of Solomon's dedication of the original Jerusalem Temple. "1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from Heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. 3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is Good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (2Chronicles 7:1-3). The Judge of All the Earth's stress upon the execution of the Vial Judgments is so great that "no man was able to enter into the Temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (15:8). This indicates that the emphasis of God is so wholly directed toward the judgment of the "seven [last] plagues" (15:8) of the Vial Judgments, that He allows no one else to even enter His Heavenly Temple for worship, and thereby detract from their momentousness. "But the LORD is in His Holy Temple: let all the Earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

Chapter 16: Pouring Out the Vial Judgments

- "1 And I heard a Great Voice out of the Temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the Earth."

Most awful of the judgments of God are the Seven Vial Judgments. "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee" (Psalm 66:3). Unlike the Seal Judgments (Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1) of the First Half of the Tribulation Week, which unveil and introduce, i.e., "Come and see" (6:1, 3, 5, 11), the Almighty's dealings with the planet, and the Trumpet Judgments (8:2-13; 9:1-21; 11:15-19) of the Second Half of the Tribulation Week, which further demonstrate how seriously God expects man's repentance through His smiting of a "third part" (8:7-12; 9:15, 18) of His creation; the Seven Vial Judgments, which accordingly must be placed at the End of the Tribulation Week because they are described by the Spirit as the "seven last plagues" (15:1), demonstrate the finality of the "wrath of God upon the Earth" (16:1). "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the Earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Psalm 75:8).

The "Great Voice out of the Temple" (16:1) undisputedly belongs to the LORD Jesus Christ, for another "Great Voice" that comes "out of the Temple of Heaven", comes specifically "from the Throne" (16:17), i.e., the "Throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1, 3). Also, the Voice announces, "It is done" (16:17), which is similar to our LORD's dying words upon the Cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30). As if to emphasize the enormity of this final judgment of the Seven Vials, the word "great" (Greek, *mega*) appears eleven times in this chapter:

- (1) a "Great Voice" coming "out of the Temple" (16:1),
- (2) a "great heat" (16:9) from the Fourth Vial Judgment,
- (3) the "great river Euphrates" (16:12) of the Sixth Vial Judgment,
- (4) the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14), which is Armageddon,
- (5) the "Great Voice [of Christ] out of the Temple of Heaven" (16:17) from the Seventh Vial Judgment,
- (6) a "great earthquake" (16:18) before the Second Coming of Christ,
- (7) the mightiest earthquake in the history of mankind is described as "so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (16:18),
- (8) the "great city" (16:19) of Jerusalem will be topographically rearranged,
- (9) "great Babylon [spiritual Babylon]" (16:19) is remembered by God for punishment,
- (10) "great hail" (16:21) falls upon man, and

(11) the fierceness of the hail of plague is called "exceeding great" (16:21).

Commandment will then be given by the LORD Jesus Christ to the angels to begin the Vial Judgments. "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the Earth" (16:1). In His First Advent, the Son of God is the meek Saviour, inviting all to find their rest in Him. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). But, the Second Advent will find Christ as the King that the Father has appointed to judge "all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats" (25:32). "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:27). The Vial Judgments teach us that the Benevolent Love that emanated from the Father through the Son, will then be substituted with a ferocity of judgment against sin that signals that God has a limit to His patience with sinners. "And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). Though none repent during the Vial Judgments, i.e., "repented not" (Revelation 16:9, 11), God is still offering the opportunity of repentance; or else, He would have swiftly and immediately terminated the lives of these final surviving rebels. "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague" (Numbers 11:33).

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- "2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the Earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the Mark of the Beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

The First Vial Judgment is poured out upon all worshippers of the Beast, i.e., "upon them which worshipped his image" (16:2). A "vial" is translated from the Greek word *chiale*, which means a shallow bowl or cup, usually without a stand or foot, used to draw out of a larger goblet. The Almighty's anger with man's wickedness is that larger goblet, i.e., "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). He has wisely chosen to govern His anger by the offering of His Only Begotten Son in atonement for man's sinful rebellion; but, man's probation must eventually end, or God's Kingdom cannot ultimately stand. "And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?... How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me?" (Numbers 14:11, 27). If man could always count upon sinning with time left for repentance, then:

- (1) There would be no pressing need for immediate repentance; however, Jesus preached, "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17),
- (2) Hell would be entirely empty; but, Hell (Greek, *gehenna*) is not idly promised to those that do not escape it, i.e., "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" (23:33), and
- (3) The White Throne Judgment would have no Unrighteous Sinners to punish; nevertheless, "whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Revelation 20:15), which is the place "where the Beast and the False Prophet are [at that time already]" (20:10).

A "noisome [Greek, *kakos*, meaning bad] and grievous [Greek, *poneros*, meaning evil] sore [Greek, *helkos*, meaning sore or ulcer]" (16:2) is a loathsome and malignant ulcer, that will be poured out upon worshippers of the Beast. An ulcer is a lesion resulting from the gradual disintegration of tissue, which covers most of the internal and external surfaces of the body, whose main symptom is pain. And, pain, which was originally intended to punish, i.e., "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:16, 17), if it does not reform the recipient, will only be a prelude to their final destruction, for ulcers that are painful to touch are oftentimes a cancer. "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:8).

This malignant ulcer will fall specifically upon the "men which had [Greek, *echontas*, present tense, literally, are having] the Mark of the Beast, and upon them which worshipped [Greek, *proskunountas*, present tense, literally, are worshipping] his image" (16:2). Is it possible for one to have received the Mark of the Beast and yet not worship the Antichrist? Yes. The Beast will mark *all of humankind* as his property, i.e., acting for the Antichrist, the False Prophet "causeth **all**, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16), which will include even those humans who are not moral agents, e.g., infants, toddlers, mentally handicapped, etc., who have no agency, and therefore cannot receive Divine Punishment. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). From the Antichrist's perspective, refusal to take the Mark of the Beast means starvation, i.e., "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark" (Revelation 13:17), and refusal to worship the Beast means the penalty of death, i.e., "as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed" (13:15). On the other hand, God will Eternally Punish those who are clinging to the Mark and worshipping the Beast. "If any man worship [Greek, *proskunei*, present tense, literally, is worshipping] the Beast and his image, and receive [Greek, *lambanei*, present tense, literally, is receiving] his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the Wrath of God" (14:9, 10).

Does this mean that someone who has taken the Mark and worshipped the Beast might yet be converted before it was too late? Yes, but ***no one should ever take the Mark-- much less, take it with the mental reservation that they they will repent of it later--*** for "ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (James 4:14). However, if repentance was morally impossible for all who had taken the Mark and worshipped the Beast, then:

- (1) Why is the Everlasting Gospel preached in the Last Hour to "them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6), if the offering was not sincere, or the hearers were unable to believe?
- (2) Why report that the hearers "repented not" (16:9, 11), if their repentance would not be accepted, or they were not still morally capable of repenting?, and
- (3) Who will be saved to physically enter into the Millennial Kingdom, where the "wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6), as subjects of Messiah the King? Remember that a "Great Multitude, which no

man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9) of Tribulation Saints, will come "out of Great Tribulation" (7:14), *after* the Mark of the Beast has been implemented; and, undoubtedly, there will be *former* Beast Worshipers in that number. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

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- "3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."

"Every living soul died in the sea" (16:3) when the "second angel poured out his vial upon the sea" (16:3) causing it to become "as the blood of a dead man" (16:3). This is the Second Vial Judgment. "17 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. 18 And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river" (Exodus 7:17-18). Unlike the ancient plague that Moses brought upon the nation of Egypt, or the Second Trumpet Judgment of this same Tribulation Week, where only the "third part of the sea became blood" (Revelation 8:8), the Second Vial Judgment will *completely* change the seas of the world into actual blood. Our beautiful planet, when viewed from space, is 70.8 percent covered by oceans and marginal seas, encompassing 139.4 million square miles (361.1 million square kilometers), holding a volume of 329 million cubic miles (1.37 billion cubic kilometers) of seawater, at an average depth of 12,450 feet (3,795 meters), and appearing in rich shades of blue under patches, bands, and swirls of clouds. But, soon the Almighty's fierce wrath will turn the planet's appearance into visible shades of red blood. "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15).

Since blood is half blood cells and half plasma-- with plasma's chemical composition resembling seawater-- when the Second Vial Judgment miraculously transforms the sea into actual blood, the vast addition of the organic waste of the blood cells to the seas will deplete the supply of dissolved oxygen in the ocean, which is normally renewed by absorption from the air and by photosynthesis. When bacteria degrades the organic waste into its inorganic components (nitrogen, phosphorous, and carbon)-- which in turn nourishes the microscopic algae of the aquatic food chain-- the process consumes oxygen present in the sea. But, when Jehovah overwhelms the process with apocalyptic proportions of the organic wastes of blood cells, the process collapses. The seas' oxygen supply is exhausted, and the ocean eutrophies or "dies". Thus, the sea turns slimy and stinks. "He is the Rock, His work is Perfect: for all His ways are Judgment: a God of Truth and without iniquity, Just and Right is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4). Man began the pollution of the oceans; but, in judgment, God will instantaneously complete the process, with the result that "every living soul died in the sea" (16:3). Thus, the great life giving reservoir of the oceans are rendered dead because of God's judgment upon man's sin. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (Romans 6:23).

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- "4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."

To complete the destruction of the hydrosphere, the LORD God Almighty will cause His angel to pour out the Third Vial Judgment upon the remaining sources of fresh water. "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters" (16:4). It is estimated that the Earth's hydrosphere contains 336 million cubic miles (1.4 billion cubic kilometers) of water, with the oceans constituting 97 percent of this amount. The polar ice caps and glaciers hold slightly more than 2 percent; and, the remainder is found in freshwater bodies (e.g., lakes, streams, the "rivers and fountains of waters"), groundwater, vegetation, and atmospheric vapour. "Thou visitest the Earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water" (Psalm 65:9). Life on the planet survives on less than one percent of the water in the Earth's hydrosphere; and, it is evident that without a hydrologic cycle of transferring water from the oceans through the atmosphere to the continents by means of evaporation and precipitation, and back to the oceans through transpiration, infiltration, subterranean percolation, overland flow, runoff, and other complex processes, life on dry land would cease. "The LORD by wisdom hath founded the Earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens" (Proverbs 3:19).

However, survival on this planet after the Second and Third Vial Judgment, i.e., the sea became "as the blood of a dead man" (16:3) and freshwater sources "became blood" (16:4), will rapidly become a life ending crisis. The human body can live for seven to nine weeks without food (depending upon body weight), but it can only survive up to ten days without water (in moderate weather). When deprived of food but not water, the body will deplete its carbohydrates, that are stored as glycogen in the liver and muscle cells, after the first day. It will then begin to consume the body's fat reserves for the next four to six weeks. Subsequently, the body will begin to consume its protein reserves-- which is the body itself-- irreparably damaging itself, especially the brain, for the last two to three weeks. On the other hand, water is immediately more vital to survival, since the weight of the adult human body is 55 to 60 percent water, and it is recommended to drink six to eight 8-ounce glasses (about 2 liters) of water or other fluids daily for healthful maintenance. "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the Judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

Even in this Third Vial Judgment, God does not eradicate human life instantaneously; rather, He justifies Himself in wisdom by preparing the last vestiges of the elect-but-still-lost for their just-in-time repentance at His Second Coming. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). Unlike the plague that Jehovah visited upon the ancient Egyptians, where both the Nile River and even water found "in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone" (Exodus 7:19-20) became blood, the Third Vial Judgment seems to restrict itself to only the natural sources of freshwater storage, e.g., aquifers, rivers, lakes, springs, etc. "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters" (16:4). By apparently allowing manmade water storage containers to escape this judgment, it appears that the Almighty is preserving even the lives of wicked men to be slain several days hence at Armageddon, i.e., the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14). "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). Man has little conception of the glory due unto the Name of the LORD; and therefore, it is accordingly difficult for the same minds to conceive that the "LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth" (9:16). But, He must exalt Himself in judgment, if man will not repent. "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 38:23).

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- "5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O LORD, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus."

This verse begins with a declaration by the "angel of the waters" (16:5), i.e., the "third angel" (16:4) of the Vial Judgments, praising and worshipping God for His righteous judgment-- "Thou art righteous, O LORD" (16:5). "48:10 According to Thy Name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the Earth: Thy right hand is full of righteousness... 50:6 And the Heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge Himself... 89:16 In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted... 97:2 Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne... 119:142 Thy righteousness is an Everlasting Righteousness, and Thy Law is the Truth... 144 The righteousness of Thy Testimonies is everlasting: give me Understanding, and I shall live" (Psalm 48:10; 50:6; 89:16; 97:2; 119:142, 144). In substance, if God is not righteous, then an eternal standard does not exist to which we can anchor and by which we can live. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (Romans 3:5, 6). Man's inability to justify all the actions and allowances of the Righteous God, only underscores our minuscule understanding of what is right, for even the visible "heavens declare His righteousness" (Psalm 97:6).

The Eternal God, "which art, and wast, and shalt be" (16:5), must judge righteously, or the very foundations of Heaven would eventually collapse. "Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their host, the Earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and **Thou preservest them all**; and the host of Heaven worshippeth Thee" (Nehemiah 9:6). The "LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:6) has revealed that the same Jesus, whom He has appointed to "judge the quick and the dead at His appearing" (2Timothy 4:1), is "made unto us... righteousness" (1Corinthians 1:30), that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Corinthians 5:21). The same "righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:1) that will judge the Tribulation Rebels of this Third Vial Judgment, is the same righteousness that will always deliver His Saints. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

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- "6 For they have shed the blood of Saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

A precept of the ancient Jewish civil law was the Retributive Justice of a "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Exodus 21:23, 24). This was not intended as a statement of mercy, but it was an unqualified fitting of the punishment to the crime. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). Whether or not all the inhabitants of the Earth have personally executed a Tribulation Saint, God reckons them complicit with the crime by their adherence to the Antichrist, through their reception of the Mark of the Beast, their worship of the Beast, and their use of the Mark to further their self-survival. "For they have shed the blood of Saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (16:6). The crime against the unborn [see our article, "What the Bible Says About Abortion" --

<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Abortion.html> --], the injustice of American slavery [see our article, "The Spirit of Slavery (Part 1)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spirit.of.Slavery.Part_1.html --], and Germany's holocaust of the Jews are modern examples of how the Almighty must deal with a nation, when sin is tolerated by its people. "3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place... 5 But if ye will not hear these Words, I swear by Myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation" (Jeremiah 22:3, 5).

When the Almighty shall give the world literal "blood to drink" (16:6), it is the curse of God against the human life that He fashioned into existence on the Sixth Day of Creation. "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (Isaiah 49:26). Remembering that human blood is a mixture of human tissue (blood cells) and an equal proportion of plasma (whose chemical composition resembles seawater), drinking human blood would be paramount to the curse of drinking a mixture of seawater and decomposing human tissue. "The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but He blesseth the habitation of the just" (Proverbs 3:33). The very word *ecology*, which is the study of the relationships between organisms and their environments, comes from the Greek word *oikos*, which means house. Thus, according to Proverbs, *the curse of the LORD is in the ecology of the wicked*, "for they are worthy" (16:6). Yes, God does care that we wisely manage the environment, but He is more concerned that unrighteous humanity is covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Romans 3:22).

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- "7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, LORD God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments."

It is instructive that the Spirit of God deemed it wise to tarry this thought another verse, to bolster our understanding of the veracity and rightness of His actions in this Third Vial Judgment. "Even so, LORD God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy Judgments" (16:7). Man's bewilderment at God's judgments truly illustrate the words of the LORD, "My Thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My Ways" (Isaiah 55:8). Why such ferocity by the Divine One against the world after nearly two millennia of tender Gospel entreaties? Contrary to the misconception that repentance is a right guaranteed by God forever, opportunity to turn away from sin must be:

(1) limited to the present, i.e., "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of Salvation" (2Corinthians 6:2),

(2) restricted to the time before physical death, i.e., "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14),

(3) prior to the appointed time of judgment for all sin, i.e., "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this The Judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), and

(4) excepted that the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has not already been committed, i.e., "31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:31-32).

Therefore, the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God in these Vial Judgments is an indication that the time of man's probation has all but expired. "Behold, thou art but a dead man" (Genesis 20:3). His vehement anger signifies not His surprise that man can still be so obstinately wicked, but it simply gauges exactly how vast and terrible man's sinfulness will finally become. "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2Peter 2:20). God hates sin because it assaults the highest good and well-being of Himself and the universe. "30 Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the First Commandment. 31 And the Second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other Commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31). So, He must match the magnitude of the punishment to the scope of the crime, i.e., "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward" (Hebrews 2:2), if His moral government of the universe is to endure. "Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a right sceptre" (Psalm 45:6). In essence, the same rebellious slogan that Lucifer incited against the Most High in the Heavens, has echoed throughout time, and especially against the Son of Man. "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). But now, the Vial Judgments represent the end of Jehovah's therapeutic judgments of man, whereby man's repentance is still possible. "An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come" (Ezekiel 7:6).

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- "8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the Sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire."

Rebellious Earth dwellers are the target of the Fourth Vial Judgment, for none but the wicked remain on the planet at this time. In this instance, Earth's Sun is the vehicle chosen by God to make the required impression. "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun" (16:8). Our Sun is a medium sized dwarf star-- measuring 864,049 miles in diameter compared to Earth's 7,937 miles-- located in the outer part of the Milky Way Galaxy. It is 90 percent composed of hydrogen atoms, which are converted to helium, thus releasing energy in the form of neutrinos, the kinetic energy of product particles, and gamma-ray photons, which reach the Earth in about eight minutes (traveling approximately 92 million miles). At its present rate of consumption, the Sun would theoretically consume its mass in 100 billion years. As the sun depletes its supply of hydrogen, it burns 10 percent brighter every billion years, raising its central temperature and potentially increasing the temperature of the Earth. "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night" (Genesis 1:16). However, nothing in the natural process of the Sun's nuclear burning approximates the prophetic account of the thermostatic effect upon the Earth and all its inhabitants, i.e., "to scorch men with fire" (16:8). "21 For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act. 22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of Hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole Earth" (Isaiah

28:21-22).

The corona, which is the outermost atmosphere of the Sun, typically has a temperature of a few million degrees Kelvin; but during a solar flare, the temperature of the sun's corona may reach 10 to 20 million degrees Kelvin, and can run as high as 100 million degrees Kelvin. Still, this nowhere captures the power of the Fourth Vial Judgment, where the Almighty God will "scorch men with fire" (16:8). "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6). A solar flare is a rapid release of energy from a sunspot region of the Sun in the form of electromagnetic radiation. Though the energy released in a solar flare is the equivalent of millions of 100-megaton hydrogen bombs exploding simultaneously, it is less than a tenth of the total energy emitted by the Sun every second. Space stations and satellites-- which tie together our planet's broadcast media, communications, the Internet, commerce, banking, navigation, military, government, and ultimately the Mark of the Beast-- would be most effected by this solar bombardment. "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isaiah 3:11). Satellite technology has rapidly become the connective tissue of modern civilization, and while the Almighty punishes and pleads with men in this Vial Judgment, He will deliver what must be a fatal blow to the satellites from the Sun. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29).

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- "9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory."

The amount of solar radiation reaching the Earth is a function of both the energy output of the Sun and the condition of the stratospheric ozone layer. Earth's atmospheric ozone layer absorbs ultraviolet radiation (UVR), preventing it from reaching the surface of the Earth. Ozone is created by the disassociation of oxygen by short wavelength UVR; however, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other gases released by human activities are believed to destroy the ozone layer. A higher incidence of skin cancer is the result of the depletion of the ozone. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Sunburn results from the overexposure of the skin to the ultraviolet of sunlight; but, when men are "scorched with great heat" (16:9), more severe injury is indicated, i.e., second-degree or third-degree burns. Both these burns damage the dermis and epidermis, while the third-degree burn also destroys the entire thickness of the skin. "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9). Pain, infection, and shock are some of the immediate concerns of victims of severe burns, and it appears that those injured by the Fourth Vial Judgment have sufficient consciousness, for still they "blasphemed the Name of God" (16:9).

Can God be so mistaken about the character of these impenitent rebels that He would torture them with malignant ulcers, bloody seas, bloody waters, and now scorching heat? God would cease to be God, if His judgments were not forever righteous. "5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (Romans 3:5-6). God has always promised that the breaking of His Laws were to be punished with death, i.e., "But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt

surely die" (Genesis 2:17). It has only been the mercy, grace, and love of God that "in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). The Righteous Judge has never *owed* us mercy, but He has continually shown His mercy throughout this Gospel dispensation. "5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5-6). Why should He Who "hath power over these plagues" (16:9) *not* judge and punish these that still have "repented not to give Him glory" (16:9)?

