

**THE SEER, THE SAVIOR,  
AND THE SAVED**

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# **BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK**

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## **THE SEER, THE SAVIOR, AND THE SAVED**

**A NEW**

- Commentary**
- Workbook**
- Teaching Manual**

**James D. Strauss**

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**College Press, Joplin, Missouri**

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## DEDICATION

I live daily by the vicarious efforts of others! I pray God's rich and abiding blessings upon my mother and father, who have graciously and ceaselessly sacrificed that I might continue to obtain an adequate education for the Glory of Christ.

Wayne and Janet Shaw have opened their home and hearts to me. They are stewards par excellence! They have supported me both spiritually and financially. My prayer is that I will be able to finish many literary projects which I have already started, and thus produce concrete results of their unending confidence in me.

There is no way that I can express, in mortal language, my gratefulness to my wife Jewel and our two little Godsends, Joye Lu and Jeaneen Kay. They have helped beyond all my capacity to repay or even express. There is only one vindication of the things they have never received, and the time which was theirs that I have taken from them, because of my prolonged schooling, and that is that it will bring much glory to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to declare that I live daily by the vicarious labors of others.

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## PREFACE

### Emphasis in This Study

1. Word and Phrase Study will be emphasized because it is most fruitful for an initial study.
2. We will try to show O.T. source of imagery however, the O.T. does not always help in determining its significance in The Revelation.
3. We shall often take a position which is exegetically possible but not necessary the only position, without going into the critical grounds.
4. We shall take notice of various English translations but the basic text is the R.V. of 1901.
5. Notes and appendices will be provided to make available bibliographical data for further study.
6. Keep constantly in mind that many things cannot be settled about the message and often the imagery of the Book of Revelation even if we were writing a more technical work. We must have epistemological (source of knowledge) humility about many of the secrets of the book which have not yet been yielded up.
7. The Basic Message of the Book is clear, so we will strive not to become lost in minute details.
8. We shall provide an extended annotated bibliography on the Revelation in appendix of this study.
9. To the advanced student of the Word it will be apparent that we have been dependent on the great works of Charles, Swete, Beckwith, *et al.*!



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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION

### I. *The Title:*

1. The oldest, extant form of the title of this book was *Apocalypse of John*.
2. The Greek word *apocalypsis* has the same meaning as the Latin root from which we get the word *revelation*.
3. The title is singular (*Revelation*) not plural (*Revelations*).
4. While the title of the book as it stands in our 1901 A.V. translation is *The Revelation of John*, it does not mean that the book is about John, or that origin of the revelation is John. Jesus Christ is both the revealer and the one revealed.

### II. *The Revelation and Apocalyptic Literature:*

1. Apocalyptic Literature was a type of literature which contained secret, hidden teaching which was not to be disclosed to the uninitiated - (only those who belonged could know).
2. Liberal scholarship tries to connect *The Revelation* with this very prevalent type of literature. A body of literature came into being and was called *The Apocrypha*. The book of Revelation is certainly in the lineage of this type of non-canonical literature. But the difference lies in the fact that *The Revelation* is in direct lineage with the inspired Apocalyptic Literature of The Old Testament, i.e., the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah respectively. One need not appeal to nonbiblical Apocalyptic Literature in order to account for its unique form and imagery. *The Revelation* is the book of this form in The New Testament. This accounts for the difficulties many find as they begin studying this inspired work for the first time.