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- "10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the Beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,"

"As for God, His way is perfect" (2Samuel 22:31). Just as the wire of a coat hanger is repeatedly bent one way, then another before it finally breaks, the All Wise God applies pressure first to the seas, then to the freshwater. Next, He pressures man with light and the scorching heat of the Sun, only to quickly reverse the circumstances to worldwide darkness in the Fifth Vial Judgment. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the Beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness" (16:10). Because the world ruled by the Antichrist has been relieved of its burden of Saints, who are the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)-- through Pre-Tribulational Rapture, martyrdom, and Pre-Wrath Rapture-- the Judge of All visits Antichrist's Earth with a physical darkness that can be felt. "Give glory to the LORD your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness" (Jeremiah 13:16). [For an explanation of the concept of More Than One Rapture, please read our article, "The Wisdom of More Than One Rapture" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/More.Than.One.Rapture.html> --.]

Physicists define light as energy, propagated from one place to another at the speed of 186,000 miles per second (300,000 kilometers per second), to which the human eye is sensitive. Light behaves both like a wave, i.e., electromagnetic wave theory of light (19th century), and like particles, i.e., quantum theory of light (20th century). Energy in the form of light is always moving; and, when light energy ceases to move, because it has been absorbed by matter, it is no longer light. "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1John 1:5). Darkness is the absence of light. "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Proverbs 4:19). Jude, either the half brother of the LORD Jesus or one of the original twelve apostles, described some of Lucifer's cohorts as being held in chains of darkness. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). Astronomers theorize the existence of black holes, which is, they say, the final stage of progression of very massive stars following total gravitational collapse, so densely packed that even light cannot escape. "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

Like the totally blind, one who descends into the abyss of the ocean or journeys into the bowels of a cave, may experience the sensation of total darkness; and, in the Scriptural record, both Jonah in the belly of the whale and Pharaoh of the Exodus experienced a darkness that could be felt. "21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward Heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. 22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward

Heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: 23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Exodus 10:21-23). This type of total darkness resulted in the repentance of Jonah and the hardening of Pharaoh. And, during the final days of the Tribulation Week, we can be sure that the rebels will receive great pain from the darkness, i.e., "and they gnawed their tongues for pain" (16:10). Since most of these will never repent, they have already begun their descent into the "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13), into their final place of Unending Punishment, originally "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

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- "11 And blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

The impenitence of these Earth dwellers is not unexpected, i.e., they "repented not of their deeds" (16:11). They have the infamous distinction of being the most stubborn and defiant human beings still drawing breath, for of such "Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matthew 12:24) takes grudging delight. "29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:29-32). Being without remorse for all their wickedness, what more evidence could the Faithful Creator give of the stark reality of their need for repentance than the supernatural, miraculous Vial Judgments? "23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?... 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezekiel 18:23, 32).

But, they "blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores" (16:11). If God cannot be magnified in their Salvation, He must "lay the land desolate" and "destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isaiah 13:9). So much of the message of the Old Testament prophets against faithless Israel and upon the Gentile nations, made such sweeping statements of Jehovah's worldwide judgment against sin, that the final scene of judgment seemed remote-- until the world sinned away the opportunity of Gospel repentance. "6 Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (55:6-7). Their blasphemy, from the Greek word *blasphemeo* (to speak evilly of God's divine majesty), only further hardens them, ensuring the rightness of their destruction and damnation. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2Peter 2:12). "Their pains and their sores" (16:11) have continued from at least the First Vial Judgment's malignant ulcers and certainly from gnawing their tongues for pain in the Fifth Vial Judgment. They are much like a repeatedly wounded animal, only looking for a way to die. "Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation" (Jeremiah 50:27).

- "12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared."

Preparation of the Kings of the East for the Battle of Armageddon is the purpose for the Sixth Vial Judgment, i.e., "that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared" (16:12). In particular, the Omniscient God understands the necessity for the drying up of the Euphrates River-- to ensure the arrival of the Kings of the East for the slaughter of the Battle of Armageddon at the appointed time. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up" (16:12). The eastern boundary of the ancient Roman Empire was the Euphrates River. It was also the eastern extent of the land promised to the seed of Abraham. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18). Flowing from the Armenian plateau in Turkey southeastward across Syria and southern Iraq, joining to the Tigris River to form the Shatt al-Arab, and emptying into the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates River is the largest river of western Asia, with a total length of about 1,700 miles (2,700 kilometers). "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden... And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads... And the fourth river is Euphrates" (Genesis 2:8, 10, 14).

It is fittingly poetic of God that the geographic area known as the Fertile Crescent (roughly extending from the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, arching northward to Assyria, westward over Syria to the Mediterranean, southward through Israel, and extending into the Nile valley of Egypt) would be both the location of the Garden of Eden and Armageddon-- the place of man's beginning and the area of the end of his rebellion against God. "I am Alpha and Omega, The Beginning and The Ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8). The distance from Armageddon to the "great river Euphrates" (16:12) is approximately 350 miles (560 kilometers) at its closest point and 700 miles (1,100 kilometers) at the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. In the beginning of the 21st century, the evident pattern is the rising military-industrial power of China, the technological ascendancy and prowess of Japan, and the continued growth in the population of India-- all guarantee sufficient capability and combatants to cross the dried Euphrates to keep an appointment at Armageddon. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17).

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- "13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet."

The "three unclean spirits" (16:13) that "come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet" (16:13), indicate that the hellish influence of the devil and Satan possessed men alike is often disseminated by demons. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1John 4:1). That the demons are "like frogs" (16:13), signifies that they are *representatively unclean*, much as the superseded Old Testament Ceremonial Law used to specify. "5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from Heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the Earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things,

and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a Voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, LORD: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth" (Acts 11:5-8).

What Satan, demons, and evil men believe to be their own machinations against the Most High and His elect ones, is actually the supreme demonstration of the Omnipotent and Omniscient God in using their evil to perform His purpose. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7). Though God can never be the substance of evil, He does so thoroughly control His adversaries that the "wrath of man shall praise [Him]: the remainder of wrath [shall He] restrain" (Psalm 76:10). The slaughter of Armageddon will be promoted by the Antichrist as the *final solution* for eliminating the LORD Jesus Christ from contention to the rulership of the Kingdom of God, in particular, the Millennial Earth. "37 But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance" (Matthew 21:37-38). Armageddon will not be the revolt of the Kings of the East against the Antichrist, to be fought out in Israel. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast" (Revelation 17:12). Rather, it will be the concerted effort of the Antichrist and the Kings of the East to finally defeat and destroy the LORD Jesus Christ, who is the *Only* Legitimate Heir to the Throne. "Until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall shew, who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:14-15).

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- "14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

It is a characteristic of ungodliness that both wicked men and evil angels are by nature unreasonable. "And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith" (2Thessalonians 3:2). These faithless "spirits of devils" (16:14) are the demons that possess those individuals who have refused obedience to Christ, i.e., "to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Romans 6:16), because "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (1:28). Why? Demoniacs (the demon possessed) are those who simply "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (1:28), that have been allowed by God to be so inhabited by demons for the sake of punishment, judgment, and even reformation. "And [Christ's] fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them" (Matthew 4:24).

Christ's healings demonstrated that curable physical illnesses were often the manifestation of demon possession. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw" (Matthew 12:22). In addition, demons:

- (1) spoke through their host, i.e., "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out" (Mark 1:23),
- (2) possessed knowledge beyond that of their host, i.e., "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou

art, the Holy One of God" (1:24),

(3) preferred inhabiting a beast, if a human was not available, i.e., "So the devils besought Him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine" (Matthew 8:31),

(4) are allowed their habitation only by permission from God, i.e., "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, LORD, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name" (Luke 10:17),

(5) are cast out by the prayer and fasting of the Saints, i.e., "25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him... 28 And when [Jesus] was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:25, 28-29), and

(6) comprehend that they are only biding their time until they will be finally and eternally judged, i.e., "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29).

The unreasonableness of these "spirits of devils" (16:14) is that though they know that the Almighty has ultimate control over them and will finally judge them, they persist in opposing the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. But, why does God allow it? Because the Kingdom of God is a vast Moral Government-- *not* an autocratic rule over those who have no choice but to obey, praise, and worship the Almighty-- the King must demonstrate to the satisfaction of all His subjects that His judgment of the world that opposes Him at Armageddon, is a righteous and just execution. "9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the Faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy with them that love Him and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations; 10 and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the Commandments, and the Statutes, and the Judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them" (Deuteronomy 7:9-11). These demons are allowed to work miracles, i.e., "working miracles" (16:14), so that they may persuade the "kings of the Earth" and the "whole world" (16:14) that they can fight and win at Armageddon, the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14). "19 And [the good prophet Micaiah] said, Hear thou therefore the Word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His Throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. 20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. 21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. 22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And He said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so" (1Kings 22:19-22).

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- "15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he

walk naked, and they see his shame."

"Behold, I come as a thief" (16:15) is a warning, but this verse is also meant to be a promise to those who read it before Armageddon is fought. Only to the wicked, will He come as a thief; but, a receiver of this promise "watcheth" (16:15) and awaits his LORD's coming. "2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the Children of Light, and the Children of the Day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of Salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:2-9).

To keep one's garments, i.e., "keepeth his garments" (16:15), implies a carefulness to walk in holiness, for the first garments were given by the Creator to cover the nakedness of our first parents' sin. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). But, in that act of covering is the lesson that our God has provided the shed blood of His Son in atonement for our sins. "And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The benefit of our Redeemer's covering extends beyond our initial Salvation, but it must encompass all subsequent cleansings for backslidings, when we "walked naked" and the world saw our "shame" (16:15). "If we confess our sins, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). Only as we are taught our need of abiding in Christ, can we possibly find relief from sinning. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1John 3:6). And, abiding in Christ is so understanding the "riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19) that conforms Christ as the answer to our every question and the provision for our every need, that we become the victor and not the vanquished. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). [See our article, "Must We Then Sin?" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, which is "a clarification of what is sin, why we sin, and how not to sin".]

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- "16 And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The most advertised battle engagement of all time is Armageddon. "In the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (16:16) was probably *Har Megiddo*, which means mount or city of Megiddo. Armageddon, presently only a rich archaeological excavation and tourist site, lies about 18 miles (29 kilometers) southeast of the coastal city of Haifa, in northern Israel. Because Megiddo occupied a strategic military position on the Plain of Esdraelon-- which is the Greek derivation of the Hebrew, Yizre'el meaning God will sow, and is also identified with the Valley of Jezreel of Scripture-- it was the scene of numerous historic, Biblical battles and many conflicts more recent. Geographically, Armageddon's Plain of Esdraelon cuts Israel in half, affording clear passage from the Mediterranean Sea to the Great Rift Valley of the Jordan River. Economically, Megiddo controlled a chokepoint on the ancient Via Maris-- the "Way of the Sea" (Isaiah 9:1)-- making it of great importance along that international trade route connecting Egypt to Mesopotamia, i.e., Euphrates River. Located immediately above the Palestinian controlled West Bank area, the Plain of Esdraelon is a green, fertile

valley about 25 miles long by 5 miles. Whoever maintained an army at Megiddo, controlled this essential international trade route, as did the Romans, when they came and fortified Legio, a mile farther south on the same ridge. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14).

Armageddon has been traditionally a symbol for a final and catastrophic conflict for the planet-- as the Judgment of God will be for the Wicked. "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about" (Joel 3:12). From 1479 BC, when Thutmose III, king of Egypt, took the advice of his generals to enter Megiddo via the 'Aruna Pass to successfully defeat a coalition of Canaanite forces led by the Prince of Kadesh, to 1948, when Israeli forces used Megiddo as a base of operations against their Arab adversaries to successfully secure their statehood, the Plain of Esdraelon has witnessed innumerable battles of Armageddon. [See our article, "The Conflicts of Armageddon" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Conflicts.of.Armageddon.html> --, for more background.] Understanding that the Almighty is God alone, and "there is nothing too hard for [Him]" (Jeremiah 32:17), we must consider that the closing events of Armageddon are accomplished and revealed to us in this appointed fashion that the LORD, the Master Potter, may complete the fashioning of the clay pots of the moral agency of humanity that they "learn war [no] more" (Micah 4:3). "6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel. 7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (Jeremiah 18:6-10).

The timing of the Apocalyptic Armageddon is at the End of the Tribulation Week, since the Vials are poured out at the close of the "Hour of Temptation" (3:10), at nearly the rate of one Vial Judgment per day, with the Sixth Vial Judgment specifically preparing the way for the "Kings of the East" (16:12). [For a day-based calculation for the Hour of Temptation, see our comments on Revelation 3:10 -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.3.html#Keep thee](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.3.html#Keep%20thee) --.] Since the Battle of Armageddon will be the final confrontation of the LORD Jesus Christ with the Antichrist, its climax must come when the Lamb of God casts the Antichrist and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire. "19 And I saw the Beast [the Antichrist], and the Kings of the Earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [Christ] that sat on the horse, and against His army. 20 And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (19:19-21). The Battle of Armageddon will be conducted as a campaign over a period of a few days, before and after the End of the Tribulation Week, which most importantly marks the Second Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ. "29 Immediately after the Tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30).

Participants in the Battle of Armageddon will be the "Beast" (19:19) in alliance with the "Kings of the Earth" (16:14), specifically *with* the "Kings of the East" (16:12), arrayed against the LORD Jesus Christ-- Who is the "LORD God Omnipotent" (19:6), the "Lamb" (19:7), "Faithful and True" (19:11), "The Word of God" (19:13), "Almighty God" (19:15), "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16), "The Great God" (19:17)-- and the Lamb's army of Angelic Hosts and Glorified Saints. "And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (19:14). Just as Hitler knew by 1943, after his troops were defeated in North Africa and Stalingrad, that he could not win, yet he did not sue for peace; just so, the Antichrist will unreasonably attempt to engage the LORD Jesus Christ in combat at Armageddon. "And out of [Christ's] mouth goeth a Sharp Sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15). All of Antichrist's forces are bodily annihilated, i.e., the "remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (19:21). Instructive to the Saints is that our LORD battles and wins against the Enemy using solely His Word. How much more need we this Ultimate Weapon System? "4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2Corinthians 10:4-5).

Actual battlefield progress is limited to a description of the vast quantity of the enemies' blood that will flow at Armageddon, i.e., "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Revelation 14:20). [See our comments on Revelation 14:20 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.14.html#verse20> -- on the manner of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ.] "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13). The towering center of attention at Armageddon is the magnificence of the LORD Jesus Christ, who is the "LORD of Sabaoth" (James 5:4), literally, the LORD of Armies, whose garments are stained with the blood of His vanquished adversaries. "1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isaiah 63:1-3). Neither the Antichrist nor the False Prophet are killed during the engagement, but will be captured and given the ignominy of being the first two Eternal Prisoners of the Lake of Fire. "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20). Thus, ends the Battle of Armageddon with the complete physical annihilation of the forces of the Antichrist, leaving the LORD Jesus Christ as the Victor. "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the Heaven and in the Earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as Head Above All" (1Chronicles 29:11).

- "17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a Great Voice out of the Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, saying, It is done."

The Seventh Vial Judgment is the last recorded Apocalyptic Judgment. Since Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and the "god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4), then pouring out the Seventh Vial Judgment "into the air" (16:17), would be a frontal attack against Satan, so that all can see how Jehovah defeats, masters, and judges the Archenemy. Finite man finds it difficult to conceive of a supernatural Devil with vastly superior intelligence, superhuman power, commanding a host of demons, and evilly dedicated to himself, the destruction of the Almighty, and the ruination of mankind (a conspiracy)-- to whom even "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The LORD rebuke thee" (Jude 9). But even, to the Saints: "Greater is He [the Spirit of God] that is in you, than He that is in the world [Satan]" (1John 4:4). It is to the glory of God that He has so fortified His Saints that simply standing in faith upon the promises and precepts of the Word of God defeats this mightiest of enemies. "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1Peter 5:9). "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Again, the "Great Voice out of the Temple of Heaven" (16:17) is undoubtedly that of the LORD Jesus Christ (16:1). The declaration of our LORD, "It is done" (16:17), is an affirmation of mastery. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44). Patience and long-suffering have been the very essence of the Creator's relationship to mankind. "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth" (Exodus 34:6). We have given the LORD every reason to destroy us, as we would put down a mad dog, for the totality of our conduct; but, He has responded with "Great Mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression" (Numbers 14:18)-- when we repented and believed-- through the Sacrificial Death of the Son of God. "But this Man [Christ Jesus], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). Jesus knew that the Enemy was defeated when He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30) on the Cross. "24 Then cometh the End, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. 26 The Last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death" (1Corinthians 15:24-26).

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- "18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the Earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."

The Throne Presence of God is seen and felt throughout the world in the Seventh and Last Apocalyptic Judgment, i.e., "voices, and thunders, and lightnings" (16:18), leaving the planet with the certainty that God Himself has returned. "5 And out of the Throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices... 19 And the Temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His Temple the Ark of His Testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Revelation 4:5; 11:19). Just as secular writers identify Hell with misery, pain, and anguish, e.g., World War II, American infantryman Audie Murphy's description of combat

in his memoir, "To Hell And Back" (1949), and Vietnam Era, American POW Jeremiah Denton's description of captivity in his book, "When Hell Was in Session" (1976), the inspired writers of Scripture characterize Heaven with victory, blessing, and overcoming. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). The "voices" (16:18) of the Seventh Vial Judgment are most probably those of the Godhead commanding the Greatest Invasion Force the World Will Ever See-- the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ-- making the massive June 6th 1944 D-Day invasion of Nazi occupied Europe by Allied forces during World War II on the beaches of Normandy, France, only a significant footnote by comparison. "The LORD is a Man of War: the LORD is His Name" (Exodus 15:3). "Thunders" (16:18) and "lightnings" (16:18) would most appropriately represent the chain of command and the execution of the Divine Orders. "The voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the Earth trembled and shook" (Psalm 77:18).

As indicated in this verse, the Greatest Earthquake of All Time occurs at this Seventh Vial Judgment, i.e., "there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the Earth" (16:18). [See our editorial, "Armageddon and the Great Crack in the Earth" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Armageddon.html --, to examine the relationship between this last great earthquake and the Second Coming.] Earthquakes are sudden movements of the Earth's crust caused by the release of stress accumulated along geologic faults (tectonic earthquakes) or by volcanic activity (volcanic earthquakes). Although 50,000 earthquakes each year may be felt without the aid of instruments, very great earthquakes only occur at the rate of about one per year. In the past, only a handful have been recorded as truly great earthquakes:

- (1) Lisbon, Portugal was heavily damaged by a temblor, whose epicenter was off the coast, on November 1st 1755 at 9:40 AM (All Saints Day), killing as many as 60,000 in Lisbon alone, while celebrating Mass;
- (2) New Madrid, Missouri (USA) experienced a series of three earthquakes on December 16th 1811, January 23rd 1812, and February 7th 1812, felt as far away as Canada, the Gulf Coast, and Cincinnati, Ohio, affecting more than 1 million square miles, and where the Mississippi River was reported to have flowed temporarily backwards;
- (3) San Francisco experienced a slip of the San Andreas fault that killed 700 people and destroyed its central business district on April 18th 1906 at 5:12 AM;
- (4) Tokyo-Yokohama, Japan on September 1st 1923 about noon was devastated by an earthquake that killed an estimated 140,000 people, destroying hundreds of thousands of homes, decimating fifty-four percent of its brick buildings, and collapsing ten percent of its reinforced concrete structures;
- (5) T'ang-shan, China, a coal-mining and industrial city 68 miles (110 kilometers) east of Beijing, saw the death of 240,000 people from an earthquake, along with the injury of another 500,000 on July 28th 1976, due mainly to the collapse of unreinforced masonry homes, while they slept; and
- (6) Mexico City on September 19th 1985 at 7:18 AM was shocked by a fault slip along

the Benioff zone, killing 10,000 inhabitants and causing major building damage on this city founded on a former lake bed.

But, none of these tremors combined approach the damage and destruction of the worldwide shaking that will be experienced with the Seventh Vial Judgment, i.e., "so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (16:18). "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8). "Safety is of the LORD" (Proverbs 21:31).

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- "19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."

The "great city" (16:19) refers to Jerusalem, i.e., the "great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified" (11:8). Babylon the Great, which is the Harlot Rome, is *not* the "great city" (16:19) mentioned at the beginning of the verse, for Rome will be utterly destroyed in "one [literal] hour" (18:10, 17), i.e., "in one hour is she made desolate" (18:19). But, Jerusalem will *not* be completely destroyed, though it will be "divided into three parts" (16:19). [See our series, "Babylon the Great" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --, for a development of the identification of Rome with Babylon the Great.] "17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.... 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (17:5; 18:2). At the End of the Tribulation Week, during the Seventh Vial Judgment, time is left for the Almighty to complete the judgment of the "great city" (18:10, 16, 18, 19) of Rome, which is Babylon the Great, even before the battle is joined at Armageddon. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (18:21).

Not only is Jerusalem specified as a target for tripartite division, but the "cities of the nations fell" (16:19), as well. This is a Global Earthquake. "17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. 18 And the idols He shall utterly abolish. 19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the Earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the Earth" (Isaiah 2:17-19). "Great Babylon" (16:19) or "Babylon the Great" (18:2) will *not* be forgotten by the Omniscient God, i.e., "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (16:19). She must be made to pay for her sins. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19). Finally impenitent Babylon must be judged, or God's Holy Law of Perfect Love toward God and man must be eternally ridiculed. The "soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Christ's Atonement on the Cross, which rescues from Hell (if we repent), must not be depreciated by allowing Babylon the Great's sin to go unrewarded. "5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought Salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. 6 And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth" (Isaiah 63:5-6).

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- "20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

It is apparent that the Global Earthquake of the Seventh Vial Judgment will cause the destruction of the islands throughout the world, i.e., "every island fled away" (16:20). This will occur through the action of tsunamis (seismic sea waves), as well as the earthquake itself. Fast moving tsunami waves moving through deep water will increase in amplitude as they approach the shallow waters near land. The onrush of water, especially around bays and inlets, will cause the greatest amount of immediate destruction around the low-lying ground of such inlets. Islands will not only be catastrophically damaged by the waves, but the volcanic earthquakes that initially formed some islands, e.g., the Hawaiian Islands, will permanently destroy them or alter their existence. "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Revelation 6:14). Just as volcanoes and earthquakes were responsible for the formation of much of the world's mountains, they will now be responsible for their destruction, i.e., "and the mountains were not found" (16:20). The noble mountains that ascribed glory to God through their creation, will bow themselves down to Him again, in performance of His judgment. "He stood, and measured the Earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the Everlasting Mountains were scattered, the Perpetual Hills did bow: His ways are everlasting" (Habakkuk 3:6). Though the New Heavens and New Earth will not occur until after the Millennium, the topography of the Millennial Earth will be greatly rearranged by the Global Earthquake of the Seventh Vial Judgment. "Bow Thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke" (Psalm 144:5).

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- "21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of Heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

As if to ensure that what the "exceeding great" (16:21) plague of the Global Earthquake does not sufficiently awaken or destroy, "there fell upon men a great hail out of Heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent" (16:21). Hail is the precipitation of balls or pieces of ice that often accompany thunderstorms. Ordinarily, hail may be about a quarter of an inch to 4 inches (5 millimeters to 10 centimeters) in diameter, but this hail will be "every stone about the weight of a talent" (16:21). The weight of a talent would be between 90 to 100 pounds (41 to 45 kilograms). Scripture indicates that there is sufficient humanity left to be cursed by the hail, for they "blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail" (16:21). "To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). Though judgment is the theme, repentance is still possible. "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me?" (Exodus 10:3). The purpose of the Seventh Vial Judgment is to prepare for the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, which follows soon thereafter. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

Chapter 17: Revealing the Mystery of Babylon the Great and the Beast

- "1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the Great Whore that sitteth upon many waters:"

Both Chapter 17 and the following chapter describe the destruction of "Babylon the Great" (17:5), i.e., "I will shew unto thee the judgment of the Great Whore" (17:1); but, this chapter sets the stage for that destruction by revealing to us the identities of both Babylon the Great and the Beast, i.e., "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her" (17:7). Many commentators agree that ecclesiastical, political, and economic Babylon are described in this pair of chapters. However, the difficulty of interpreting the two chapters lies in distinguishing the spheres of influence of both the Great Whore and the Antichrist, since they overlap and are intertwined through their spiritual fornication. "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts" (Nahum 3:4). That their conduct is illicit, can be seen through the name given by the Holy Spirit to Babylon the Great, i.e., the "Great Whore [Greek, porne, also translated as harlot]" (17:1). "17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. 18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 23:17-18).

An angel, "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" (17:1), is seen here instructing the Apostle John concerning the "judgment of the Great Whore" (17:1). She is described as sitting "upon many waters" (17:1) *and* sitting astride the "Beast that carrieth her" (17:7). Just as Antichrist arises "out of the sea" (13:1)-- signifying that he will emerge out of the "isles of the Gentiles" (Genesis 10:5)-- the Great Whore sits "upon a scarlet coloured beast" (17:3)-- signifying that she both derives her power from the Antichrist and exerts controlling influence over him-- a symbiotic relationship. "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh" (1Corinthians 6:16). Historically, the Roman Catholic Church has been noted to have this whorish relationship between Established Religion and State, and as mammoth as Rome is today; the Roman Pontiff would need to elevate himself even more to continue the prophetic destiny of the Church of Rome-- most probably through the recent inauguration of the United Religions. "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17). [See our series of articles, "Babylon the Great" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --, for a development of the past, present, and future of this arch foe of the LORD Jesus Christ.]

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- "2 With whom the Kings of the Earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Why have the Kings of the Earth committed spiritual fornication with Babylon the Great? Just as physical fornication is intercourse between unmarried partners, spiritual fornication is an illicit departure from God for the gratification of self. "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go

from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 3:1). Rulers have both their own sense of religion for themselves, as well as their understanding of what religious sense motivates their people, which they must harness to establish their kingdom. "24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:24-25). An example of how the religious sense of a ruler converted the king, but not the kingdom, is that of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. "34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation... 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4:34, 37).

The spiritual fornication of the kings is most often the spiritual temperament of the people, i.e., "And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings" (Hosea 4:9). Kings not only enforce the Law, but they lead by their example-- for good or for ill. "With whom the kings of the Earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:2). Regardless of the actual form of government, rulers understand that their government requires the support of the people, and often make their decisions based upon the will of the people-- without concern for what is right. "13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 said unto them, Ye have brought This Man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in This Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him: 15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him [along with Jesus, to make your allegations against Him]; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. 16 I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him. 17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) 18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with This Man, and release unto us Barabbas: 19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) 20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. 21 But they cried, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. 22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go. 23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23:13-25).

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- "3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

We are here reminded that the Apostle John was given a series of visions in the Apocalypse, for one of the seven angels of the Vial Judgments carries him "away in the Spirit" (17:3) to see a third vision of Christ climaxing His judgment of the world (17:1-21:8). [See our notes on Chapter 11 --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.11.html> --, verse 1 for the fourfold division of John's Apocalyptic visions.] Why was this vision given to John in the "wilderness" (17:3)? In this instance, the "wilderness" (17:3) seems to indicate the theme of judgment. "How is the hammer of the whole

Earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!" (Jeremiah 50:23). The Great Whore (17:1) is the woman that sits upon the "scarlet coloured Beast" (17:1). The "seven heads" (12:3) of the Dragon signify seven governments, kingdoms, or empires, from which the "ten horns" (12:3) or ten different rulers reign, i.e., "ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (Daniel 7:24).

The phrase "full of names of blasphemy" (17:3) indicates that both the Great Whore and her paramour the Beast are full of evil speaking against our LORD Christ, "who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 9:5). Though sin is plainly the despising of the Law of Love, i.e., "sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4), how anyone could loathe the God who is love, is truly a mystery. But, the "mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2Thessalonians 2:7). Or, as the Apostle John informs us, "Little children, it is the Last Time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the Last Time" (1John 2:18). Virulent hatred of God exists in the world, because God in His wisdom has allowed moral agents to exercise their Godlike image, i.e., "in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6), for or against Himself; however, it is the "goodness and forbearance and longsuffering" (Romans 2:4) of God that brings any of us unto "repentance" (2:4). That Loving Longsuffering of God that seeks our repentance, is even more unfathomable than the blackest sin and blasphemy of the Great Whore herself. "17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

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- "4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:"

The Great Whore is "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls" (17:4), indicating an opulence unknown to the vast majority of the world, but so easily identifiable with the ecclesiastical pomp of the Church of Rome. "7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow... 16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!" (Revelation 18:7, 16). What justification does the Church have to impress the ungodly with worldly displays of wealth in the name of seeking the salvation of their souls? None whatsoever! "And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Luke 9:58). Neither pageantry to impress the benighted masses or woo the overindulged elite, justifies the ostentation that places the emphasis upon the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16). Only with the greatest caution and understanding could any successful ministry justify the building of *any* superstructure that would potentially overpower the hearts of the Faithful. "7 Two things have I required of Thee; deny me them not before I die: 8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:7-9).

A gilded cup is held by the Whore, "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (17:4). The cup is gold, which is lawful for all to possess, but its contents of disobedience and rebellion are deceptively marketed to mankind as good and right-- and *not* the self-seeking, self-loving, self-gratifying, God-hating thing that it really is. "O love the LORD, all ye His Saints... for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalms 31:23; 136:1). The Whore seeks to entrap mankind to gratify herself, as well as justify her actions. "4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, **seeketh not her own**, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (1Corinthians 13:4-5). As long as we "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2), it is unfathomable that all men would not likewise love the Blessed LORD with all their heart, soul, and mind; but, Scripture has wisely depicted evil to give the Innocent Saints the necessary understanding of our enemy, which is the Whore. "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2Corinthians 2:11). Those who refuse to separate themselves from the Whore, become partakers of her evil deeds, and are justly worthy of her punishments. "And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

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- "5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Why should the "Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding" (Isaiah 11:2) inspire the Apostle John to record that Babylon the Great is "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5)? The ziggurats of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and the Mayan people of Central America indicate the antiquity of such structures as the Tower of Babel-- built like the Egyptian pyramids in receding tiers, often of sun-baked bricks, e.g., "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar" (Genesis 11:3). These ziggurats normally had shrines at the top, which indicated their use for religious worship. One of the most ancient examples of these ziggurats was discovered in Erech, i.e., "And the beginning of [Nimrod's] kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (10:10), dating more than 3,000 years before Christ. For this reason, Babylon the Great would be viewed as the Fountainhead of Idolatry and Spiritual Harlotry and "ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5), since the time of Noah's Flood.

The very name Babylon is also translated as Babel in the Old Testament. "8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the Earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod [literally, rebellion] the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel [literally, confusion], and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Genesis 10:8-10). Subsequently, the building on a "plain in the land of Shinar" (11:2). of a "city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (11:4); was devised to exalt man and not God. "11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. 12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:11-12). Jehovah's judgment was to scatter and confuse them, because the intent of the builders of the Tower of Babel was not only to exalt the name of man,

i.e., "let us make us a name" (Genesis 11:4), but to refuse obedience to the Almighty's command to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth" (9:1)-- which implies populating and overspreading the Earth-- as can be seen in their concern that they would "be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth" (11:4).

It is typical of a prostitute to know "no shame" (Zephaniah 3:5), inasmuch that Scripture speaks of a "whore's forehead" (Jeremiah 3:3), i.e., "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jeremiah 6:15). John Gill (1809) recorded that some harlots of ancient times impudently advertised their names over their doors, as well as upon their foreheads. But, the name emblazoned *by God* upon the forehead of the Whore, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5), makes simple her identification. "Knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" (Proverbs 14:6). The Greek word *musterion*, which is translated "MYSTERY" (17:5), is capitalized by the translators of the King James Version as part of the title "BABYLON THE GREAT" (17:5); however, it *may* only be an adjective describing the woman's title, e.g., "Babylon the great" (18:2). John Wesley also reminds us, "This very word ["MYSTERY"] was inscribed on the front of the Pope's mitre, till some of the Reformers took public notice of it" (from Wesley's comments on Revelation 17:5 in his "Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament" [1765].) [See our article, "An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics: Or, Roman Catholicism Examined in Light of the Scriptures" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html> --, for a realistic look at Catholicism.] In his classic expose on Romanism, Alexander Hislop (1809-1865), a Scottish Free Church minister, wrote, "There never has been any difficulty in the mind of any enlightened Protestant in identifying the woman 'sitting on seven mountains,' and having on her forehead the name written, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great,' with the Roman apostacy" (from the Introduction to "The Two Babylons: Or, The Papal Worship Proved to be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife" [1853].) It has been a common position of Christians since the Reformation to view Roman Catholicism as a corruption of the Primitive Church, and a torch bearer of the "mystery of iniquity" (2Thessalonians 2:7) that has polluted the world from Ancient Babylon to the present. Henry Alford (1857) saw Roman Catholicism in the BABYLON THE GREAT of this passage: "I do not hesitate therefore, induced mainly by these considerations, which will be confirmed as we proceed step by step in the prophecy, to maintain that interpretation which regards papal and not pagan Rome as pointed out by the harlot of this vision" (from "Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary," IV, p. 705.) [See "The Reformation and the Church of Rome" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.2.html> -- from our in-depth series of articles on "Babylon the Great" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> -- for Martin Luther's perspective of Rome's connection to Babylon.]

What will be the final form of Babylon the Great? We can be sure that the Whore:

- (1) Will be personified as "the False Prophet" (Revelation 16:13). Since Babylon the Great only rides the Beast, i.e., "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast [the Antichrist]" (17:3), she is not to be confused with the Beast himself. Her intimacy with the Beast stems from her need for the governmental power of the Beast to assure her a monopolistic religious franchise, i.e., "as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed" (13:15).
- (2) Will promote the worship of the Antichrist., i.e., Babylon the Great "exerciseth all the power of the first beast [the Antichrist] before him, and causeth the Earth and them which

dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12). Babylon the Great's ingenious device will be forcing the world to take the Mark of the Beast, which assures the participation of every human being in the world in the religion of Babylon the Great in exchange for life and its physical necessities. "16 And [the False Prophet] causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (13:16-17).

(3) Will spiritually fornicate with the kings of the Earth, i.e., "With whom the kings of the Earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:2), because, as with the Antichrist, she needs their help to force her religion upon the world. Her spiritual fornication is that she will champion the violation of the Most High God's Law of Love. "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

(4) Will be blasphemous, i.e., "And [Babylon the Great] had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak... full of names of blasphemy" (13:15; 17:3). "10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart... 21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him" (Proverbs 7:10, 21).

(5) Will be materially rich, i.e., "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4).

(6) Will be a murderer of the True Saints, i.e., "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6).

(7) Will reign over the people of the world, i.e., the "inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication... The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:2, 15).

(8) Will be characterized as a city, i.e., "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the Earth" (Revelation 17:18). Alexander Hislop recorded:

"No other city in the world has ever been celebrated, as the city of Rome has, for its situation on seven hills. Pagan poets and orators, who had not thought of elucidating prophecy, have alike characterised it as 'the seven hilled city.' Thus Virgil refers to it: 'Rome has both become the most beautiful (city) in the world, and alone has surrounded for herself seven heights with a wall.' Propertius, in the same strain, speaks of it (only adding another trait, which completes the Apocalyptic picture) as 'The lofty city on seven hills, which

governs the whole world.' Its 'governing the whole world' is just the counterpart of the Divine statement--'which reigneth over the kings of the earth' (Rev 17:18). To call Rome the city 'of the seven hills' was by its citizens held to be as descriptive as to call it by its own proper name. Hence Horace speaks of it by reference to its seven hills alone, when he addresses, 'The gods who have set their affections on the seven hills.' Martial, in like manner, speaks of 'The seven dominating mountains.' In times long subsequent, the same kind of language was in current use; for when Symmachus, the prefect of the city, and the last acting Pagan Pontifex Maximus, as the Imperial substitute, introduces by letter one friend of his to another, he calls him 'De septem montibus virum'--'a man from the seven mountains,' meaning thereby, as the commentators interpret it, 'Civem Romanum,' 'A Roman Citizen.' Now, while this characteristic of Rome has ever been well marked and defined, it has always been easy to show, that the Church which has its seat and headquarters on the seven hills of Rome might most appropriately be called 'Babylon,' inasmuch as it is the chief seat of idolatry under the New Testament, as the ancient Babylon was the chief seat of idolatry under the Old" (from the Introduction to "The Two Babylons: Or, The Papal Worship Proved to be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife" [1853].)

(9) Will be destroyed by the Antichrist, i.e., "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Revelation 17:16).

(10) Will be judged by the Almighty God. i.e., "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Revelation 17:17).

Consequently, identification of Papal Rome, i.e., Roman Catholicism, with Babylon the Great, and the Pope with the False Prophet, are both historically accurate and prophetically most probable. "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; He will render unto her a recompence" (Jeremiah 51:6). Though the Roman Pontiff has adopted the wait-and-see Gamaliel approach to the June 2000 chartering of the United Religions Initiative (URI), if the Almighty soon chooses to remove His watching and waiting Saints by Pre-Tribulational Rapture, then the events of the ensuing Tribulation Week will take away the necessity of a voluntary, interfaith URI. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Of course, the events of the Tribulation Week will mean that the Pope must mandate the worship of the Antichrist "in the midst of the week" (Daniel 9:27), if he continues to pursue the headship of world worship, namely as the False Prophet.

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- "6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

The refinement of True Christian Character *demands* a suffering that even Babylon the Great has unwittingly provided. "3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 and patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). As distasteful to our flesh as any kind of suffering is, we do not seek tribulation, but neither should we avoid it, if the path of loving obedience directs us under its blows or through its flames. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Colossians 1:24). As the Apostle John said, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1John 3:13); therefore, his reaction to the "woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6) was that when he "saw her, [he] wondered with great admiration [literally, wondered with great wonder]" (17:6). The Greek word *thaumazo* means to wonder with great wonder or astonishment. And, what astonished the Apostle John? That the world would hate the True Saints, was clearly understood by John; therefore, his astonishment must have been that the Great Whore was seen by the world as representing True Religion, *while persecuting* the True Church-- and, it may be added, with the greatest intensity and thoroughness ever allowed by the Almighty. "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10). "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zechariah 13:9).

The intimacy and similarity between the Antichrist and the False Prophet, the "Beast out of the Sea" (Revelation 13:1) and the "Beast out of the Earth" (13:11), "Mystery, Babylon the Great" (17:5) and the "scarlet coloured Beast" (17:3), made confusion between the two likely for the Protestant Reformers, whose vantage forced their conclusion; and especially, their position is understandable, since the False Prophet "exerciseth all the power of the first beast [the Antichrist]" (13:12). *For the present, whether the Roman Pontiff is identified as the False Prophet and not the Antichrist, is of small consequence, since both epitomize the pinnacle of human evil.* "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6). It is a task of mind boggling proportions to recount the depths of savagery inflicted upon the Body of Christ by Babylon the Great under the sponsorship of the Church of Rome. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" (1563) contains eyewitness accounts of Rome's atrocities; and, it continues to be attacked by Roman Catholics as a dishonest and untrustworthy portrayal by John Foxe (1516-1587) of the suffering of the Reformers, as well as vilified as containing grotesque stories of popes and monks with, as they ridicule, a motley succession of witnesses to the truth. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). The histories of the Waldensians, Albigensians, Lollards, Hussites, Huguenots, etc. are only representative of how bloodthirsty Rome may treat her heretics; but, even more, the fires of the Inquisition have touched untold numbers. "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

As history witnesses, it has been the common position of the Protestant Reformers and many noted Christians since the Reformation, to identify the Pope as the Antichrist:

- (1) John Wycliffe (1330-1384) (Precursor of the Reformation):

"Wycliffe had come into communication with the Italian, Spanish, and French dignitaries of the Church, who enjoyed the confidence of the Pope and the cardinals. There was given him an insight into a circle which would not have readily opened to his view in his own country. Other lessons too he had been learning, unpleasant no doubt, but most important. He had not been so far removed from the Papal court but he could see the principles that reigned there, and the motives that guided its policy. If he had not met the Pope he had met his representatives, and he had been able to read the master in his servants; and when he returned to England it was to proclaim on the house-tops what before he had spoken in the closet. Avarice, ambition, hypocrisy, these were the gods that were worshipped in the Roman curia – these were the virtues that adorned the Papal throne. So did Wycliffe proclaim. In his public lectures he now spoke of the Pope as 'Antichrist, the proud worldly priest of Rome...'" (excerpted from "The History of Protestantism" by J. A. Wylie.)

(2) Martin Luther (1483-1546) (Lutheran):

"In another way the decree of the Pope helped to overthrow the system it was meant to uphold. It compelled Luther to go deeper than he had yet ventured to do in his investigations into the Papacy. He now looked at its foundations. The doctrine of indulgences in its sacrilegious and blasphemous form he had believed to be the doctrine of Tetzl only; now he saw it to be the doctrine of Leo of Rome as well. Leo had endorsed Tetzl's and Cajetan's interpretation of the matter. The conclusion to which Luther's studies were tending is indicated in a letter which he wrote about this time to his friend Wenceslaus Link at Nuremberg: 'The conviction is daily growing upon me,' says he, 'that the Pope is Antichrist'" (excerpted from "The History of Protestantism" by J. A. Wylie.)

(3) John Knox (1505-1572) (Scotch Presbyterian):

"Knox preached in the castle, and at times also in the parish church of St. Andrews. In his first sermon in the latter place he struck the key-note of the Reformation in his native land. The Church of Rome, said he, is the Antichrist of Scripture. No movement can rise higher than its fundamental principle, and no doctrine less broad than this which Knox now proclaimed could have sustained the weight of such a Reformation as Scotland needed" (excerpted from "The History of Protestantism" by J. A. Wylie.) Agreeing with Luther, Knox finally concluded that the Papacy was "the very antichrist, and son of perdition, of whom Paul speaks" (from "The Zurich Letters" by John Knox, pg. 199.)

(4) John Calvin (1509-1564) (Presbyterian):

"Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Roman

pontiff Antichrist. But those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself, after whom we speak and whose language we adopt... I shall briefly show that Paul's words (in II Thess. 2) are not capable of any other interpretation than that which applies them to the Papacy" (taken from "Institutes of the Christian Religion" by John Calvin.)

(5) Cotton Mather (1663-1728) (Congregational Theologian):

"The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian Church: and in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness upon them" (from "The Fall of Babylon" by Cotton Mather.)