### III. *The Authorship and the Canon:*

1. The first to refer definitely to the book as from John was the Justin Martyr (c. 140 A.D.).

2. Irenaeus (c. 180 A.D.) assigns the book to the Apostle John repeatedly and without question.--Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was the disciple of the Apostle John.
3. Papias (c. 130 A.D.) is quoted as referring the book to John.
4. It was questioned by the sect of the Alogoi (about 190 A.D.) who assigned it to Cerinthus the Gnostic.
5. Later, Dionysius of Alexandria (250 A.D.) made a study of the language and style and asserted that it could never have been written by the author of the fourth Gospel.
6. Many have suggested that John the Presbyter wrote the book.
7. The Reformers rejected it as not being apostolic.
8. However, we can be sure that the ancient tradition is overwhelmingly in favor of John the Apostle as the Author.
9. The modern negative critical view admits several possibilities of authorship:
  - (a) If the Apostle John wrote the Gospel and Epistles of John, then John the Elder may have written the Apocalypse.
  - (b) If the Elder wrote the Gospel and Epistles, then the Apostle may have written *Revelation*.--Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.*, 1900-1950, p. 98, suggests that he was a Christian prophet of Asia Minor, (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1951).
10. The basis for the modern critical view:
  - (a) The style and vocabulary of *Revelation* is very much like that of the Gospel and epistles.--The Greek is barbarous and ungrammatical (See Charles Volume I, Introductory Section).
  - (b) The ideas and thought of *Revelation* are different from those of the other Johannine writings.
11. Arguments for John the Apostle as author:
  - (a) Godet and Alford contend that the similarities of these writings far outweigh the differences.--Consider *Word*, (19:13); *Lamb* (5:6); *water of life* (22:1).
  - (b) Many of the differences can be explained by the fact that the book is of a different character apocalyptic.

- (c) The so-called defects of style and grammar may well have been the advanced age of John, and the content of what John desired to say.
  - (d) In addition, the claim of Rev. 1:9, that the author was exiled on Patmos, is referred to John the Apostle by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius.
12. Because of the style and grammar of the book, some have suggested an early date such as 68, 69 A.D.—The pre-supposition is that by the time he wrote the Gospel he had learned better Greek.
13. Others date it at the time of Trajan, 112 A.D.
14. However, the traditional date places the writing of the book under Domitian (81-96 A.D.)
  - (a) Eusebius says that John was sent to Patmos during the latter part of Domitian's reign.
  - (b) Irenaeus also places the book at the same time as does Clement of Alexandria.
  - (c) It is also declared that John was 90 years of age at the time of the exile. (--Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.*, p. 98.)
15. These facts give reason for us to date the Apocalypse at 95-96 A.D.:
  - (a) It fits in with the decadence of the churches of that day.
  - (b) It fits Domitians's policy of punishment by exile.
  - (c) It fits the Domitianic type of persecution which grew out of the refusal of the Christians to engage in emperor worship.

#### IV. Ways of Interpreting The Revelation:

- (a) *Preterist*—past - fulfilled largely in destruction of Jerusalem and fall of Roman Empire.
- (b) *Continuous-Historical*—survey of history of the church.
- (c) *Spiritual*—symbolical, figurative; teaches triumph of good over wickedness.
- (d) *Futurist*—Largely predictive of future events - See Thiessen, *Introduction to the N.T.* pp. 323-327; Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan - was a very capable Evangelical Scholar.

Also see the following Words on *Interpretation*: The only extant early commentary on The Revelation available in English was written by Victorinus, Bishop of Patavium, died 303 A.D. This commentary is found in volume seven of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, pp. 344-360.

Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of St. John, Studies in Introduction with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, New York, 1919. This is the finest commentary produced by American scholarship.

E. E. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*; or, a Commentary on the *Apocalypse, Critical and Historical*, four volumes - 5th rev. edition, London, 1862. He has a 400 page history of the interpretation of The Revelation - indespensable!

William Lee, *The Revelation of St. John*. In The Anglican Commentary - edited by F. C. Cook. N.T., volume 4, New York, 1890. Exhaustive survey of the different interpretations of chapter beginning or a disputed passage beginning with the Fathers.

Frederich Bleek, *Lectures on The Apocalypse*, ed. by T. Hossbach, 1875. Contains excellent 50 page "History of the Use of the Apocalypse in The Church."