(6) John Wesley (1703-1791) (Methodist): Speaking of the Papacy, John Wesley wrote,

"He is in an emphatical sense, the Man of Sin, as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled the Son of Perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers... He it is...that exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped...claiming the highest power, and highest honour...claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone" (from "Antichrist and His Ten Kingdoms" by John Wesley, pg. 110.)

(7) Charles Chiniquy (1809-1899) (Former Roman Catholic Priest, speaking of his struggle to find Christ):

"Thus, as the unexpected contradictions of the Holy Fathers to the tenets of my church, and their furious and uncharitable divisions among themselves, were striking me, I plunged deeper and deeper in the deep waters of the Fathers and the Word of God, with the hope of getting rid of the deadly darts which were piercing my Roman Catholic conscience. But, it was in vain. The deeper I went, the more the deadly weapons would stick to the flesh and bone of my soul. How deep was the wound I received from Gregory the Great, one of the most learned Popes of Rome, against the supremacy and universality of the power of the Pope of Rome as taught today, the following extracts from his writings will show: 'I say confidently, Whosoever calls himself Universal Priest, or desires so to be called, is in his pride the forerunner of Antichrist, because, in his pride, he sets himself before the rest'" (from "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" by Charles Chiniquy.)

However, it is certain that even Rome could *not* eradicate all of the godly through martyrdom, for Christ promised that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against" (Matthew 16:18) the True Church; and, though at times, it is difficult to believe otherwise, Rome could *not* martyr but a small portion of the True Saints, for the LORD of the Lampstands has promised Suffering Smyrna, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may

be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life" (Revelation 2:10). "36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the Earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the Promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:36-40). [James Aitken Wylie's "The History of Protestantism" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/James.A.Wylie.html> -- (1878) contains, among many other things, a scholarly account of the martyrdom of the Saints (the Waldensians, Albigensians, Lollards, Hussites, Huguenots, etc.) at the hands of the Church of Rome.]

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- "7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."

The angel of this verse is "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" (17:1). "Wherefore didst thou marvel?" (17:7), he asked. Or, why were you amazed? This is spoken not as a rebuke, but the angel prepares John for the revelation of the "mystery of the woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her" (17:7). The explanation must have been agreeable to the First Century mind of John, for we have it on the word of an angel of God that the clarification was given, i.e., "I will tell thee the mystery" (17:7). Though we may prefer the angel to have given the explicit names of people and organizations that we may glean from current events, i.e., "Tell us plainly" (John 10:24), it was necessary to describe the Antichrist and False Prophet in more general, spiritual terms-- requiring the indwelling Spirit of God to make the specific application to the hearts and minds of the readers at the appropriate time. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Corinthians 2:10).

The Beasts of the Apocalypse:

(1) The four angelic seraphim around the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-9; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4) are the godly "four beasts" (6:1)-- "second beast" (6:3), "third beast" (6:5), and "fourth beast" (6:7)-- who are delegated the task of announcing, i.e., "Come and see" (6:1, 3, 5, 7), the first four Seal Judgments (6:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8), and opening the Second, Third, and Fourth Seal Judgments. The Greek word *zoon* speaks here of living creatures, not wild animals (Greek, *therion*). And, these are the same "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5), i.e., living creatures like a "lion... calf... a man, and... a flying eagle" (Revelation 4:7), of the prophet Ezekiel's vision.

(2) Actual wild animals (*therion*) or "beasts of the Earth" (6:8) are described as part of the instruments used by the Almighty in connection with His killing of one-fourth of the human population of the planet under the Fourth Seal Judgment. "Beasts" (18:13) are also listed as part of the "merchandise" (18:11-12) of the "merchants of the Earth" (18:11), who "were made rich by [Babylon the Great]" (18:15).

(3) Satan is the "Beast that ascendeth out of the Bottomless Pit" (Revelation 11:7), who

martyrs God's Two Witnesses (11:3)-- Moses and Elijah. In this instance, the Greek word *therion* describes Satan like a wild beast. "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the Bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (9:11). However, the Saints are reminded that Satan is a present foe that resides in this world-- coming and going from the Pit-- "whom resist stedfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9), knowing that if you "resist the devil... he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Satan's empowering of the Antichrist is for the selfish end that he will thereby gain the worship that he so fervently desires. "And they worshipped the Dragon ["the Great Dragon... that Old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Revelation 12:9)] which gave power unto the Beast [the Antichrist]: and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

(4) In the overwhelming majority of instances, the Antichrist is *the* Beast of the Apocalypse (13:1-4, 12, 14-15, 17, 18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:3, 7-8, 11-13, 16-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10). "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1). When distinguishing the difference between the person of the Antichrist and the Antichrist system that produces him, *the* Antichrist will be a specific human at a future time; whereas, he will arise out of the religious, political, economic, and social power structure of the world, which is the Antichrist system. "And the Beast [the Antichrist] which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the Dragon [Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2)] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:2). Keep in mind that whatsoever portion of this world, which is willfully kept in disobedience of King Jehovah, is the world or Antichrist system of Satan. "15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1John 2:15-16).

(5) The significant and twin beast of the Antichrist is the False Prophet. "And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the Earth; and he had two horns like a Lamb, and he spake as a Dragon" (Revelation 13:11). The False Prophet embodies the desire for worship that Satan has always possessed since his fall. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13). Satan's imitation of the Trinity is the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet" (16:13). The certain doom of the Antichrist and the False Prophet is that they will be "cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20) at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, while Satan's final judgment will be held in abeyance until his Post-Millennial Revolt is crushed by King Jesus. "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever

and ever" (20:10). Hallelujah!

- "8 The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the Earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Unlike the Elect, those that "dwell on the Earth shall wonder" (17:8) after the Beast. Their "names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world" (17:8). God gave them over that "they should believe a lie" (2Thessalonians 2:11) "because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved" (2:10). The angel proceeds to describe to John the "Beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (17:8). What kind of Beast can be both "is not, and yet is" (17:8), as well as "was" (17:8)?

The Beast That Was, and Is Not, and Yet Is

(1) Satan is the Beast that "was" (17:8), and as Apollyon, he but again "shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit" (17:8). This Beelzebub (Matthew 10:25), the so-called Lord of the Flies-- "the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub [Hebrew, lord of the fly] the god of Ekron?" (2Kings 1:3)-- though he is as a "roaring lion, [that] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8) and as a "serpent" (Genesis 3:4) that did "bruise [the] heel" (3:15) of the Son of Man on the Cross of Calvary, when Christ was "wounded for our transgressions [and] was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5), at that time the LORD Our Substitute did mortally "bruise [the] head" (Genesis 3:15) of Satan, the creaturely Beast. This leaves the wild Beast in a wounded and raging condition, requiring the meek Saints to "submit [themselves] to God [and to] resist the devil [knowing that only then] he will flee from you" (James 4:7), until he shall finally "go into perdition" (Revelation 17:8). Perdition is the Greek word *apoleia*, meaning destruction and utter ruin, which is the exquisite destruction designed by the Almighty to divorce the Devil from interfering with the happiness of the Godly, while preventing Satan's eternal soul from experiencing anything but the "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

(2) The Antichrist is the Beast that "is not" (17:8)-- at least, at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse. This second person in the Trinity of Evil is the Counterfeit Christ that triumphantly enters the Tribulation Week as a Messiah-like peacemaker, speaking "great swelling words" (Jude 16), to "confirm the covenant with many [but not with all, i.e., the recently awakened Tribulation Saints] for one week" (Daniel 9:27). The character of the Antichrist can be seen in the first four Seal Judgments. He will imitate Christ the Conqueror-- Who "ascended on high... [and] led captivity captive... [to give] gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also" (Psalm 68:18)-- when he, the arch Son of Satan, goes forth "conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2) in the First Seal Judgment, gaining for himself world domination through diplomacy. Antichrist the Little Horn (Daniel 7:8) will mimic Christ the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) in the Second Seal Judgment, when he

takes True "Peace from the Earth... [with] a great sword" (Revelation 6:4), no doubt to establish the peace of no further opposition to himself. Antichrist the Lawless One-- "then shall that Wicked [literally, the Lawless One] be revealed" (2Thessalonians 2:8)-- will copy the Abundant Christ-- Whose rain falls "on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45)-- in the Third Seal Judgment, when his policies and leadership introduce the world to the "black horse" (Revelation 6:5) of famine, sharing the abundance of his administration. In the Fourth Seal Judgment, the Man of Sin (2Thessalonians 2:3) will bless the world with "Death, and Hell" (6:8) in his abortive attempt to counterfeit for his people the life that comes only from Christ the Life (John 14:6).

(3) The Antichrist system of the world, i.e., the religious, political, economic, and social power structure of the world, is the Beast that "yet is" (17:8). We are informed through the Apostles John's First Epistle that even in the First Century there were "many antichrists" (1John 2:18). This system of antichrists has spanned the ages of humankind, for the human antithesis of God has always been the Antichrist. "The fool [Hebrew, nabal-- signifying the Arch Fool, Antichrist] hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). The world system that spawns the Antichrist has always been at enmity with the Saints-- only variously employing the crafty means of Vanity Fair Friendship to confuse and disarm unwary Pilgrims. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). Why does the Antichrist system of the world have such animosity to the Holy Jehovah? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). Until the miracle of the New Birth begets a renewed heart and mind in the life of one of Satan's former serfs, the Royal Law of Love will be odious; and, the Antichrist world system will continue to persuade its benighted masses of the indispensability, and yea further, of the supreme good of self-love-- without the slightest hint of our overpowering necessity of seeking, trusting, loving, and obeying the Living God. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

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- "9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

In the day of the Apostle John, the city of Rome was famed for its situation of encompassing seven hills, i.e., Capitolinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Coelius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis, as noticed by Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Claudian, Starius, Martial, and others. But, though this may draw the reader to correctly identify the "woman" (17:9) with Papal Rome, the identification of the "seven heads" (17:9) is that they "are seven mountains" (17:9). Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a "great image" (Daniel 2:31) makes reference to a "stone [that] was cut out without hands [Jesus Christ, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords], which smote the image [human government]... became a Great Mountain [Christ's Millennial Kingdom], and filled the whole Earth" (2:34, 35). Using this understanding, the "seven mountains" (17:9) are seven kingdoms or temporal dominions upon "which the woman sitteth" (17:9). Seven, being the number of perfection or completeness, i.e.,

"on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day" (Genesis 2:2), the "seven mountains" (17:9) represent the totality of kingdoms and empires, which the "woman" (17:9)-- Babylon the Great-- seduces and manipulates.

Scripture reminds us that if you will not "rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18), then the resulting apostasy, i.e., Greek, *apostasia*, falling away, as seen in the Professed Church's imitation of the world's pattern of marriage-then-divorce, i.e., "And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?" (5:20), will cause Professing Christians to commit adultery against God and their former spouse. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:32). The door will then be wide open to embrace the Great Harlot. Why? Because, "he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). Infidelity to the "wife of thy covenant" (Malachi 2:14) places you one step closer to committing spiritual adultery with Babylon the Great. The "MOTHER OF HARLOTS" (Revelation 17:5) is the Spiritual Harlot that has beguiled mankind since ancient Babylon, and she will continue her siren call and the spiritual ruination of Professing Christians until her soon judgment. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the Great Transgression" (Psalm 19:13).

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- "10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

The "seven kings" (17:10) represent seven successive kingdoms or empires, i.e., Egypt (1600-1200 BC), Assyria (900-600 BC), Babylon (606-536 BC), Medo-Persia (536-330 BC), Greece (330-146 BC), Rome (200 BC-400 AD), and Revived Rome, which seems to be the European Union, that was formed from the older European Economic Community (1957-1958) through the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), which was enacted on November 1st 1993. Though the first six kingdoms fit the historical pattern, the lengthy gap between the Roman Empire and the Revived Roman Empire takes more effort on the part of the reader to interpret, but it was just such a stretch that the unbelieving Jews did not make to accept that the Messiah would make a first appearance-- to be rejected, abused, and killed, i.e., "He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken" (Isaiah 53:8).-- then, to return a second time after a significant space of time in triumph and judgment. "34 The people answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? who is this Son of Man?... 37 But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, LORD, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (John 12:34, 37-38). In fact, even the early Jewish Christians were not initially clear about the necessity of a Second Advent for Christ, when they asked the Risen Messiah, "LORD, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

"Five are fallen" (17:10) refers to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece having come and gone-- the zenith of their power already abated. "For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown

endure to every generation?" (Proverbs 27:24). Since the Apostle John penned this Apocalypse around 95 AD, Rome was the "one [that] is" (17:10), while the Revived Roman Empire was the one that "is not yet come" (17:10). The longevity of the Revived Roman Empire will be short-lived, for "when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (17:10). Even as the Devil knows that "he hath but a short time" (12:12), the seventh king must sense a need for haste to accomplish Satan's will. "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths" (Isaiah 59:7). Again, it is certain that "he must continue a short space" (17:10), for it has been decreed by the Spirit of Christ through the Apostle John. "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

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- "11 And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

At this point in the Divine Narrative, our analysis of the "Beast that was, and is not" (17:11)-- see our comments on verse 8-- is focused upon the coming Antichrist, i.e., "even he is the eighth" (17:11). The implication is that the Antichrist will come out of the seventh kingdom, i.e., "is of the seven" (17:11). Though the "seven kings" (17:10) represent successive dominions, the Antichrist will uniquely be the consummation of the seventh kingdom. Antichrist's designation as the eighth identifies him as the epitome of defilement, for:

(1) on the eighth day, the male child was circumcised, i.e., "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:3), since the previous seven days his mother was in her separation and uncleanness, i.e., "If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days" (12:2),

(2) the eighth day after his healing from leprosy, the healed leper was to offer sacrifice for his ceremonial cleansing, i.e., "And [the newly healed leper] shall bring [the required sacrifice] on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD" (14:23), and

(3) a woman was not considered ceremonially clean of her menstrual discharge, until she had offered "two turtles, or two young pigeons" (15:29). Even so, the Man of Sin "goeth into perdition" (17:11)-- that place of Unending Defilement-- just as his "father the Devil" (John 8:44), for "like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9).

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- "12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast."

What are the "ten horns" (17:12)? The Spirit of God has revealed that they "are ten kings" (17:12). The interpretation that the "ten kings" (17:12) represent the European Union is appended with the thought that the Antichrist's global kingdom will ultimately-- for in the Apostle John's time, they had "received no kingdom as yet" (17:12)-- metrically divide the world into ten parts. "41 And whereas

thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken" (Daniel 2:41-42). By comparison, the feet have ten toes, which act jointly for the benefit of their ruling body. This seems to have been the mind of the LORD, when He gave the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the "great image" (2:31) to Daniel, to designate that the final form of human government would have the strength of the Ancient Roman Empire's "legs of iron" (2:33), but its power would be diluted to have the human weakness of feet of clay, in that the feet and toes are represented as "part of potters' clay, and part of iron" (2:41). "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of Him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of Him that framed it, He had no understanding?" (Isaiah 29:16).

The Ancient Roman Empire stretched from England through Spain to Northern Africa during its nearly six centuries (100 BC to 476 AD) of marching across the then known world of Western civilization. Most of Europe, Greece, and Asia Minor fell under the control of the iron of Roman peace {*Pax Romana*). Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were added to the Empire, before it reached its greatest extent under the emperor Trajan (c. 117 AD). Roman law, coinage, civil engineering, roads, and communication welded together diverse peoples into the stability and security that the Living God providentially used to rapidly diffuse the message of Christianity throughout the world. "10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go" (Acts 25:10-12). By comparison, the European Union (EU) is presently (circa 2002) composed of fifteen nations, i.e., 1950: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; 1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain and Portugal; 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden. There is preparation for the accession of thirteen eastern and southern European countries, i.e., Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Turkey. The EU projects to the world an image of "stability, peace, and economic prosperity." "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

What is the meaning that the "ten horns" (17:12) shall "receive power as kings one hour with the Beast" (17:12)? The "ten horns" (17:12) point to a global expansion of the EU format with ten regional governors under the Antichrist. The final form of human government before the Return of the LORD Jesus Christ will be with the Antichrist, but only for "one hour" (17:12). What does "one hour" (17:12) signify? Our comments on the Promise made to the Church of Philadelphia, i.e., "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10), are repeated:

"The 'Hour of Temptation' (3:10) is equivalent to 15 days, if Daniel's Seventieth Week (1 week) equals 2,520 days. One hour would be 1/168 of a week or .0059523 of a week, which is 15 days. This would be the time equivalent to Tishri 1 to Tishri 15. If the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church occurs at perhaps the midnight hour on Tishri 1, then

approximately 8 to 9 days (depending on how you count it) would be left in the Tribulation Week, which would then extend through Tishri 9. This would allow for the pouring out of about one Vial a day during the Seven Vial Judgments. Armageddon lasts 5 days from Tishri 10 (the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ) to Tishri 14-- the day before Tishri 15 (the Inauguration of the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ on Earth). 9 days (for the Vial Judgments) plus 5 days (for Armageddon) equals 14 days, which lacks only one day to complete the 'Hour of Temptation' (Revelation 3:10). That one day lacking is Tishri 15." [See our article, "The Appointed Time" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, to see how the Seven Feasts of Israel of Leviticus 23 correspond to upcoming prophetic events. Also, our article, "The Wisdom of More Than One Rapture" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/More.Than.One.Rapture.html> --, demonstrates the possibility of both a Pre-Tribulational and Pre-Wrath Rapture.]

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- "13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast."

Each of the "ten kings" (17:12) will be prepared to administrate their respective domains in concert with the Son of Perdition. "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast" (17:13). Satan hopes to promote the success of pan-European cooperation, i.e., the European Union, as a model for future global governance through the Antichrist-- capitalizing on the world's yearning for material well-being, as well as their fear of instability, conflict, and annihilation. "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness" (Psalm 52:7). Man is inexcusable in choosing the alternative of Antichrist, for the Almighty has given mankind the understanding that:

(1) God exists, ought to be trusted, and rewards those who do so confide in Him, i.e., "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6),

(2) Man has sinned not only against God, but his neighbour, i.e., "14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves: 15 which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14-15), and

(3) He offers forgiveness to rebels who repent, for even an Angel will ultimately herald the Good News to *all* surviving rebels shortly *before* the KING of Kings returns, i.e., "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6); further, accomplishing the fact that "this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and [only] then shall the End come" (Matthew 24:14), and thus, authenticating that the "grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

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- "14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is LORD

of Lords, and KING of Kings: and they that are with Him are Called, and Chosen, and Faithful."

What madness! "These shall make war with the Lamb" (17:14). How unthinkable that man should fight against God! "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30). It is infinitely easy for the High and Lofty One to terminate such ants as wicked men are. "By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed" (Job 4:9). But, have the Professed Saints realized that all sin is warfare against God? "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). And, have we learned that Jesus Christ was "manifested to take away our sins" (1John 3:5), if we will actively trust Him to be, do, and accomplish in us all that He is and is able to do. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [See our article, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to explore our sanctification through His Promises.]

How the best conceived weapons can prosper against God is preposterous, for the "Oracles of God" (Romans 3:2) need only to briefly assert that the "Lamb shall overcome them" (17:14). If "no weapon that is formed against [the servants of the LORD] shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17), how much more inconceivable that the pots should rise up to outwit and subdue the Potter! "2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it... 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jeremiah 18:2-4, 6).

His Name is "LORD of Lords, and KING of Kings" (17:14); and, since this truly declares His position, He leaves to the human dramatist the need to paint pictures with words, canvas, celluloid, and computer generated graphics to persuade us that a Being with such a name will deftly conquer the mightiest human foe that can be conceived. "Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). His very name of "LORD of Lords, and KING of Kings" (17:14) assures us that He must conquer the "ten kings" (17:12), because when He speaks, it must come to pass. "6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto Thee, O LORD; Thou art great, and Thy Name is great in might. 7 Who would not fear Thee, O King of Nations? for to Thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto Thee" (Jeremiah 10:6-7).

Notice that the King's attendants are so honored that they would appear with Him as His "Called, and Chosen, and Faithful" (17:14). The Resurrected and Raptured Saints are His "Called" (17:14), who have the honour of conquering with the Conqueror. "5 Let the Saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; 7 to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; 8 to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His Saints. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 149:5-9). To be elevated to this honour, is the predestiny of the "Chosen" (17:14), for the LORD Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). Though we *must* aspire and exert our utmost to be His "Faithful" (17:14), it is He alone that makes us faithful, for "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who

also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24).

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- "15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the Whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The same angel that began this chapter's narrative describing the "judgment of the Great whore" (17:1), said to John, the son of Zebedee, "The waters which thou sawest, where the Whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17:15). Unless the context of Scripture demands a figurative interpretation, we are to receive It's Words as literally as we would talking to one another; but here, we are specifically told that the "waters" (17:15) are to be non-literally interpreted as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17:15). It is a fearful thing to be given over to a "reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28) to be accounted as one of the many upon whom the "Whore sitteth" (17:15). "7 And it was given unto [the Antichrist] to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the Earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:7-8). May such reminders of the fearfulness of the "reprobate [Greek, *adokimos*] mind" (Romans 1:28) should cause us to lean upon the LORD to keep us from the Great Falling Away. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [Greek, *adokimos*]" (1Corinthians 9:27).

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- "16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

The "ten kings" (17:12) will turn against their paramour, i.e., "these shall hate the Whore" (17:16). The selfishness that Satan cultivates in his own to promote rebellion against Jehovah, causes the "ten kings" (17:12) to despise the Whore, for they can truly love only themselves. How unlike True Love, which "seeketh not her own" (1Corinthians 13:5)! Once Babylon the Great has been targeted by the Beast's hatred, he-- in concert with the "ten kings" (17:12)-- will isolate, abuse, and spoil the Great Whore, i.e., "make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh" (17:16), in the tradition of a cruel, invading army, raping and pillaging what they have come to destroy. "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished" (Isaiah 13:16). When they have finished with her, they will "burn her with fire" (17:16). However, neither they nor the Whore have anything left, but a future of Unending Destruction. "For Tophet [literally, a place of fire, where infants were sacrificed to Molech] is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isaiah 30:33). The destruction of the False Prophet, even at this point, will be to the Religious System of the Whore, and particularly to City of Rome-- see verse 18-- but, it is the LORD Jesus Christ that will have the ultimate honour of capturing alive both the Antichrist and the False Prophet to Eternally Destroy them in the Lake of Fire. "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20). And, that

destruction will be "world without end" (Ephesians 3:21). "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44). If I AM made the burning bush *not* to be consumed before Moses, then He will yet again make the Whore's destruction unending. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

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- "17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the Words of God shall be fulfilled."

The Living God plays His creation like a symphony orchestra, and even His enemies "fulfill His will" (17:17). Most memorable of misjudgments was the Satanic Conspiracy to crucify the LORD Jesus Christ, who had to die in the fashion He did, i.e., "that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 19:24, 28); but, "none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory" (1Corinthians 2:8). Luke further affirms the lunacy of the Most Wicked Action "against the LORD, and against His Anointed [Hebrew, mashiyach-- Messiah]" (Psalm 2:2): "27 For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy Counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28). In the context of Revelation 17, these cohorts of the Antichrist destroy the Whore-- which is the Roman Harlot, the world religion of Satan, the global religion of the False Prophet. "Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked" (Jeremiah 30:23). In particular, their destruction is aimed against "that great city" (17:18) of Rome. This collaborative effort will continue "until the Words of God shall be fulfilled" (17:17).

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- "18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the Kings of the Earth."

The greatest clue to the identity of the "woman which thou sawest" (17:18), is that she is "that great city" (17:18)-- of Rome. Religiously and historically, no other city has so reigned "over the Kings of the Earth" (17:18). Present attempts to discount the role of the Papacy as part of the system of the Beast-- incorporating Ecumenical Christianity and probably the United Religions Initiative-- range from incredulity that any could think such a thought against the Vicar of Christ to certainty that some impostor will ultimately misrepresent Catholicism. "9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies... 45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD" (Jeremiah 51:9, 45). But, if the Spirit of God cannot awaken such understanding of the Babylonian character of Roman Catholicism, then it will be most certainly impossible to properly understand the events that must shortly come to pass. "Consider what I say; and the LORD give thee understanding in all things" (2Timothy 2:7). [See our "Babylon the Great" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> -- series of articles, detailing not just the development of Roman Catholicism from Babylon (Part 2) --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.2.html> --, but Babylon's involvement with the Protestants in the Ecumenical Movement (Part 3) --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.3.html> --, and the inclusion of all religions in the United Religions Initiative (Part 6) --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.6.html> ---.]

Chapter 18: The Destruction of Babylon the Great

- "1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from Heaven, having great power; and the Earth was lightened with his glory."

The previous chapter ended with a short statement that the Antichrist and his governmental system of Ten Horns "shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (17:16). The angel, which began the discourse of Chapter 17, promised to "shew unto [the Apostle John] the judgment of the Great Whore that sitteth upon many waters" (17:1); but, to do so, he had first to give John a better understanding in that chapter of the identity of the Whore, the Beast, and the Ten Horns, i.e., "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (17:7). The distinction between Chapter 17 and 18 is that the last chapter revealed to us that *the Almighty will use the agency of the Antichrist* to accomplish His Judgment of the religious system of Babylon the Great, i.e., "16 And the Ten Horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For **God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His Will**, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the Words of God shall be fulfilled" (17:16-17), while Chapter 18 makes no mention of the agency of the Antichrist, but presents the Judgment of Babylon the Great as coming solely from Jehovah. The focus in Chapter 18 is on the Judgment that the LORD God gives upon "that great city Babylon, that mighty city" (18:10) of Rome, the capital city of Babylon the Great, i.e., the City of Seven Hills (17:9). Babylon's Judgment will yield the collateral damage of cutting off the lucrative commerce that we learn that Babylon feeds upon and controls, i.e., the "merchants of the Earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (18:3). After all, Babylon the Great seeks her ease, aggrandizement, and glory now; and, not in the world to come. To "eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19) appeals to Babylon's "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16), which Jesus turned down when Satan tempted Him. "And [Satan] saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:9).

"Another angel" (18:1) refers to another (Greek, *allos*, another of the same kind) angel than the angel, which instructed John in the previous chapter. These blessed angelic beings are superior both in power, i.e., "having great power" (18:1), and understanding to man, for man was created a "little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8:5). But, mankind, who has experienced the Grace of Salvation and the vicissitudes of Sanctifying Faith, has come to the side of the Almighty in a way altogether unknown to these "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:14). For this reason, the angels in Heaven have the greatest awe of the Gospel program, because the Gospel speaks of the interest of the exalted Saviour in the eternal welfare of the lowliest of sinners. "Unto whom [the prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1Peter 1:12). The same kind of angel, by whom the "Earth was lightened with his glory" (18:1), condescends to "minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation"

(Hebrews 1:14).

- "2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

The very name Babylon brings to mind the mad attempt of building the Tower of Babel, "whose top may reach unto heaven... [to] make [for the builders] a name" (Genesis 11:4)-- glorifying the builders and *not* God. Or, we could very well imagine Nebuchadnezzar's "image of gold" (Daniel 3:1), towering 90 feet above the "plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon" (3:1)-- commanded to be worshipped by the Babylonian king, for Daniel's dream declared Nebuchadnezzar to be the "head of gold" (2:38). Again, the word Babylon represented the wicked and futile attempt to exalt man and *not* God. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22). But possibly, the most enduring representation of the concept of Babylon, is the Pontifex Maximus seated on the Papal Throne of the Roman city of Seven Hills, i.e., "seven mountains, on which the woman [Babylon the Great] sitteth" (Revelation 17:9). When that mighty and glorious angel cries out, "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen" (18:2), then all those who love the LORD will surely rejoice. "1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power, unto the LORD our God: 2 for True and Righteous are His Judgments: for He hath judged the Great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Revelation 19:1-3). [See our "Babylon the Great" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> -- series of articles for a history of Babylon the Great until her Judgment.]

What did the LORD mean that Babylon the Great "is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (18:2)? This indicates that mighty Babylon has been divinely, officially, and finally abandoned to its Judgment, cutting off the invitation of Salvation to all those taking refuge within her treacherous walls. "Come out of her, My people," cries Jehovah in the fourth verse of this chapter, eliminating the possibility that the faintest glimmer of Elect Life will any longer remain in the Doomed City, i.e., "the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel" (Exodus 11:7). Only that which remains in the Seven Hilled City are "devils... every foul spirit... [and] every unclean and hateful bird" (18:2). And, with all respect to "every unclean and hateful bird" (18:2), they most likely represent the ceremonially unclean birds of the Old Testament, e.g., vultures, ravens, etc. (Leviticus 11:13-20), that will be present to feast on the carnage of the decimated City of Rome. Since the wicked human occupants of Babylon the Great's epicenter will be completely decimated-- though the False Prophet will *not* be allowed to expire on his Papal Throne, that he may be personally captured alive by Jehovah Jesus and cast with the Antichrist into the Lake of Fire (19:20)-- only "devils... [and] every foul spirit" (18:2) are left in their "habitation... hold... [and] cage" (18:3). "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19).

- "3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the Earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the Earth are waxed rich

through the abundance of her delicacies."

It is instructive that "all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the Earth have committed fornication with" (18:3) Babylon the Great. What entity today has such a global reach, that has spanned so much of the Christian era, and has been so responsible for counterfeiting the Christian religion in its presentation to the world of the "faith in Christ" (Acts 24:24) than the Roman Catholic Church? The evil of Babylon's spiritual intoxication is proliferated through her comprehensive reach of humankind. "15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! 16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory" (Habakkuk 2:15-16). Is it any wonder that the "merchants of the Earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (18:3), since both have immensely benefited by their intimate cohabitation and correlation? For example, Pope Nicolas V (1447-1455) authorized the King of Portugal to war on the African people, take their property and enslave them; and, Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) ordered civil rulers to deliver up all heretics to the Church, and thereby forfeit their property and wealth (from "Halley's Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary" [1965], p. 779).

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- "4 And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Again, before the "Judge of All the Earth" (Genesis 18:25) brings His wrath upon Babylon the Great, He miraculously and audibly calls out "from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4). Since the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the Road to Damascus, who has heard of such a miraculous call to the Elect for Deliverance and Safety? "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). When Saul first began to *obey* the Jesus Whom he was persecuting, *then* he was truly Christian. "4 And [Saul of Tarsus] fell to the Earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the LORD said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the LORD said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:4-6). Likewise, if any that are Elect obediently answer the call to flee the Roman city, then they will be spared, as Lot was when he fled Sodom. "6 And [God] turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2Peter 2:6-7).

"Come out of her, My people" (18:4) coincides with the timing of a Pre-Wrath Rapture, in that before Babylon the Great is judged and the "Vials of the Wrath of God" (16:1) are then poured out in the few remaining days before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, God mercifully provides a "way to escape" (1Corinthians 10:13). If the United States of America can be equated in type to the Judgment of Babylon the Great, then a Pre-Tribulational Rapture would conceivably occur before such a Judgment. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come Up Hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (4:1). [See our article, "The Wisdom of More Than One Rapture" ---

<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/More.Than.One.Rapture.html> --, to see the possibility of *both* a Pre-Tribulational Rapture and Pre-Wrath Rapture, remembering that *both* Enoch and Elijah were raptured.] Notice also that a Pre-Wrath Rapture would be a Second "Come Up Hither" (11:12), which occurs when the "Two Witnesses" (11:3)-- Moses and Elijah-- are resurrected and raptured. The concept that God would reveal Himself as a God of Mercy before He would disclose Himself as a God of Judgment, rings true at this time, as it did with Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot acknowledged God's mercy, when he told the angels, "Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life" (Genesis 19:19). [See our editorial, "What is Mercy?" --- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_What.Is.Mercy.html --, for a better understanding of the nature of the mercy that God offers to us in Salvation and Rapture before He executes His Judgment.]

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- "5 For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

The LORD commands the Elect inhabitants of Babylon the Great, "Come out [Greek, *exelthete*] of her" (18:4). John the Beloved seamlessly transitions to a divine commentary concerning the conduct of those who do not leave, e.g., "her sins have reached unto Heaven" (18:5). God has been taking careful account of all the sins of Babylon the Great, and this verse reminds us that the knowledge of her sins is remembered by the Almighty. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Why are Babylon's iniquities "remembered" (18:5) at this time? They are recalled because the Divine Mind knows that this is the most prudent time for that knowledge to be exercised against Babylon the Great. "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1). In our finite exuberance, we would move the All Wise God to immediately pull up and judge all the False Wheat that masquerades as True Believers, but the LORD of the Harvest overrules us, since more harm than good will come, if we do not wait until His appointed time of Judgment. "28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto Him, Wilt Thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But He said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the Tares [False Wheat, i.e., False Professors of Christianity], ye root up also the Wheat [True Professors] with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the Wheat into My barn" (Matthew 13:28-30).

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- "6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."

Retribution for sin is the theme of this chapter, i.e., "Reward her even as she rewarded you" (18:6). Though the Saints take delight in the mercy of God granted to themselves and others, God's offer of Salvation must be a limited time offer or the Devil himself would eventually repent himself back into the presence of God. "Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). With the understanding that Divine Retribution for sin must be made, if the moral agent does not accept the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, then we have been told in advance that this is the time for Babylon the Great to pay for her sins. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose Judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2Peter 2:3). A double measure of Judgment, i.e., "double unto her double according

to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double" (18:6), is commanded, to indelibly imprint upon the universe of moral agents that unrepented sin is a heavier load than the "pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

Not only is this the time of God's Judgment of the Whore, but we are commanded to cooperatively judge or "reward [Greek, *apodote*, recompense] her" (18:6) for her sins, instead of seeking her Salvation. "5 Let the Saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; 7 to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; 8 to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 to execute upon them the Judgment written: this honour have all His Saints. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 149:5-9). How do the Saints accomplish the rewarding of "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5)? Prayer is God's appointed means for our participation in the Judgment of the Mother of Harlots. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). And, that prayer for Babylon's appointed Judgment should be offered up even now. "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezekiel 36:37). Dear LORD, judge Babylon the Great; but in the meantime, redeem as many as possible from her clutches! "22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22, 23). [See our article, "An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html> --, for assistance in reaching Roman Catholics, but remember that the only debate that actually converts the gainsayer-- "the servant of the LORD must not strive *<as in a war of words>*; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2Timothy 2:24)-- must come from the Holy Spirit as Catholics are prayerfully presented the Word of God.]

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- "7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

It comes as no surprise that Roman Catholicism celebrates the Queen of Heaven as being Mary the mother of Jesus, for we have already established to our satisfaction that Babylon the Great embodies the Church of Rome. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). But not coincidentally, Scripture identifies the Queen of Heaven as a pagan goddess, most likely Ashtaroth (literally, means *a star*), who was worshipped for fertility, especially in Phoenicia. "And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:13). Ashtaroth was known as Ishtar, the goddess of sexual love in Mesopotamia, and as Aphrodite, the goddess of love, fertility, and beauty in Greece. The Queen of Heaven was offered worship, for example:

- (1) "to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven" (Jeremiah 44:17), which may be compared to the burning of votive candles when Roman Catholics pray to Mary,
- (2) "to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven" (7:18), which can be analogized to the sacrifice of the bread (host) in the Catholic Mass, and
- (3) "to pour out drink offerings unto [the Queen of Heaven]" (44:18), which can also be likened to the offering of the wine in the Catholic Mass. Just as the unwilling mind could never see such a connection, a willing heart and mind could easily understand the correlation. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the Doctrine" (John 7:17).

Without speculation, Scripture assures us that for those who know how to exploit the Roman Catholic system, the wealth of the Catholic Church is immense, i.e., "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously" (18:7). God's Judgment of Babylon the Great extends only towards those who for whatever reason refuse to leave the culture of lies and deception that is the Church of Rome. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17). It is instructive that the Saints are enjoined, "So much torment and sorrow give her" (18:7), revealing that they will participate in judging Babylon the Great, i.e., specifically through prayer which directs the Almighty to judge her. "Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers" (Ezekiel 20:4). The Spirit of God reasons through the Scriptures that the willful union with a harlot brings the same Judgment upon both, i.e., "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh" (1Corinthians 6:16). The self-satisfied, willfulness of the crime of Babylon the Great is represented by her statement, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (17:7), which was the same statement made by Ancient Babylon before her destruction, i.e., "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it" (Isaiah 47:7). Old Testament Civil Law for the nation of Israel mandated a particular kind of death, i.e., execution by burning, for a whore, who was the daughter of a priest-- because it scandalized, disgraced, and reproached the True Religion that the whorish daughter was misrepresenting. "And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire" (Leviticus 21:9). Perhaps, this is the reason that the Almighty directs the Judgment of the Great Whore, whose papal leadership counterfeits Christianity to the world, to be burning by fire. "And the Ten Horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Revelation 17:16).

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- "8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the LORD God who judgeth her."

The swiftness of Jehovah's Judgment is such that "her plagues come in one day" (18:8). "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7). What some may agonize as an eternity of waiting is but the "twinkling of an eye" (1Corinthians 15:52) in the sight of God. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Peter 3:8). Of course, this is not to teach that every prophetic reference to a day equals a thousand years or vice versa, but that the LORD "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9), i.e., *He tarries for our benefit*. When the time comes for the Judgment of Babylon the Great, it will come "in one day, death, and mourning, and famine" (18:8) compacted together with bewildering speed. "She shall be utterly burned [Greek, *katakaio*] with fire" (18:8). *Katakaio* implies that Babylon the Great will be *consumed* by fire. Because the "mighty God of Jacob" (Genesis 49:24) is almighty, He judges the Whore in this fashion, i.e., "strong is the LORD God Who judgeth her" (18:8). "Who is this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle" (Psalm 24:8).

- "9 And the kings of the Earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,"

Historically, the Protestant nations, e.g., England (Anglican Church), Denmark (Evangelical Lutheran Church), Finland (Finnish Orthodox Church), Norway (Norwegian State Church), etc., joined themselves to religion through established state churches; but, it has been through the global outreach of the Ecumenical Movement, in particular, through the World Council of Churches, that Babylon the Great encouraged the union of non-Catholic churches-- and, ultimately with herself-- without yet officially joining them. [See our analysis of the Ecumenical Movement in Part 3 --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.3.html> -- of our Babylon the Great series, and our conclusions about Roman Catholicism's ultimate union with what used to be Protestantism and all religions of the world in Part 6 of the same series.] "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished" (Proverbs 11:21). But, the relationship of those that control the governments of the world with the Great Whore has been illicit in that they have adopted or tolerated her religion, i.e., "committed fornication and lived deliciously with her" (18:9), in exchange for the material benefit that comes from her control of the benighted masses. "13 So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, 14 I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. 15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. 16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. 18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. 19 For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: 20 he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed" (Proverbs 7:13-20). Accordingly, they "shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning" (18:9). But, why will the "kings of the Earth" (18:9) mourn over the loss of Babylon the Great, if they are responsible for her destruction, i.e., the "Ten Horns which thou sawest upon the Beast, these shall hate the Whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (17:16)? The suicidal irrationality of killing the system that feeds you demonstrates that the end of the Tribulation Week is very near, for "if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). The continued insane insistence of the Antichrist to still be worshipped as God in the Temple, when everything has obviously fallen apart, fuels this deranged behavior. "So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4).

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- "10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy Judgment come."

Why do the kings of the Earth stand "afar off for the fear of her torment" (18:10)? If the judgment by the Ten Horns involves, for example, a thermonuclear device detonating upon "that great city Babylon" (18:10), then it would be understandable that there would be concern about getting too close to Ground Zero. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11). The very idea that man has the capacity to deliver such ruin "in one hour" (18:10) was not apparent until the first weapon of mass destruction, an atomic bomb of 6 kilograms of plutonium, was detonated in the Trinity Test of the Manhattan Project at Alamogordo, New Mexico with a force of 20,000 tons of TNT at 5:30 AM on July 16th 1945-- billowing 50,000 to 70,000 feet into the stratosphere and exposing a family 20 miles away from Ground Zero to dangerous levels of radiation from nuclear fallout. On August 6th 1945, a fissionable explosion of uranium-235 over Hiroshima,

Japan, and three days later, another fission bomb employing plutonium-239 was detonated over Nagasaki, killing over 100,000 people in both events, thus, precipitating the end of WW2. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the Elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). [See our article, "For the Elect's Sake" --- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html> --, to see the thesis developed that a Merciful God will shorten the Tribulation Week.] The annihilation of Babylon the Great by fire, in particular, the city of Rome, is easily possible in this 21st Century. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8).

The question is not *if* God is capable of such destruction, but *why but Judgment* would God allow man such power? "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). "Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do Judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her" (Jeremiah 51:47). What wisdom God has shown in His Judgment of Babylon the Great! And, how wise is God? Scripture advises us that Jesus Christ is the "Wisdom of God" (1Corinthians 1:24), that the "foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1:25), and that the "world by wisdom knew not God" (1:21). Since any truly wise understanding or action must have emanated from God, i.e., "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights" (James 1:17), then the sum total of all truly wise actions or pronouncements of man can only be a sampling of the Infiniteness of the Wisdom of Christ. "19 For it pleased the Father that in Him [Christ Jesus] should all fulness dwell; 3 In Whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge" (Colossians 1:19; 2:3).

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- "11 And the merchants of the Earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:"

First, the "kings of the Earth" (18:3, 9) and then the "merchants of the Earth" (18:3, 11) are described as mourning their loss of Babylon the Great, i.e., they "shall weep and mourn over her" (18:11); but, like all sinful people, they mourn for selfish reasons, because greed is not good. "Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough" (Isaiah 56:11). Their sadness does not touch the fact that the only way that God could deal with Babylon's wickedness was through Judgment, so their immediate loss is only material and financial, i.e., "for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (18:11). "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). The humanist has not seen beyond the confines of his earthly circumstances to notice the testimony those circumstances give of God, i.e., "For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20); and therefore, he does not seek after Him. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Clearly, he is satisfied with only seeking and finding his own material gain. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16).