1. Introduction, 1:1-8
2. The Patmos vision of Christ, 1:9-20
3. Christ and the churches, chaps. 2, 3
  - (a) Letter to the church in Ephesus, 2:1-7
  - (b) Letter to the church in Smyrna, 2:8-11
  - (c) Letter to the church in Pergamos, 2:12-17
  - (d) Letter to the church in Thyatira, 2:18-29
  - (e) Letter to the church in Sardis, 3:1-6
  - (f) Letter to the church in Philadelphia, 3:7-13
  - (g) Letter to the church in Laodicea, 3:14-22
4. Christ and the Great Tribulation, chaps. 4-19
  - (a) The seven seals, 4:1-8:1
  - (b) The seven trumpets, 8:2-11:18
  - (c) The seven persons, 11:19-14:20
  - (d) The seven bowls of wrath, chaps. 15, 16
  - (e) The fall of Babylon, chaps. 17, 18
  - (f) The second coming of Christ, chp. 19.

5. Christ and the Millennium, chp. 20
  - (a) The binding of Satan, 20:1-3
  - (b) The millennial reign, 20:4-6
  - (c) The loosing and final doom of Satan, 20:7-10
  - (d) The Great White Throne Judgment, 20:11-15
6. Christ and the Eternal State, 21:1-22:5
  - (a) The new heaven and the new earth, 21:1,2
  - (b) The new conditions, 21:2-8
  - (c) The new Jerusalem, 21:9-22:5
7. Conclusion, 22:6-21.

#### V. *Peculiarities:*

1. This is the last book of the Bible—the consummation of God's revelation and of God's plan of the ages.
 

(a) <i>Genesis depicts:</i>	(b) <i>Revelation depicts:</i>
Paradise Lost	Paradise Regained
Creation of Heaven and earth	The new heaven and earth
Earthly Paradise of God	Heavenly paradise
Satan's appearance, sin's beginning	Satan punished, sin wiped out
The rise of Babylon	The doom of Babylon
Man estranged from God	Man re-united with God
2. This is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret, and yet it was written to be understood (an unveiling, a revelation).
3. Its place among the apocalyptic books of the Bible
4. The special blessing promised to those who read and obey the book, 1:3.
5. The pattern of sevens which runs throughout the book.
6. The unique letters to the seven churches.

#### IV. *The Basic Pattern of the Revelation:*

1. The book is mainly made up of 4 series of sevens generally with various parenthetical sections interspersed.
  - (a) The seven churches
  - (b) The seven seals
  - (c) The seven trumpets
  - (d) The seven bowls of wrath
2. The pattern of the presentation of the last three sets of sevens is the same:

- |     | <i>Seals</i>        | <i>Trumpets</i> | <i>Bowls of Wrath</i>    |
|-----|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | The first six units | Ch.6            | 8:2-9:21      15:1-16:12 |
| (b) | The parenthesis     | Ch.6            | 10:1-11:14      16:13-16 |
| (c) | The seventh unit    | 8:1             | 11:15-18      16:17-21   |
3. The use of the O.T. in the Book of the Revelation.
- (a) Various reckonings of the number of O.T. references in Revelation have been given.
    - (1) Hunter, *Interpreting the N.T.* op. cit. p. 97, says the Apocalypse has over 500 references to the O.T.
    - (2) Swete is referred to by Toy, *Quotations in the N.T.* as saying that the 404 verses of the Apocalypse contain 278 O.T. references.
    - (3) Merrill Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957. See excellent chapter XI, The O.T. Background of Revelation, pp. 101-116.
    - (4) Westcott and Hort', *Greek New Testament* gives over 500 references and allusions to O.T. in The Revelation,
    - (5) Wm. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Baker Book House, 1952, chap. 6, pp. 57-73.

## VII. *The Nature of the Book:*

1. A book of symbols, 1:1
  - (a) This is implied by the word "signified"—to show by signs (1:1).
  - (b) These visions and symbols are given, not to show how these things look, but to teach certain truths concerning the person or event depicted.—Not that we are to imagine Christ standing encircled by literal candlesticks, but we are to see the truth that He is in the midst of the churches.
  - (c) Ezekiel and Zechariah likewise contain this apocalyptic characteristic.
2. A book of prophecy, 1:3
  - (a) John is a prophet following the tradition of the O.T.
  - (b) We must go back to the O.T. prophetic books in order to fully understand the symbols of the book—Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Revelation.

Points of Contact in the Writings of Ezekiel, Daniel,  
 Zechariah, and Revelation  
 (E. Stands for Ezekiel; R. for Revelation; Z. for Zechariah;  
 D. for Daniel)

I was among the captives	E. 1:1 R. 1:9
The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel	E. 1:3 R. 1:10
A whirlwind out of the north	E. 1:4
Four winds strove upon the great sea	D. 7:2
A fire infolding itself, &c.	E. 1:4
Lamps of fire	R. 4:5
Four Living creatures	E. 1:5
Four great beasts	D. 7:3
Four beasts	R. 4:6
The likeness of a man	E. 1:5
The first beast was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.	D. 7:4
The third beast had a face as a man.	R. 4:7
Every one had four faces and four wings	E. 1:6, 10:14, 2
The third beast had four wings and four heads	D. 7:6
The fourfold nature distributed severally to each individual.	R. 4:7
Four wings	E. 1:6
Eagle's wings, four wings	D. 7:4, 6
Six wings	R. 4:8
The appearance of lamps	E. 1:13
Seven lamps	R. 4:8

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Wheels	E. 1:16, 10:9, 12, 13, 16, 19 D 7:9
The colour of the terrible crystal	E. 1:22
Glass like unto crystal	R. 4:6
Like the noise of great waters	E. 1:24, 43:2 D 10:6 R. 1:15
A throne	E. 1:26, 10:1 D. 7:9 R. 4:2, 3
The colour of amber, as the appearance of fire	E. 1:27, 8:2
Like the beryl	D. 10:6 E. 10:9 R. 1:14-16 10:1
The bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain	E. 1:28
A rainbow	R. 4:3, 10:1
I fell upon my face	E. 1:28, 3:23 44:4 D. 8:17 R. 1:17
Stand upon thy feet	E. 2:1, 3:24 D. 10:11 R. 1:17
A roll of a book	E. 2:9
A flying roll	Z. 5:1
A little book	R. 10:2, 8-10
Eat this roll	E. 3:1 R. 10:9

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The spirit took me up	E. 3:12, 8:3, 19:1, 24, 37:1, 43:5
I was in the spirit	R. 1:10
A man clothed with linen	E. 9:3, 11, 44:17 D. 10:5, 12:6, 7 Z. 3:3-5 R. 15:6, 19:8, 14
A mark upon the foreheads	E. 9:4 R. 7:3
Come not near any one whom is the mark	E. 9:6 R. 9:4
Scatter the coals of fire over the city	E. 10:2 R. 8:5
Full of eyes	E. 10:12 R. 4:8
The living creature	E. 10:15, 20
Four living creatures	E. 1:5 D. 7:3 R. 4:6
The glory of the Lord stood upon the mountain	E. 11:23 Z. 14:4
The day of the Lord	E. 13:5, 30:3 Z. 14:1 R. 6:17, 16:14
Written in the writing of the house of Israel	E. 13:9 R. 20:12

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The vine-tree	E. 15:2, 6, 17:6-9 19:10-14 R. 14:18, 19
The whore	E. 16:15-34, 23:1-21 Z. 5:7, 8 R. 17:1-6
Punishment of the whore	E. 16:35-43, 23:22-49 R. 17:16
A goodly cedar	E. 17:3, 22-24, 31:3-18 D. 4:10-12
Prophecy against the forest	E. 20:46-48 Z. 11:1, 2
Bring into the wilderness	E. 20:35 R. 12:6, 14
Mine holy mountain	E. 20:40 Z. 8:3
The sword	E. 21:3-5, 9-20, 28, 30:4, 24, 32:10 Z. 13:7 R. 1:16, 19:15
I will make the pile for fire great	E. 24:9-13
The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever	R. 14:11
A merchant of the people	E. 27:3, 33, 28:5 R. 18:3