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- "12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all

manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,"

Beginning with the more durable items of desire, the best known precious metals "gold, and silver" (18:12) head the list of things not to be found any more, no longer in Babylon. The Saints know that wickedness is not gold or silver, but avarice or the "**love** of money is the root of all evil" (1Timothy 6:10). "Precious stones" and "pearls" (18:12) are denominated second in this list of permanently out of stock items for Babylon the Great. The skills of the lapidary, who faceted exquisite gemstones of beauty, may have graced but few of the humble servants of God; however, those Saints willingly made that exchange, with the result that they should "shine as the brightness of the firmament; and... as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). Even now, Godly Women are noted for their adornment of a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1Peter 3:4). Third in this list of desirable but unavailable commodities are the dry goods of "fine linen [Greek, *byssus*, a species of Egyptian flax, a very costly, delicate, soft, white and yellow linen], and purple [Greek, *porphura*, a fabric dyed purple, worn by the ungodly rich man who was contrasted to Lazarus <Luke 16:19>, placed upon Jesus after His scourging by the Romans <Mark 15:15>, and sold by the godly Lydia in Thyatira <Acts 16:14>], and silk [Greek, *serikos*, the product of silkworms], and scarlet [Greek, *kokkinos*, a crimson colored cloth, whose color was derived from the crushing of the eggs of the *Coccus ilicis*, an insect which infests oak trees]" (18:12). The hunger, thirst, and taste for such riches holds no power to the True Saint, because he has "set [his] affection on things above, not on things on the Earth" (Colossians 3:2) and is sustained by the Spirit of God, who "worketh in you both to will and to do of His Good Pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

"Thyine [Greek, *thuinus*] wood" (18:12) was known to the Romans as citrus or citron wood, to the botanists as *Callitris quadrivalvis*, and to the modern island nation of Malta as its national tree, Gharghar or Sagra tal-Gharghar, whose English name is the Araar Tree. This evergreen tree is rare and found only in the Mediterranean area, i.e., Malta, Spain, and Northern Africa, where the Mother of Harlots maintains her papal throne. Thyine was valued for its fragrance in burnt sacrifices and for its beauty when fashioned into furniture. Just so, True Christians are "unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto Death; and to the other the savour of life unto Life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2Corinthians 2:15, 16). "All manner vessels of ivory [Greek, *elephantinos*], and all manner vessels of most precious wood [exotic hardwoods], and of brass [Greek, *chalkos*, an alloy of 67% copper and 33% zinc], and iron [symbol of power and strength], and marble [Greek, *marmaros*, a metamorphic rock formed by alteration of limestone or dolomite, often irregularly colored by impurities]" (18:12) are added to this list of newly unavailable commodities, as if to warn the reader of their fleeting nature, and caution us against placing undue emphasis upon them in our affections. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Proverbs 23:5).

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- "13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

The list of items which will soon be extinct to Babylon the Great emphasizes the materialistic emphasis of her religion, indicating that to execute the Great Whore is to cut off the economic head of the trade of nations. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

"Cinnamon [Greek, *kinamomon*]" (18:13) comes chiefly from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and the Old Testament citation of it for the holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23) indicates that commerce with the Far East took place from antiquity, and will continue until the prophesied destruction of Babylon the Great. "Odours [Greek, *thumiama*, incense], and ointments [Greek, *muron*], and frankincense [Greek, *libanos*. It was called *frank* because of the freeness of its release of fragrance when the *incense* was burned. The burning of this incense in the ancient Jewish Temple emitted a fragrant odor, and for that reason, incense was a symbol of the Divine Name, i.e., 'For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering: for My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of Hosts' (Malachi 1:11), as well as an emblem of prayer, i.e., 'Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice' (Psalm 141:2)]" (18:13) demonstrate how fully Babylon appeals to all the physical senses of man to maintain her grasp upon his immortal soul. "21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. 22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; 23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life" (Proverbs 7:21-23).

The consumables of "fine flour [Greek, *semidalis*, the finest wheat flour], and wheat [Greek, *sitos*, wheat grain]" (18:13) demonstrate that both the refined taste of the elite and the necessary palate of the masses are appealed to by Babylon. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:37). Meat and transportation-- "beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots" (18:13)-- are eradicated in Rome's destruction. Though our modern minds must pause to realize that only since the mid-1880s when Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler began to build gasoline-powered carriages, did the relatively recent era of automobiles begin, this reference to chariots brings across the idea of transportation to most past readers, i.e., wisdom is "easy to be intreated" (James 3:17). The list concludes with man, the most valuable of all resources; therefore, the physical Judgment of Babylon the Great is complete, i.e., "slaves [Greek, *soma*, living human bodies], and souls [Greek, *psuche*, the moral essence of a living being] of men" (18:13). "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

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- "14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."

The merchants and their customers are here directly rebuked for their inordinate lust after the merchandise or "fruits" (18:14) of Babylon the Great. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). As quickly as that, Babylon is stripped of all the goods that made her desirable. "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (Proverbs 6:25). The Truth they had to surrender to gain "all things which were dainty and goodly" (18:14) is their sin. Before they, too, are likewise punished, the condemned merchants are duly admonished by their Judge because they sought after the goods of the world and "not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psalms 62:10) should have been their motto, but they were "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). It is already

over for the inhabitants of Babylon. "The expectation of the wicked shall perish" (Proverbs 10:28). She has been punished, and her goods are found "no more at all" (18:14).

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- "15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,"

The secular humanism of the merchants only measured their success by the bottom line of monetary profit, i.e., "which were made rich by her" (18:15), and *not* how "unrighteous mammon" (Luke 16:11) could be used to:

- (1) serve God, i.e., "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Malachi 3:10);
- (2) benefit man, i.e., "do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1Timothy 6:18); and
- (3) truly help themselves, i.e., to "lay hold on Eternal Life" (6:19)-- *not* earning Eternal Life, but in faith laying hold of Christ, who is "Eternal Life" (1John 5:20).

As if mesmerized by a charmer, the merchants can only keep their distance "for the fear of her torment" (18:15)-- again, quite probably for fear of contamination by nuclear radiation-- still selfishly considering only their physical but not spiritual safety. "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). Their strong emotions, i.e., "weeping and wailing" (18:15), demonstrate the depth of their bitterness over their financial loss. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).

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- "16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"

Here, we are reading the Divine Writ concerning the destruction of Babylon the Great, and we have noticed at length the strong reactions of the merchants of the world to their loss of goods, income, and opportunity, when she is judged, i.e., "that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!" (18:16). We cannot even know but the surface of the relationship between the religious robes of Babylon the Great and the economic order of the world! "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). We may only have limited success in describing from human records the religious, political, economic, and social cabal of Babylon the Great; but here, the Divine Audit authoritatively records the evidence. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17).

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- "17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,"

All are still bewildered at the swiftness of their loss-- astounded that it actually took place. "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought" (18:17). Now the merchant marine participates in mourning over their loss of Babylon the Great, i.e., "every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off" (18:17). Like the survivors of the World Trade Center on September 11th 2001, they are in a state of disbelief that this event has actually transpired. For most all of those sailors, this is a signal for their deaths, as well, during the next few days of the Vial Judgments-- since during those days of the Vial Judgments, the inhabitants of the world "repented not" (16:9, 11)-- if not their deaths at the climax at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2Peter 2:12). However, even at the End, a Remnant will be saved, for a nation is converted "in one day" (Isaiah 66:8). Essentially, in spite of all the carnage, the onlookers refuse to see the overall picture of the judgment of sinners in the hands of an angry God. "Their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deuteronomy 32:35).

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- "18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!"

This is the end of an illicit love affair that has endured the ages. "And I will come near to you to Judgment; and I will be a Swift Witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Malachi 3:5). Since it is the vengeance of God, the Righteous can rightfully rejoice that justice has been done. "The spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of Recompences shall surely requite" (Jeremiah 51:56). Rome, the emblem of Babylon the Great, has been judged. "What city is like unto this great city!" (18:18). We are given this lengthy picture of the sailors' grief to emphasize the certainty of God's Judgment. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19).

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- "19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."

It is inconsolable grief, when these grown men "cast dust on their heads" (18:19) and cry, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate" (18:19). This is a picture of numbness that can only be assuaged by repentance-- and, death will not put them out of their misery. "43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into Life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-44). The Great Whore will not deliver herself from God's Judgment, even with her vast wealth, i.e., "by reason of her costliness" (18:19). "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land" (Zephaniah

1:18). For the third time (cp. v. 10, 17), it is said that her desolation is complete in "one hour" (18:19), making the reader feel that the impact of her Judgment must be so swift that it *must* take place within sixty actual minutes. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

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- "20 Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

Vengeance is the domain of God, so the Saints ought to "rejoice over" (18:20) God's Judgment of Babylon the Great. "17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him. 19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; 20 for there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. 29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I [Jehovah] will render to the man according to his work" (Proverbs 24:17-19, 29). The Mighty God avenges Himself upon Babylon the Great to clear away her disrespect for Himself and His Law, so that an influence will be felt throughout Heaven that would counteract the thought or possibility of any future rebellion in that happy company of moral beings. "42 I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with [or, it may be rendered, because of] the blood of the slain and of the captives [i.e., because of the blood of His people whom they have killed], from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people" (Deuteronomy 32:42-43). The Ten Horns, like the policeman, may execute God's Judgment here below; but, it is God's revenge, that is accomplished, and God's people that will be avenged. "3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4).

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- "21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Now that Babylon's mourners have had their say, God's "mighty angel" takes "up a stone like a great millstone, and cast[s] it into the sea" (18:21). Is this "great millstone" (18:21) merely symbolic, as when Jeremiah instructed Seraiah, a prince that accompanied Zedekiah into captivity, "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary" (Jeremiah 51:63-64)? Or, will some kind of tsunami accompany the destruction of Babylon the Great? We shall soon see. The Apocalypse records the phrase "no more at all" six times in this chapter:

- (1) The luxury merchandise of "goodly and dainty" (18:14) fruits will not be found any

longer in Babylon.

(2) Babylon itself will be found "no more at all" (18:21).

(3) The lively music of "musicians" (18:22) will not be heard any longer in Babylon.

(4) The sound of a working machine, such as a "millstone" (18:22), will no longer be heard in Babylon.

(5) The helpful and revealing "light of a candle" (18:23) will not be seen in Babylon any longer. And,

(6) the celebrative and hopeful "voice of the bridegroom and of the bride" (18:23) will no longer be heard in Babylon.

In short, God erases Babylon the Great. "When Thy Judgments are in the Earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn Righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

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- "22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;"

The finality of God's Judgment of Babylon the Great is heard in the silence of the "voice [Greek, *phone*, the sound as of a musical instrument] of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters" (18:22). Music's jubilation has filled Heaven expressing the joy, i.e., "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance" (Acts 2:28), since before Lucifer fell. And, Lucifer is thought to have also been the chief of God's musicians. There is no doubt that this gives more credence to the Christians' description of the overtly vile music of the world as the Devil's Music. "13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth... 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:13-15). The soundtrack of life has been terminated for Babylon. "1 Behold, the LORD maketh the Earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him... 6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the Earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the Earth are burned, and few men left. 7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. 8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth" (Isaiah 24:1-2, 6-8).

Total Judgment falls upon the scientists, engineers, technicians, and skilled laborers of Babylon the Great. "No craftsman [Greek, *technites*], of whatsoever craft [Greek, *techne*] he be, shall be found any more in thee" (18:22) The dominion that God appointed man to have over the Earth, i.e., "And God said... have dominion... over all the Earth" (Genesis 1:26), has been lost by man's skillful

creation of all manner of devices to fulfill his wicked lusts. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5). Likewise, the inanimate, nonmoral machines that fulfilled the will of the craftsmen of Babylon the Great will be silenced. "And the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee" (18:22). The very atoms will cooperate with their Creator, when the time comes for the Judgment of wicked men, as well as for the Rapture of the Righteous. "In a moment [Greek, *atomos*], in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Corinthians 15:52).

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- "23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the Earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

The Holy Spirit concludes this enumeration of things "no more at all" with the death of all help, i.e., the "light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee" (18:23), and the termination of all hope, i.e., the "voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee" (18:23). "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Those men of finance and commerce who cooperated with and profited by their relationship with Babylon the Great are labeled "thy merchants" (18:23). "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers" (Psalm 50:18). In the meantime, True Christians who must make a living and do business in the world, should not engage in any employment or business relationship that will defile their conscience before God. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Christian Liberty allows that "all things are lawful" (1Corinthians 6:12) for any action, employment, or business that abides by and does not violate the Law of Love, i.e., "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39), and, of course, is not expressly forbidden by God. Even then, we are given the Spirit's guidance to particularly seek out those choices that are spiritually profitable, that are not harmfully addictive, and that build up the Kingdom of God, i.e., "12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient [i.e., profitable]: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any [i.e., addictive]. 23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient [i.e., profitable]: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify [i.e., build up] not" (1Corinthians 6:12; 10:23).

Who are the "great men of the Earth" (18:23)? In any age, they are those of renown, who their respective generation identifies as the rich, powerful, gifted, and talented-- occasionally including even the Godly-- but, the Godly are not in this instance numbered among Babylon the Great. "26 For ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1Corinthians 1:26-29). "By thy sorceries [Greek, *pharmakeia*, deceptions and seductions] were all nations deceived" (18:23). The Mother of Harlots merely gave those merchants what they wanted, seducing only those who were willing, and failing with those who refused. "19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of

the land: 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20).

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- "24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were slain upon the Earth."

This closing verse of Chapter 18 lays the "blood of prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were slain upon the Earth" (18:24) on Babylon the Great. Where is the justice of blaming even the bloodthirsty Whore for the blood "of all that were slain upon the Earth" (18:24)?

"There is no city under the sun which has so clear a title to Catholic blood-guiltiness as Rome. The guilt of the blood shed under the heathen emperors has not been removed under the Popes, but hugely multiplied. Nor is Rome accountable only for that which hath been shed in the city, but for that shed in all the earth. For at Rome under the Pope, as well as under the heathen emperors, were the bloody orders and edicts given: and wherever the blood of holy men was shed, there were the grand rejoicings for it. And what immense quantities of blood have been shed by her agents! Charles IX., of France, in his letter to Gregory XIII., boasts, that in and not long after the massacre of Paris, he had destroyed seventy thousand Huguenots. Some have computed, that, from the year 1518 to 1548, fifteen millions of Protestants have perished by the Inquisition. This may be overcharged; but certainly the number of them in those thirty years, as well as since, is almost incredible. To these we may add innumerable martyrs, in ancient, middle, and late ages, in Bohemia, Germany, Holland, France, England, Ireland, and many other parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia" (excerpted from John Wesley's "Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament" [1755], commenting on Revelation 18:24).

Scripture teaches us of a Unity of Moral Action, in that, if your heart is right, then your actions are divinely judged as morally right, i.e., "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matthew 23:26); but, if your heart is wrong, your actions are accounted as *all* morally defective. "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). For the Holy Spirit to here accuse the Mother of Harlots of culpability for "all that were slain" (18:24) is like the LORD Jesus Christ's pronouncement of woe upon the lawyers. "47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: 50 that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation" (Luke 11:47-50). It appears that the Divine Mind views the bloodguilt of Babylon the Great to be equal to her hearty agreement with all the murderers, who came before her, and her imitation and multiplication of the duplicity of their feigned fidelity to the memory of the Righteous, while likewise refusing to obey the Present Truth. "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed [Hebrew, *shadad*, wasted]; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us" (Psalm 137:8).

Chapter 19: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

- "1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God:"

The focus of this chapter of Revelation is the physical return of the LORD Jesus Christ to the planet Earth to sit upon His Throne, i.e., "and He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (19:15), while the Beast (the Antichrist) and the False Prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever, i.e., "both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20). "I am the LORD: I will speak, and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass" (Ezekiel 12:25). Many newspapers have reserved their largest print type, which they call "Second Coming Type," for headline news of the highest importance. Why *shouldn't* the headline, "Jesus Christ Returns to Earth," be deemed the greatest headline possible by even the secular press, if atheists curse with the name of God upon their lips, and all walks of life make some kind of appeal to the Almighty in dire circumstances? "10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

At this point in the Divine Narrative, "a great voice of much people in Heaven" (19:1) signifies all mankind, who have been saved by the Blood of the Lamb, who have been resurrected or raptured after the "mystery of God ['concerning Christ and the Church' (Ephesians 5:32)] should be finished" (Revelation 10:7), praising God in a Heavenly Scene around the Throne of God. What is the reason for this Great Noise in Heaven? A command has been echoed by God's creatures to praise and worship God, i.e., "Alleluia" (19:1). In the Greek, *allelouia* means Praise ye the LORD or Hallelujah. It comes from the Hebrew words *halal* (praise) and *Yahh* (Jehovah). Only four times does "Alleluia" occur in the New Testament. All four times are in this chapter (19:1, 3, 4, 6), and each time in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Worship does not merely state the obvious facts of Who God Is, but it enters into hearty agreement with God about the truth of those facts. "Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God" (19:1). Because He has saved us, we glorify God, agreeing and declaring that glory, honour, and power rightfully belong to God "for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:31). This heartfelt praise comes because of the Almighty's magnificent judgment of the Great Whore (Revelation 18); further, the Glorified Saints must be excited because they are about to enter into their Marriage Supper with the Lamb (19:7-10). And, before the Beast and False Prophet face their final doom in the Lake of Fire (19:20), the ultimate conflict of all time, Armageddon (19:17-19), must be emblazoned on the consciousness of all Moral Beings. "15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: 16 But the LORD of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness" (Isaiah 5:15-16).

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- "2 For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the Great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand."

Since we have been taught to "love [our] enemies, [and] bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44), we must again agree with Christ that "true and righteous are His judgments" (19:2). It has long been our proper understanding that True Love is willing to be stern and hard where it is necessary, e.g., "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes [Hebrew, *shachar*, early]" (Proverbs 13:24). And, if God does not guard the efficacy of the sanctions and punishments of the Moral Law of Love, i.e., "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), then Satan himself would eventually be paroled from the Lake of Fire. But, we have been assured that the Judgment that follows this life is forever because: (1) Sinners will dwell with Everlasting Burnings, i.e., "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with Everlasting Burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14), (2) Transgressors will always feel an Unquenchable Fire, i.e., "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isaiah 66:24), (3) The Goats (in the Judgment of the Nations of Matthew 25:31-46) will depart into Everlasting Fire, i.e., "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), and (4) The Cursed will go into Everlasting Punishment, i.e., "And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment: but the Righteous into Life Eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

As we have seen from Revelation 18, already Jehovah "hath judged the Great Whore" (19:2), but how could such an Accursed Entity been so pervasive on the face of the planet without everyone knowing her identity far in advance of her judgment? In answer, the Great Whore is *already* known by her (1) Moral Pollution of doctrine and practice, e.g., the sex scandals of the Roman Catholic priests of the 21st Century, i.e., "which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication" (19:2) and (2) Violent Killing of her enemies, as in the extermination of 70,000 to 100,000 French Protestant Huguenots by the Church of Rome (beginning in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day of August 24th 1572 and continuing through October 1572 throughout France), i.e., "the blood of His servants at her hand" (19:2). Such naming of names is consistent with the conduct of the LORD Jesus Christ, when He publicly labeled the Established Religious Teachers, "who [held] the Truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18), He called them seven times in one encounter, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" (Matthew 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). Christian Objectivity would realize Rome's sin, while holding out the Hope of Salvation for those who come out of her "that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). [See our article, "An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics" ---New Window, for a call to a True Christianity outside the walls of the Church of Rome. Read or reread our comments on Revelation 17, "Revealing the Mystery of Babylon the Great and the Beast" ---New Window, for the Apocalyptic context of identifying the Great Whore with Rome. Also, our Babylon the Great series ---New Window of articles *even more extensively* reveals the roots and lineage of Rome, where this Commentary is more restricted.]

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- "3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

This second time the Inhabitants of Heaven cry out their praise of God, i.e., "Alleluia" (19:3), for their hearty agreement with His judgment of the Great Whore. Pause for a moment and think of your loved ones who have "fallen asleep in Christ" (1Corinthians 15:18). You do not think of that cherished, departed loved one as mean spirited or vindictive, yet you would agree that both they and yourself would then be in absolute agreement with the judgment of the Great Whore. True, "if he repent,

forgive him" (Luke 17:3), but if they die in their sins (as the Great Whore certainly does), God will judge them, and that forever, i.e., "her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Revelation 19:3). "9 The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the Unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the LORD. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2Peter 2:9-17).