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Fine linen, blue and purple	E. 27:7, 16 R. 18:12, 16
Ivory	E. 27:6, 15 R. 18:12
Precious stones and gold	E. 27:22, 28:13 Z. 9:3 R. 18:12, 16
Persons of men	E. 27:13 R. 18:13
Spices	E. 27:19, 22 R. 18:13
Horses	E. 27:14 R. 18:13
Lambs and rams and goats	E. 27:21 R. 18:13
They shall fall into the midst of the seas	E. 27:27, 34 Z. 9:4 R. 18:2, 21
They shall cry bitterly	E. 27:30 R. 18:9, 11, 15, 19
Thine heart is lifted up	E. 28:2, 17 D. 4:30 R. 18:7
There shall be no more any grieving thorn	E. 28:24 R. 21:4
The horn of Israel to bud	E. 29:21 D. 8:9, 10 Z. 6:12 R. 22:16

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I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean	E. 36:25 Z. 13:1 R. 1:5, 7:13, 14
The stony heart	E. 36:26 Z. 7:12
The breath came into them	E. 37:10 R. 11:11
They shall be my people and I will be their God	E. 37:23, 27 Z. 8:8 R. 21:3
My tabernacle shall be with them	E. 37:26, 27, 28 Z. 8:3 R. 21:3
Gog, the land of Magog	E. 38:2, 3, 39:1 R. 20:8, 9
I will bring thee forth and all thine army	E. 38:4, 9, 16 R. 16:14, 20:8
A great shaking	E. 38:19 Z. 14:4 R. 16:18
Great hailstones	E. 38:22 R. 16:21
Fire and brimstone	E. 38:22 R. 20:9, 10
I will give thee unto the ravenous birds	E. 39:4, 17-22

R. 19:17,  
18, 21

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A very high mountain	E. 40:2, 43:12 Z. 8:3 R. 21:10
A city	E. 40:2 R. 21:10
Like the appearance of brass	E. 40:2, 1:7 D. 10:6 R. 1:15
A line of flax and a measuring reed	E. 40:3 Z. 2:1 R. 11:1, 21:15
The outward court	E. 40:17 R. 11:2
Pillars	E. 40:49 R. 3:12
They shall put on other garments	E. 44:17 Z. 3:4, 5 R. 7:13, 14, 19:8
He measured it by the four sides	E. 42:20 R. 21:16
The earth shined with His glory	E. 43:2, X:4 R. 18:1
I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever	E. 43:7, 9 R. 21:3
Most holy	E. 43:12, 48:14

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14 THE SEER, THE SAVIOUR, AND THE SAVED

Z. 8:3, 14:20,  
21  
R. 21:2, 27,  
22:3, 14,  
15

They shall enter into my sanctuary	E. 44:16 R. 21:22, 24, 22:3, 4
The gate shall not be shut until the evening The gates of it shall not be shut at all by days for there is no night there	E. 46:2 R. 21:25
The gate	E. 46:1, 9 R. 22:14
Four corners	E. 46:21-23, 48:16, 17
Four-square	R. 21:16
Waters issued out of the house A fountain opened Water of life	E. 47:1-5 Z. 13:1, 14:8 R. 22:1, 17
Very many trees The tree of life	E. 47:7, 12 R. 22:2
Go into the sea	E. 47:8 Z. 14:8
The waters shall be healed	E. 47:8, 9 Z. 14:10 R. 22:2
On either side of the river	E. 47:12 R. 22:2
New fruit according to his months	E. 47:12 R. 22:2
The fruit for meat	E. 47:12 R. 22:2

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The leaf for medicine	E. 47:12 R. 22:2
Three gates	E. 48:31-34 R. 21:13
The name of the city shall be "The Lord is there"	E. 48:35 Z. 2:10 R. 21:3, 22:3

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*Special Study*The Status of the Book of Revelation in the  
Western and Eastern Churches

## OUTLINE

## INTRODUCTION:

The relationship of Early Christian Chiliasm (The belief in Christ's return to earth to reign during the millennium) (Montanism, etc.) and the general attitude toward the Apocalypse in Asia Minor.

## SECTION ONE:

The General attitude in the West in about the year A.D. 200  
The Muratorian Canon  
Tertullian  
The Alogoi  
Hippolytus

## SECTION TWO:

The General attitude in the East during the period of Origen  
Clement of Alexandria  
Origen  
Dionysius

## SECTION THREE:

Development of General attitude within the period of the early church fathers.

The East Beyond Alexandria  
Alexandria  
The West in General

## CONCLUSION:

Conclusions concerning the attitude of the Church both East and West concerning the Apocalypse.

## INTRODUCTION

This essay is an elementary and cursory effort to trace what the early church Fathers have said concerning the status of the Book of Revelation. Many imperative issues can only be mentioned and passed over, because of the limited extent of this work.

We shall establish the general attitude of both the Eastern and Western Church. Inseparably involved in such a study is the history and development of the canon of the New Testament, the nature, function, and extent of authority involved in extra-biblical tradition.

Our purpose shall be confined to the tracing of the first explicit witness to the Apostolic origin and authoritative status through the number of voices raised in criticism of the tradition of the Apostolic origin of the Apocalypse and beyond to the more universal concensus.

What was the attitude of the early Church toward the Apocalypse? In order to give both the positive and negative positions we shall examine many of the positions extant only in Eusebius the historian and the titanic supply of Early (90-323 A.D.) Literature.

The enthusiasm latent in early Chiliasm is a vital aspect in our gaining a credible perspective to examine specific statements concerning the place of the Apocalypse in the ancient church.

I have no concern to give even a comprehensive survey of the history of chiliasm, but only to view it as it contributes to an understanding of the history of the canonical regard for the Apocalypse of John.

In the epistles of Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna there is nothing that suggests the doctrine of Chiliasm. Nevertheless, in I Clement we read<sup>1</sup> of a sudden coming of the Lord to judgment.

It is a striking fact that the earliest writer to use the Apocalypse with normative regard is also the first Christian Chiliasm (Papias).<sup>2</sup> It is also important to note that it is in Asia Minor where we note (to this I shall speak next) nearly all of the evidence for a use of and high regard for our work in the

first half of the second century. It was in Asia Minor where this doctrine had taken its deepest roots. Here, there was a general interest in apocalyptic and eschatological literature.

Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, volume III, chp. 3a vs. 3) and Irenaeus (*adv. Heresys* 5, 33, 4) provides most of our extant information concerning Papias. Though the description of Eusebius is not adequate to warrant the conclusion that Papias was completely absorbed in Chiliasm, it is the only extant information we have that Papias' millennial teaching was based on a misunderstanding of the message of John's Apocalypse. Yet, it points to his attitude toward the document under discussion.

Justin Martyr<sup>3</sup> also appeals to the apocalypse to support his belief in the millennium. It is very apparent that he was strongly influenced not only by the prophetical passages which he quotes from the Old Testament, but also by his regard for the Apocalypse. It is not likely that in his early Christian years in Asia Minor Justin came under the influence of the bishop of Hierapolis who at that time was at the peak of his influence?

In as much as Papias and Justin were the only authors of whom it can be safely stated that they were Chiliasts, and the eschatological expressions of many others exclude the specific connotation of the assertion that Chiliasm was an essential aspect of the faith of early Christianity needs revision. Chiliastic belief is usually accompanied by a high regard for the Apocalypse, and indeed it may well have been a factor which tended to make the work popular.

We must raise a more fundamental question concerning its general acceptance as authoritative writing—what was the real ground for its early use?

Did Papias and Justin accept its testimony because they with Christians generally regarded all prophetic utterances as divine and canonical, or was apostolic origin the prime criterion?

Though the Apostolic office held great influence in the Church there were other influences, and among these the Christian prophets<sup>4</sup> held a very high place of significance.