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- "4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

Do you remember these "four and twenty elders" (19:4) worshipping around the throne of God, especially in Revelation 4, 5, and 11? They are said to sit upon their own seats or thrones before God, i.e., "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats [Greek, *thronos*, a chair of state having a footstool]" (Revelation 11:16). Each time the expression "Come up hither" (4:1; 11:12) is used, the "four and twenty elders" are present. If they represent the Church, as it appears they do, is it any wonder that the First "Come Up Hither" (4:1) occurs immediately before the opening of the Seal Judgments (Revelation 6) and would coincide with the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Watching and Waiting Saints, while the Second "Come Up Hither" (11:12) occurs soon before the pouring out of the Vial Judgments (Revelation 16), indicating a coincidental Pre-Wrath Rapture shortly before the end of the Tribulation Week? Notice also that the concept of the Rapture is most often taught with the passage from 1Thessalonians 4 where the Trumpet sounds, the Dead in Christ are resurrected, and the Living Saints are caught up into the clouds, i.e., "16 For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the Dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD" (1Thessalonians 4:16-17). This actually better describes the timing of the Pre-Wrath Rapture; however, the concept of the LORD finding a way for His people to escape-- "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape **all** these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36)-- finds a Pre-Tribulational Rapture also modeled, when the Apostle John was commanded to come up for a better look at what is going to prophetically take place. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven: and the First Voice which I heard was as it were of a Trumpet talking with me; which said, Come Up Hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Revelation 4:1). The Voice of a Trumpet talking with John is none other than the LORD Jesus Christ Himself. "10 I was in the Spirit on the LORD's Day, and heard behind me a Great Voice,

as of a Trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Revelation 1:10-11). Jesus is calling and commanding His Church Home before He progressively unleashes the various stages of His Final Judgment upon the Earth. "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9).

The consensus of the "four and twenty elders" (19:4) is agreement, i.e., "Amen; Alleluia" (19:4), with the "Great Voice of much people in Heaven" (19:1) and with the Angelic Creatures, who are here called the "four beasts" (19:4). Again, these Angelic Creatures or Seraphim-- compare them to Isaiah's "seraphims: [who] each one had six wings" (Isaiah 6:2) with the "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5) of Ezekiel's vision-- are the Angels, who stand in the Presence of God directing the worship of Him. "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the Whole Earth is full of His Glory" (Isaiah 6:3). "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Revelation 4:8). Note also that the word "Amen" (19:4) is the same in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English; thus, it is universally understood as an expression of affirming absolute confidence and trust. What is *everyone in Heaven* affirming? God "hath judged the Great Whore" (19:2)! Confusion to the enemies of God! No more do we hear the sophisms warning against judging God's enemies, for if it is not then clear to you that the Righteous must "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24), then you could not possibly be in Heaven, for *all* of Heaven agrees with the Judgment of Babylon the Great. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1Corinthians 2:15). Judging the Great Whore is entirely consistent with a state of Continual Worship of the Living God, as demonstrated here by the "four beasts" (19:4). Never cast doubt into your mind that identifying the Church of Rome (the institution of Roman Catholicism) with the Great Whore is anything but the Truth affirmed in Heaven and echoed with the "Amen; Alleluia" (19:4) of *all* Holy Beings. "For True and Righteous are His Judgments: for He hath judged the Great Whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (Revelation 19:2). [See the memoirs of a notable, former Roman Catholic priest, Charles Chiniquy (1809-1899), "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" ---New Window, for a testimony of Rome's character in Canada and America during the 1800s. Also, Pastor Chiniquy, in a short testimony, "A Gift for You" ---New Window, gives an easy to read account of the difference between the Gospel Salvation of the Scriptures versus Rome's historic and *still current* position that "they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it" (Catechism, 846).]

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- "5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great."

For the Unconverted, it is a mindless and senseless thing to praise God; and, it is unbearable even to contemplate the thought of doing so for Eternity. "But the Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Corinthians 2:14). But, for the Redeemed, it is pleasurable to hear that voice come out of the throne, "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great" (19:5). We understand the purpose for which we were made. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are

and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Worship and praise of God for Eternity is settling into the natural and comfortable end for our existence, which the philosophers, humanists, and falsely called scientists of this world could never teach us. "18 For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1Corinthians 1:18-20). The voice out of the throne commands all to praise our God, but is it a burdensome and grievous thing for Heaven's Inhabitants to be required to do so? Hardly. If we are truly redeemed now, then we already comprehend the concept of willingly, lovingly seeking out the commandments of God, i.e., "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6), that we may perform whatever is required. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous [Greek, *barus*, burdensome]" (1John 5:3). Imagine the force for good when God channels His Power through a multitude of Christians scattered throughout the world bent on performing His will; and, imagine again how the Great Whore would delight in redirecting any or all of this multitude by subterfuge and deception into the camp of the Antichrist! "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the Very Elect" (Matthew 24:24).

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- "6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the LORD God Omnipotent reigneth."

A "voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants" (19:5), and joyfully, the antiphonal response comes from the "voice of a great multitude" (19:6). Praise to God begins with God, finds a willing heart, then comes back to God, which in this instance takes the form of a "voice of a great multitude" (19:6). God puts great stock in His Voice, for He declared through the mouth of His servant Moses, "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His Voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). The LORD Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word of His Voice. "1 That which was from the Beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life [Christ Jesus]; 2 (For the Life was manifested, and we have seen It, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;" (1John 1:1-2). Likewise, the Almighty expects our words to be acceptable to Him. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). The voice of the Psalmist, who said, "My mouth [shall] be filled with Thy praise and with Thy honour all the day" (Psalm 71:8), will be multiplied by the power of a "great multitude" (19:6). That Great Host of Already Departed Saints will be joined by ourselves and the Angelic Host around the Throne of God, singing: "Alleluia: for the LORD God Omnipotent reigneth" (19:6). Have you ever heard a large group of voices singing hymns to God in unison? With any kind of proper direction, such singing is certainly a foretaste of this Heavenly Chorus. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand [100 million], and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11). Two things describe the sound of that Heavenly chorus: (1) The voice is "as the voice of many waters" (19:6), and (2) Their sound is "as the voice of mighty thunderings" (19:6). While the substance of the lyrics of the Heavenly Chorus will be, "Alleluia

[Praise ye the LORD]: for the LORD God Omnipotent reigneth" (19:6), the scope of the praise will be as the sound of a Mighty Niagara of many waters, and the crescendo of the praise will rise majestically to be punctuated as with the roar of "mighty thunders" (19:6). "For thus saith the High and Lofty One That Inhabith Eternity, Whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). The roar of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe is said to be heard forty miles away, while Niagara Falls (Niagara is from an Iroquois word, which can be interpreted as "Thunder of Waters") has been described by various European explorers and observers as producing a distant rolling thunder that can be heard variously from twenty to thirty miles away. These are only poor, physical parallels of the great sound of praise that will be made by a vast number of both Angels and Redeemed Humankind, i.e., "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9), that will join in the thunderous chorus of praise to God for His judgment of the Great Whore.

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- "7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

We know that Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and this verse tells us that Heaven is in a condition of gladness and rejoicing, "for the marriage of the Lamb is come" (19:7). Marriage throughout human history has most often been a time of great rejoicing, and it is no different at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, i.e., "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him" (19:7). The very concept of marriage for the Godly has been to bring forth the fruit of a "Godly Seed" (Malachi 2:15), which is also what the LORD Jesus intends from His Spiritual Union with us. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Man has been commanded to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth" (Genesis 1:28), and he has been given the physical urge or drive to procreate, for even the Creator said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). Though polygamy was practiced by the pre-Flood antediluvians and others of the Old Testament, monogamy-- one woman and one man-- has always been the ideal, for even the balance of population of male and female in most nations is practically equal unless custom, e.g., infanticide, or other factors, e.g., genetic manipulation or abortion, unnaturally impose an imbalance. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Spiritually, the LORD Jesus Christ, the "Altogether Lovely" One (Song of Solomon 5:16), makes Himself attractive to ourselves (His Bride) that we would together produce the Fruit of Righteousness. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). Love is the point of marriage, for our Divine Bridegroom is the "God of Love" (2Corinthians 13:11), and the selflessness of marriage is illustrated by the fact that both Bride and Bridegroom become "one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31), where spouses are willing to lay down their lives, each for the other. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

An excerpt from our article, "A Tale of Ten Virgins" ---New Window, will give us some light on the Bride

of Christ, who will participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: "Who is the Bride of Christ? 'Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife' (Revelation 21:9). What did the angel show the Apostle John? 'And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God' (21:10). Is the Lamb of God to be married to a city? No, Jesus will be married to what the city represents-- His people. Israel's Twelve Tribes will be represented by the City's twelve gates. 'And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel' (21:12). The Old Testament Saints are identified with Israel, just as the New Testament Saints are identified with the Church. Abraham looked for the New Jerusalem. 'For he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Hebrews 11:10). The Church will be represented by the City's twelve foundations-- one for each Apostle. 'And the wall of the City had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb' (21:14). Both Israel and the Church are the Bride of Christ."

Scripture reveals how the Lamb's wife makes "herself ready" (19:7). A potential marriage relationship was most often determined by fathers or older brothers for the upcoming husband and wife, e.g., "Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house... Go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Genesis 24:2, 4). "Laban [Rebekah's brother] and Bethuel [Rebekah's father] answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. 58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Genesis 24:50-51, 58). In the same manner, before our consensual marriage to the LORD Jesus Christ, we have been called, i.e., "called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28), predestinated, i.e., "In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who Worketh All Things After the Counsel of His Own Will" (Ephesians 1:11), commanded, i.e., "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), as well as drawn to participate in this Spiritual Union, i.e., "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the Last Day" (John 6:44), to become the Bride of Christ. A wedding most commonly involved a feast or marriage supper, which was served at the house of the groom or his parents. "2 The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a marriage for His Son, 3 And sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared My dinner: My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" (Matthew 22:2-4). Recall that Jesus performed His first miracle at a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, "and manifested forth His glory" (John 2:11). It is just such a Marriage Supper that we have been called to as the Bride of Christ. We should "be glad and rejoice" (19:7), but, according to this text, we should also make ourselves "ready" (19:7). How can we live in a Continual State of Ready? Primarily through faith in God, He has promised to keep us that we should be ready, i.e., "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the Last Time" (1Peter 1:5). By sanctifying God in our hearts, we will be ready, i.e., "But sanctify the LORD God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1Peter 3:15). If we walk in the Spirit carefully unto sanctification, we will be "accounted worthy" (Luke 21:36) not simply to escape the Tribulation Week, but we will please Him, i.e., "walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing" (Colossians 1:10). "But without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

And, how is it that Christians are considered to be *both* the Bride of Christ *and* the Lamb's "wife" (19:7)? Historically, the betrothal relationship was considered so permanent that a betrothed damsel was already considered a wife, i.e., "23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you" (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). Even before cohabitation with the physical consummation of the relationship, to end the betrothal relationship would have been considered divorce, e.g., Joseph was contemplating divorcing Mary when he found that she was pregnant before their marriage relationship was consummated. "18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily" (Matthew 1:18-19). But, keep in mind that the Union of Christ to His Church is before and after marriage, always a Spiritual Union. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you" (John 15:16).

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- "8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints."

What a glorious condition for formerly sinful man to "be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (19:8)! Indisputably, man has little claim to anything but his sad and detestable history of sin. "10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). The True Saints of the Old Testament understood Jehovah to be their righteousness. "This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). New Testament Saints look back in faith upon the atoning work of Christ on the Cross to find any righteousness for themselves. "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9). Just so, Old Testament Saints looked forward in faith to the atoning work of the Messiah. "5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6). This whole discussion of Righteousness of the Saints has no merit without the essential understanding that no man can be accounted righteous before God unless he first puts his confidence and trust in God. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [Greek, *logizomai*, imputed, reckoned] to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6). The Apostle John stated the case thus: "If ye know that He [Christ] is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1John 2:29). This *doing* of righteousness represents the Works of Faith that the Epistle of James so strenuously advocated as necessary for Salvation and as representative that there *is* True Faith present, i.e., "17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works:

shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:17-23). This righteousness that must needs be demonstrated in our conduct manifests that we know the Righteous Christ. "7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1John 3:7, 10). In summary, any man who feels himself worthy of being ascribed righteous independent of the Righteousness of Christ, is not worthy of the "fine linen [which] is the righteousness of Saints" (19:7). "8 But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:8-9).

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- "9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

John the Beloved was told by a "fellow servant" (19:10) to "write [Greek, *graphon*]" (19:9) or commit to writing the message concerning the blessedness of the participants of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Why should John write? The essence of an idea in the mind of God would not be known to us unless expressed in an intelligible form, as in this Divine Declaration, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9). This is the Word of God, which is a "More Sure Word of Prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place" (2Peter 1:19). Scripture is an even "More Sure Word of Prophecy" (1:19) because It records for examination and re-examination what would have only been heard or seen by one or a few, and not necessarily recounted (and that, infallibly) to others. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Peter 1:21). The message that has been vouched as one of the "true sayings of God" (19:10) is: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9). Why such blessedness? At that point in time, all of the Saints have been raptured from the planet-- first by Pre-Tribulational Rapture and finally by Pre-Wrath Rapture-- and though there are still Elect upon the Earth, they have yet to repent and be saved. Therefore, to be at this Marriage Supper of the Lamb means that you are among the Most Wonderfully Blessed Group of Beings Existing in the Universe-- the Righteous, who have been redeemed "with the precious Blood of Christ" (1Peter 1:19). The LORD Jesus put His disciples into the proper perspective when He explained at an earlier time what should be the better reason for such gladness-- that they were "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6)-- after the Seventy returned from a fruitful evangelistic trip. "17 And the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, LORD, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. 18 And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven" (Luke 10:17-20). Even so, though we can hardly wait to see or hear what will come to pass at the

Marriage Supper of the Lamb, i.e., "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Corinthians 2:9)-- we should right *now* rejoice that we are in the "Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27)! What honour could be greater?

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- "10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy."

It was a very understandable reaction that John was so overwhelmed with the blessedness of the revelation of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb that he prostrated himself before the angel speaking to him, i.e., "I fell at his feet to worship him" (19:10). However, though angels are a higher order of creation than man-- for Christ, Who became a man, was said to be "made a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:9)-- the angel strictly forbade such worship to be given to himself, i.e., "See thou do it not" (19:10). This same honest reaction was given by Cornelius the Roman centurion to the Apostle Peter, when Peter came to instruct him that Gentiles too were to be equally received with Jews into the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ. "25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26). We shall further see that the overpowering sense of awe and joy caused the Apostle John again to prostrate himself before the messenger angel as the last of the Revelation was given him. "8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God" (Revelation 22:8-9). And again, the angel gently reproved John, not for sin, but with a correction to keep him and all who read the Revelation worshipping God "in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4:23, 24). Angels are an entirely separate and superior order of created beings from man, but this verse points out that both men and angels are: (1) "fellowservants [Greek, *sundoulos*]" (19:10), i.e., "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother [Greek, *adelphos*], and a faithful minister and fellowservant [Greek, *sundoulos*] in the LORD" (Colossians 4:7), and (2) "brethren [Greek, *adelphos*]" (19:10), i.e., "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He [Jesus] laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren [Greek, *adelphos*]" (1John 3:16). The angel referred to himself as having the "testimony of Jesus" (19:10). What is the "testimony [Greek, *marturia*, witness] of Jesus" (19:10)? He immediately explains that the "testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy" (19:10), but what does this mean? Both man and angel are given the witness of Jesus through His Spirit concerning the prophetic events that are to come to pass. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). In other words, it magnifies God and promotes for both men and angels confidence, stability, and permanence for the Kingdom of God when the LORD testifies what He will do *before* it comes to pass. "9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I

will also do it" (Isaiah 46:9-11).

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- "11 And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war."

The narrative of that grand event known as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ begins in this verse with a description of the LORD Jesus Christ returning to Earth as a Judge and *not* a Saviour. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of His Saints" (Jude 14). [See our comments on Revelation 14:20 ---[New Window](#) for a description of the Manner of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ, and our comments on Revelation 16:16 ---[New Window](#) on the Nature of the Battle of Armageddon.] You will notice in this chapter of Revelation that the ensuing Battle or Campaign of Armageddon represents only a relatively small punctuation in the vastly more significant statement of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). All of the Universe awaits with bated breath the opening of the curtains for the greatest stage entrance that has ever occurred, i.e., "I saw Heaven opened, and..." (19:11). No actor, the Son of God *is* the "Judge of All the Earth" (Genesis 18:25). "Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12:5). In these Laodicean times, it is forgotten that Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), *because* we departed from obedience to the Everlasting Law of Love. "Sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Too often, we have placated ourselves with the assurance that the decisive difference between ourselves and the world is that we are Saved Sinners, while they are Lost Sinners-- but, all Sinners nonetheless, i.e., "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). And yet, the reality is "that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16). You were saved and the Holy Spirit was given to establish you in a present, holy walk, long before you ever reach Heaven. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). Salvation is not merely saving you from a Well Deserved Punishment, but it is the establishment in you of a New Principle of Life, which is Holiness or a Salvation From Sinning. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1John 5:18). When Jesus returns the Second Time, He will in judgment restore obedience to His Law of Love and punish with the Sword "Out of His Mouth" (Revelation 19:15) every disobedience. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward" (Hebrews 2:2). [Note: If the Doctrine of Sin Nature was properly defined and understood, then it would be possible to win the seemingly No-Win War of Sin vs. Holiness. We invite you to read a short editorial, "Is It Possible to Guarantee Our Obedience?" ---[New Window](#) to encourage you in this crucial battle. Also, a more lengthy article, "Must We Then Sin? Or, A Response to the Doctrine of Sin Nature or the Doctrine of Original Sin, Or, A Clarification of What is Sin, Why We Sin, and How Not to Sin" ---[New Window](#), represents an even more thorough attempt to deal with this subject.] So again, Christ is returning to restore worldwide what we should be doing *now*-- Uninterrupted Obedience to His Law of Love. "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him" (1John 2:3-5).

As Heaven opens, we notice a "white horse" (19:11). Who said there were not horses in Heaven? This

white is the Greek word, *leukos*, which means brilliant from whiteness or dazzling white; and, we were earlier told that white was significant because it is identified with holiness or righteousness, i.e., "she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints" (19:8). What sets apart this dazzling white horse? The Rider of the brilliantly white horse is none other than the "KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (19:16). Now we have the proper focus of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ-- the person of Jesus Christ. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). Sitting majestically upon His steed, all eyes are riveted upon the Worthy Rider, for He is "Faithful and True" (19:11). Certainly, Heaven comprehends His majesty, but Scripture testifies that even all of Earth's Godless Inhabitants will have opportunity to see this sight while they are still in the flesh, and gain an inkling of their plight. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7). What makes the Rider of this horse so eminently fit to be Judge and Executioner? "He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True" (19:11). Only One Entity can naturally be described as Omnipotent, i.e., "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18), Omniscient, i.e., "Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1Corinthians 4:5), Omnipresent, i.e., "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), Immutable, i.e., "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8), and Eternal, i.e., "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Revelation 22:13), which is the Rider of this horse. But, these natural qualities alone are not here brought forth; instead, the Rider's moral qualifications are the reasons enumerated, i.e., "Faithful and True" (19:11). Just because God is naturally capable of such judgment, Who alone is morally worthy of such judgment, but the Epitome of Faithfulness and Truth-- the LORD Jesus Christ Himself? In the same way, it is much better to compliment a child for their Moral Character as displayed by faithfulness and truthfulness than for simply their natural qualities, such as physical height or beauty. Your own experience proves that Christ is Faithful: (1) "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is *faithful*, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13), (2) "But the LORD is *faithful*, Who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2Thessalonians 3:3), and (3) "If we believe not, yet He abideth *faithful*: He cannot deny Himself" (2Timothy 2:13). Your own consciousness verifies that the Son of God is True: (1) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6), (2) "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the *Truth*. Every one that is of the *Truth* heareth My voice" (John 18:37), and (3) "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is *True*, and we are in Him that is *True*, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the *True* God, and Eternal Life" (1John 5:20).

The twofold purpose of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is here summarized: "in righteousness He doth judge and make war" (19:11). Judge and Executioner will then denote the governmental functions of the LORD Jesus Christ because He will have already been rejected as Saviour for the surviving population of the world, who had viewed the Almighty's Moral Law of Love as distasteful and pointless, and had disdained the Lawgiver with contempt and hatred. "37 But last of all He sent

unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance. 39 And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him" (Matthew 21:37-39). Is it not fitting that Jehovah defines the Concept of Sin as an offense or transgression against the Law? "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Too often the discussion of Moral Government raises only a question mark in the minds of Professed Christians, when in fact, the whole drama of Human History will narrow down to the Saviour returning to judge and execute worldwide all rebels without exception to cleanse the world of unrighteousness. "That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2Thessalonians 2:12). True, if they had repented and believed the Gospel they would certainly partake of the LORD's glory and bliss in Heaven, and they would have cooperated with the Holy Spirit in persevering to the end. "6 But Christ as a Son over His Own House; Whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6, 14). Though they will be impenitent, would it not be well for *us*, while time remains, to restore the manward emphasis of Salvation to a Return to Obedience to the Moral Law of Love? "Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; Turn ye unto Me, saith the LORD of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 1:3). *How many people would be spared their tragic part in this Second Coming Judgment and Execution, if we would now only hold forth the Truth that Gospel Obedience is possible and not Pharisaical or Legalism.* "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). How many traditions have been passed down from generation of Professed Christians to newer generations of Professed Christians that have de-emphasized obedience as if the nature given to us by the Creator was sinful and obedience should not be expected as a rule until we get to Heaven? But, does not the Scripture tell us in plain language that our Obedience to God is the measure of our Love to Him? "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous [Greek, *barus*, burdensome, i.e., impossible]" (1John 5:3). Should we not instead trust Him and His Spirit to work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13)? "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). [See our article, "He Will Subdue Our Iniquities" ---New Window, to see how overcoming sin and walking in obedience has always been intended for us in the here and now. Also, our article, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" ---New Window, intends to show "How God Has Ingeniously Designed His Promises to Sanctify His People."] We should not only succeed in cooperating with the Spirit of Christ in saving ourselves "from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40), but we may even be responsible for cooperating with Christ in saving others "with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).

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- "12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself."

What a fierce magnificence is this upcoming picture of Christ! "His eyes were as a flame of fire" (19:12). Christ initially gave in the Revelation a manifestation of Himself to the Apostle John as a God of Judgment, i.e., "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14). The burning, searching eyes of the Incarnate Word of God

will pierce the innermost heart of all humankind. "12 For the Word of God [the Eternal Logos, Jesus Christ] is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His [Jesus'] sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him With Whom We Have to Do" (Hebrews 4:12-13). This is a grand picture of the once lowly Saviour, who came the First Time to redeem man, *but also* to restore respect for His Law of Love. "But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the Grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). What a travesty that as we approach the Second Time that the Judge of All the Earth comes-- this time to judge the Earth-- the understanding that He returns to uphold the misunderstood and trampled Royal Law of Love, has been all but forgotten! "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). Of course, the Almighty has always sought the highest good of Himself and the universe of Moral Beings, but the value of restoring respect to the Moral Law of Love is even a necessity in seeking the future happiness of the Redeemed. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). How could there be happiness in Heaven, if there were toleration of a lying rebellion against the God of Love? "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). So, the flaming eyes of the Son of God represent His Second Coming capacity of Judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).

What is the significance that on the head of the LORD Jesus Christ, "were many crowns [Greek, *diadema*]" (19:12)? We already know that the LORD Jesus is the King above every king and the LORD above every lord, not simply because it is an exalted thought or title, but because it is the clearest understanding of God, that He is most fit to be the Moral Governor of the Universe. "14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ: 15 Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1Timothy 6:14-16). What a name to be applied to Christ-- King of Kings, and LORD of Lords! And, we see here that He has the God-Only Capacity of possessing a "name written, that no man knew, but He Himself" (19:12). "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). The Second Coming emphasizes His execution of judgment against all breakers of His Law, which even Moses understood that the glory of God's Laws was the wisdom and understanding that clothe all those who humbly submit themselves to Their rule. "1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law, which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-6, 8). Do not fret about the now defunct Ceremonial and Civil Laws of Old Testament Israel, but rejoice that we will ever have the Moral Law of Love as a guide for Christ to rule us for now and for Eternity. "29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one

LORD: 30 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

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- "13 And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God."

It is no mystery that the returning Son of God is the "Lamb that was slain" (Revelation 5:12) for the redemption of mankind, but this verse describes His appearance as "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood" (19:13). Rather than alluding to His previous Work of Redemption, this seems more to point at His Work of Judgment. "1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isaiah 63:1-3). Much easier it is to dwell upon the Joy of Salvation and Heaven, but the price of that freedom cost the Son of God His Life upon the Cross and the Labour of Judgment at His Second Coming, for all of this secures the peace and tranquility of His Heavenly Kingdom. "15 Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. 16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. 17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. 18 And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:15-18).

One further evidence of the identity of the Rider of the dazzling white horse (19:11) is the fact revealed to us that "His name is called the Word of God" (19:13). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). It seems to have been a difficult concept for humanity to grasp that *our words are unimportant*, but His Word is all important. "72 The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. 97 O how I love Thy Law! It is my meditation all the day. 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word. 102 I have not departed from Thy Judgments: for Thou hast taught me. 103 How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 111 Thy Testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart" (Psalm 119:72, 97, 101-103, 111). What a discovery, yet what a pity that anyone after a lifetime of collecting and studying man's words would only *stumble* upon the thought that God's Word is Preeminent! "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). If life still remains within us, let us resolve before God by the aid of His Spirit to abide in His Word-- long before it becomes apparent to the whole world that we have always stood before the Word of God with whom we have to do. "7 If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (John 15:7-9).

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- "14 And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Such a sight is now uncommon for a battlefield commander to precede his troops into combat, but that is the picture of our LORD at His Second Coming, for the "armies which were in Heaven followed Him" (19:14). This is not without precedent, for kings have fought and died in battle throughout history. "29 In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. 30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead" (2Kings 23:29-30). Some may conceive of any battle pitting God against anyone as unfair, but this is true. What modern battlefield commander desires to give an enemy a fair fight, but rather craves overwhelming battlefield supremacy? And, only a morally insane being would fight against the Almighty. "1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the Earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed [Hebrew, *mashiyach*, Messiah, whose Greek equivalent is *christos*, anointed, Christ], saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. 8 Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for Thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the Earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2:1-12).

The Commander-in-Chief rides a white horse, and so do His armies; consequently, the stables of Heaven must be bursting with innumerable "white horses" (19:14)! How large are the LORD's "armies" (19:14)? According to Revelation 5:11, just the Angelic Host around the Throne of God would number more than 100 million. And, how many Justified Saints since Adam can be added to that count? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). As clumsy or awkward as we can be imagined in combat or on horseback, we can be certain that our Leader has completely prepared and equipped us for this engagement. "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). The Messiah's White Army will be "clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (19:14), so no mistaken friendly fire will be directed at this Host of White. The message is clear: Christ's Army is pure, "even as He is pure" (1John 3:3). Practical Holiness has *always* been the *only* acceptable and attainable standard for the Saints. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1John 3:7).

- "15 And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

This Apocalyptic picture of Jehovah Jesus with a "sharp sword" (19:15) proceeding out of His mouth may strangely bring to mind man's adage, "The pen is mightier than the sword," but even more unusual, the LORD is here both Sword and the Word. The sword of verse 15 is the unusually long Thracian *rhomphaia* [Greek]-- found six times in Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 16; 6:8; 19:15, 21-- which was a very long sword, commonly worn on the right shoulder, made of iron, and used as an offensive weapon of slaughter; especially, when compared to the shorter *machaira* [Greek] sword-- found three times in Revelation 6:4; 13:10, 14-- which was used for personal defense, as well as the butchering of animals. Note that the Word of God, which is described as a "twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow" (Hebrews 4:12), is properly the *machaira*. This depicts more the surgical removal of unwanted parts, while the *rhomphaia* speaks of the offensive function of slaughter, killing, execution, and nothing else. We are further told that the Son of God will use the "sharp [Greek, *oxus*, swift, quick]" (19:15) *rhomphaia* out of His mouth to "smite the nations" (19:15). Theoretically, the KING of Kings is returning to slaughter the entirety of all humanity that remains alive on planet Earth, so a surgical strike appears unnecessary; however, there is still the issue of the Nation Born in a Day and the discussion of who will physically populate the Earthly Millennial Kingdom.

First, Israel is prophesied to resurrect as a Godly Nation, not by United Nations decree, but by the Grace of God that promised it. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). Revelation 12 speaks of the "woman [who] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (12:6). This is Unsaved But Still Elect Israel fleeing from the Antichrist from the Abomination of Desolation at the Middle of the Tribulation Week until the End of the Tribulation Week approximately 1,260 days later. "15 When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (Matthew 24:15-16). God has promised for Himself Israel as a people and nation, who will again actively trust in Him-- unlike the beginning of this 21st Century. "18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the Earth, and will make them to lie down safely. 19 And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the Earth; 22 And the Earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. 23 And I will sow her unto Me in the Earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hosea 2:18-23).

Second, concerning the Gentiles that must repent at the End, the removal of all the Redeemed at

a Pre-Wrath Rapture-- remember, there has also been a Pre-Tribulational Rapture at the Beginning of the Tribulation Week, as well-- occurs only days before the End of the Tribulation Week, but prior to the Vial Judgments, where it is recorded that mankind "repented not" (Revelation 16:9, 11). It is a certainty that some Gentiles will repent at the End. "2 And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations [Hebrew, *gowy*, Gentiles] shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3). Lost But Still Elect Gentiles will remain impenitent until the very day of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ; but, prior to their heart change, they will have been pummeled by the Judgments of God, terrorized by the malevolent rule of Antichrist towards his own, and castigated by their own conscious' that they have been acquiescing with Evil. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

Lastly, both Finally Redeemed Israel and the Finally Redeemed Gentiles will be separated by the LORD Jesus Christ from the Damned. "32 And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: 33 And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:32-34, 41). What does it mean that "He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (19:15)? Nothing gentle is obvious to the mind, because He must come down upon the ungodly with an Iron Rod of Judgment, i.e., "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Truly, "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15), and who can stay His Hand? "3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. 4 For the Day of Vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. 6 And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth" (Isaiah 63:3-6). Remember that day where the LORD said He would repay? "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19). Well, that Day has come, and "who shall be able to stand" (Revelation 6:17)?

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- "16 And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Another portrayal is given to us of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "He hath on His vesture [Greek, *himation*, upper garment, cloak, tunic, mantle] and on His thigh [Greek, *meros*, thigh, upper part of the leg between the hip and knee] a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"

(19:16). Perhaps the LORD Jesus will be wearing some kind of sash draped across His chest extending down past His hip with His title of KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, that will certainly be read and understood by the least to the greatest of His Armies, whether His enemies can read it or not. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:11). If meekness is to be properly understood as mild tempered and not easily provoked or irritated, then Jesus, who said, "I am meek and lowly of heart" (Matthew 11:29), must be properly and legitimately provoked, because He is returning to Earth with a Slaughter Weapon proceeding out of His mouth and a banner declaring His zeal to uphold the Moral Law of Love, i.e., I am KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The Zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). Should not our zeal for His Law of Love also be seen in the present as we demonstrate the Love to God and our Brethren that should define us? "34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). As we consider this word-painting of our LORD in His Second Coming, compare a few differences between the First and Second Advents of the LORD Jesus Christ: (1) Few knew of His Birth the First Time, but "every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7) the Second Time, (2) He came as a "Saviour" (Luke 2:11) the First Time, but His Governmental Office of "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16) will be exercised the Second Time, and (3) Some chose to reject Him, but were later saved the First Time, while those Obstinate Rejecters not "slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse" (19:21) at Armageddon, will be cast "into a furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:42), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48) the Second Time.

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- "17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;"

This is the famous Battle of Armageddon matching the Christ against the Antichrist in the Final Conflict, but the battle is *completely* against the Antichrist, for "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30). "2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. 4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5 The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the Earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him" (Nahum 1:2-6). We see an "angel standing in [Greek, *en*, in, by, with, among, at, on] the sun" (19:17). Even at the onset of the 21st Century, no one but some supernatural being could conceivably stand on the surface of the Sun-- a natural thermonuclear reactor, which could easily hold one million Earths, and whose surface temperature is 6,000 degrees Celsius (10,832 degrees Fahrenheit) and whose atmosphere of the surrounding corona is even hotter

at over one million degrees Celsius (greater than 1,800,032 degrees Fahrenheit)-- but, this is not foreign to our God, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego can well testify. "Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire" (Daniel 3:26). The "angel standing in the sun" (19:17)-- probably the "fourth angel [which] poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire" (16:8)-- cries "with a loud [Greek, *me-gas*, great] voice [Greek, *phone*, voice, sound], saying to all fowls that fly in the midst of heaven" (19:17) a message that only their Creator can communicate to both man and beast. A more lengthy text of the angel's message is given prophetically by the Prophet Isaiah. "1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the Earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. 2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter. 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. 5 For My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of My curse, to judgment. 6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. 7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. 8 For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion" (Isaiah 34:1-8). Specifically, what does the angel declare in this verse of the Revelation? "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (19:17). Without any brag, but just a statement of Omniscient Fact, the flesh and blood of the armies of the Antichrist will be eaten by the animals for supper. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). Interesting parallel: The Godly will eat with their LORD at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, while the Ungodly will be eaten by scavenging birds at Armageddon. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

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- "18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

The advance of weaponry since both World Wars, the Cold War, the Gulf War, and the most recent toppling of the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq has provided the media with ample opportunity to advertise the capabilities of military technology, but what chance do man's weapons have against the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, if those weapons cannot succeed even against the lowliest of Christ's Saints who claims this promise? "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). Rather than a detailed analysis of the Antichrist's battlefield tactics, the LORD gives John the specifics of the results of the battlefield carnage of the Antichrist's armies. Vultures, ravens, hawks,

eagles, crows, magpies, and gulls shall be given the "flesh [Greek, *sarx*, physical flesh] of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (19:18) to eat. Though the Almighty is capable of creating something out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), i.e., "God said... and it was so" (Genesis 1:9, 11, 24), and conversely to make something nothing, i.e., because "by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17), the Judge of All the Earth has graphically chosen to physically kill each rebel in this wholesale slaughter of Armageddon to make an impression upon all Moral Beings, especially upon those who will physically enter into the Earthly Millennial Kingdom, as well as for the stability of His Heavenly armies. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). Remember, Heaven is *not* a place where a Moral Lobotomy has been performed to disable the Moral Capacity of Its inhabitants, but the LORD has overwhelmingly and eternally persuaded Heaven's Citizens to seek Him, His Kingdom, and His Righteousness first. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). The method to God's purpose in Creation (design), the Judgment of Rebelling Angels (awe), the Flood (judgment), the Call of Abraham (preservation), the Giving of the Law (stability), the Founding of the Nation of Israel (propagation), the Judgment of Wayward Israel (restoration), the First Coming of the Messiah (hope), the Giving of the Gospel (love), the Pouring Out of the Spirit of the New Covenant (efficiency), the Judgment of the Professed Church (reclamation), and the Second Coming of Christ to Judge the World (holiness), all make powerful impressions upon the clay of the Moral Agency of Angels and Men to seek the Highest Good of Being-- to love God first and their neighbour as themselves. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

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- "19 And I saw the Beast, and the kings of the Earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army."

The actual Battle of Armageddon, the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14), is only briefly mentioned here, and not by name. Many personages of the Old Testament have already engaged in historic battles at Armageddon, e.g., Deborah and Barak at the "waters of Megiddo" (Judges 5:19), Gideon "in the valley of Jezreel" (Judges 6:33), King Saul "fell down slain in mount Gilboa" (1Samuel 31:1) at the southeast of the Vale of Jezreel, and King Josiah "came to fight [Pharaoh Necho] in the valley of Megiddo" (2Chronicles 35:22). [See our article, "The Conflicts of Armageddon" ---New Window, for more details on these past battles.] Not all of the world will be gathered at Armageddon, but the Beast (the Antichrist) will assemble the "kings of the Earth, and their armies" (19:19) to confront Jesus Christ as He returns to Earth. But, why would someone as demonically intelligent as Satan even bother to fight against Omnipotence, unless the Sin of Rebellion is a Moral Insanity? "This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead" (Ecclesiastes 9:3). Though the rank and file foot soldier of Antichrist is also committed against Christ, how do they know to assemble in Israel to oppose the returning Christ, unless the chain-of-command has been directed by Satan? "13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon [Satan], and out of the mouth of the Beast [the Antichrist], and out of the mouth of the False Prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles,

which go forth unto the kings of the Earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:13-14). Point of fact: Since "both small and great" (19:18) will be slain by the Returning LORD Jesus Christ, at this time, like any other, subordinates should have realized that commands and orders from superiors to do wrong or sinfully have no validity, and that they should have suffered the consequences at the hand of man for instead choosing to obey the higher commands of God. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). We, who are not presently gathered together to fight the LORD Jesus Christ at Armageddon, have chosen to throw in our lot with "Him that sat on the horse" (19:19) and to be a part of "His army" (19:19), for it is an impossibility to take a middle ground-- we must be either for or against His cause. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Besides, we do not wish to take the position of the Laodicean Christianity today that similarly is "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot" (Revelation 3:16), whom Christ further promised, "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (3:16).

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- "20 And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone."

We are told that both the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be captured alive and cast into the Lake of Fire, i.e., "these both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20). Since the Lake of Fire is the Final Place of Torment for those resurrected and judged at the White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, then the Antichrist and the False Prophet have been given the dubious distinction of their own special judgment, "for they are worthy" (Revelation 16:6). Those who believe that death is the annihilation of existence would have difficulty with Jehovah's Judgment eternally keeping the condemned alive, while forever delivering the most perfect physical and spiritual torment. "4 And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you Whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him" (Luke 12:4-5). The implication of Christ's words is that physical death is not the end of torment for the wicked. "The Only Wise God Our Saviour" (Jude 25) has evaluated the weight of sin and found it to be death, but this death is most properly an Eternal Death. "43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into Life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-44). Just as Heaven is the Unimaginably Wonderful Place where "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Corinthians 2:9), the Lake of Fire will be the Unimaginably Horrible Place of Torment, where not just the Resurrected Physical Bodies of the Wicked will feel the pain of the fire and brimstone, while not being allowed to succumb or be released from their torment, but they will be forever separated from the presence of the One Who Only is the Source of Joy. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of Joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). If God's Punishment sounds excessive, then we clearly do not comprehend correctly God's Justice. "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from

that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; a Just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me" (Isaiah 45:21). God *must* put limits on His Love and Mercy, or else He will be guilty of making meaningless any warning of punishment for disobedience, and further, it would even cast doubt on the certainty of His reward *for* obedience. "19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20).

The "Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20) is an apocalyptic symbol, as well as the substance of the Judgment of God Without Mercy, because it is the wisest way for God to punish the Wicked and support the Righteous, for what Child of God would want the release of Wickedly Wild Denizens from the Lake of Fire to terrorize the tranquility and peace of Heaven? "10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as Brute Beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. 12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 10-13). Perhaps you have viewed pictures of streams of lava flowing at night from a volcano. This would give you some idea of the Lake of Fire. Brimstone in the Greek is *theion*, which is the chemical element sulfur (sulphur). Sulfur is found in its free form in hot springs and volcanic regions. When oxidized, brimstone has the distinctive and suffocating rotten egg smell, and it burns with a blue flame. Sulfur is used in the manufacture of phosphate fertilizers. Though sulfur is a necessary component of all living cells, matches and gunpowder have been some of the more notable uses of sulfur. Also, acid rain has become one of the common ways sulfur pollutes the planet. Is it any wonder that God has chosen such a sight and smell to accompany His Judgment of the Wicked? "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isaiah 30:33). This Lake of Fire is not only the destiny of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, but those who are deceived by them will receive their punishment there, as well. Scripture clearly commands and warns all, "Be not deceived" (1Corinthians 6:9; 15:33; Galatians 6:7), so those who are deceived, loved not the Truth. "3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition; 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2Thessalonians 2:3, 10-12). The combined action of the Deceived is that they "received the Mark of the Beast" (19:20) and "worshipped [the Antichrist's] image" (19:20). [Our editorial, "Repentance After the Mark of the Beast?" ---New Window, suggests the slight possibility of repentance up to the Second Coming, but stresses that "no one should ever take the Mark-- much less, take it with the mental reservation that they they will repent of it later." "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (James 4:14).]

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- "21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

In context, the "remnant [that] were slain with the sword of Him [Christ] that sat upon the horse" (19:21) are the soldiers of the Antichrist at Armageddon, who are not immediately slain by the LORD Jesus Christ before the Beast and False Prophet have been cast alive into the Lake of Fire. Christ's "take-no-prisoners" conduct resembles the conquest of the Promised Land by the Old Testament Israelites-- preventing a future snare for God's people. "2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee. 16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deuteronomy 7:2, 16; 20:16). No mercy is appropriate, when the Wisdom of God requires it, as in the Final Judgment. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Birds, which the LORD promised, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the Earth, and upon every fowl of the air" (Genesis 9:2), will be compelled to feast upon the dead bodies of Christ's slain enemies, i.e., "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (Revelation 19:17), with the result that "all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (19:21). Thus, the fury of Antichrist's Condemned Army will be reduce to carrion for the birds. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24). The Judgment of the Nations, though not formally mentioned in this text, *must* occur at this point before the Millennium begins in the next chapter. The Gospel of Matthew mentions the Judgment of the Nations or Separation of the Sheep from the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46), which would be the separation of the Saved Jews (Nation Born in a Day) and Saved Gentiles (who repent at the Second Coming) *from* the remainder of the Lost World. "31 When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: 32 And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 46 And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment: but the Righteous into Life Eternal" (Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46). The Sword that "proceeded out of [the LORD's] mouth" (19:21) will be the last thing that the Wicked Remnant will experience as they are personally killed by the LORD Jesus Christ. "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17). With all the tender pictures we have of the Saviour, we must add to them the reality that He is also the Judge of All the Earth that must enforce punishment of those who have violated the Law of Love. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The carnage of this closing scene before Christ's Millennial Reign on Earth begins, is necessary to root out and physically slay all Rebels, for the LORD poignantly promised, "If ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:20). If Wisdom shows a way to reach the Lost in the present, do so, for prophetic events are transpiring so quickly that if left unconverted, that Lost One may well be numbered among the slain described in this scene following the Second Coming of Christ. "The LORD of Hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

Further chapters will be added until the Book of Revelation is completed.

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THE END