Especially interesting for our present discussion of the comparative authority of the Apostles and the Christian Prophets before the rise of Montanism is the witness of the Didache.<sup>5</sup> This volume furnishes irrefutable argument in support of the view that in the early Church Prophets were regarded as

spokesmen of The Spirit in a way the Apostles were not, and their messages were received on a par with the Old Testament. This is also the basic attitude in the other volumes in the Apostolic Fathers.

From the perspective of the preceding testimony we will examine the testimony of those writers whom we have found either to accept or reject the Apocalypse as an authority. Space forbids that we compare other prophetic works, such as the Shepherd of Hermas, with the Apocalypse of John. The Shepherd was also received in the Church as divine, but this paper is only concerned with pointing out the general attitude toward the Apocalypse of John.

In Asia and Gaul a new prophecy arose in the form of Montanism.<sup>6</sup> It is during this period that we note an intensification of attack upon the authority of the Johannine prophecy.

One of the difficulties facing the investigator of Montanism is that of distinguishing the source, which describe the movement in its original form from those which reflect later modification of it. In my study I have become convinced of the vital place the rise of Montanism played in the negative attitude toward the Apocalypse of John. This could become a thesis, but I will only mention it in passing.

According to the most credible data it was about the year 156 A.D. when Montanus first came forward with his prophetic message at Ardabau in Phrygia. The leader was soon joined by the prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla. The center of the movement was soon changed to Pepuza and Tymion, two small Phrygian villages, but it spread rapidly throughout Asia Minor. There is extant a more complete body of sources concerning its movement into the West, but this was in a later period. The Montanists were finally driven out and excommunicated. It is possible that the Montanist use of the Apocalypse led some to reject the book altogether and ascribe it to Cerinthus.

From the Montanists and their certain use and acceptance of the Apocalypse we turn to examine the difficult question of whether there was a second century group in Asia Minor which rejected the work under investigation. The Alogoi<sup>7</sup> of Asia Minor are very difficult to examine, but we know enough for our present study.

Irenaeus mentions a group who denies both the Gospel and the book of the prophetic spirit, but he does identify them as the Alogoi. There is no evidence that the western Alogoi were

dependent for their criticism of the writings of John upon a second century source from Asia Minor.

The indirect reference in Irenaeus to certain anti-montanists is all of the specific details we have. A study of the relevant literature shows the diversity of opinion concerning this matter, but not even Zahn, Harnack, nor Bousset were certain in the efforts to make identification of Irenaeus' statement as having reference to *Alogoi* of Asia Minor.

Since Irenaeus is an important link between the Churches of Asia Minor and those of Gaul we shall conclude this elementary introduction by pointing out Irenaeus's positive attitude toward the Apocalypse.

Eusebius tells us of the positive attitude of both Melito of Sardes and Apollonius. Apollonius quotes the Apocalypse readily.

The Churches of Lyon and Vienne were much interested in the rise of Montanism in Asia Minor, and perhaps the earliest extant reference to this movement is contained in a letter sent by the brethren of these Churches to the Roman bishop, Eleutheros, by the hand of Irenaeus, who was then presbyter of Lyon. At the same time (ca. 177) a letter was sent to the Churches of Phrygia and Asia.<sup>8</sup> The high regard which these churches had for the Apocalypse is clearly shown in the long letter to the Churches in Phrygia and Asia concerning the severe persecution they had suffered under Marcus Aurelius. Besides a number of cases of the use of the language of this writing, Revelation 22:11 is the only direct quotation in the whole letter. And it is particularly noteworthy that here for the first time the Apocalypse is cited as a book of Scripture, the formula "that the Scripture might be fulfilled" being used.<sup>9</sup> As we have already stated Irenaeus was an important link between Asia Minor and Gaul, but now we turn to the situation in Rome and Carthage.

Between these two western Churches, there was fought out a battle of great significance for the future of the status of the Apocalypse. In the West Tertullian, Gaius, and Hippolytus are representative of different tendencies and attitudes. Before discussing the testimony of these prominent scholars it is necessary to note the important witness of an anonymous fragment named after its discoverer, the Canon Muratori.

SECTION ONE: General Attitude in the  
West Circa Two Hundred A.D.

The fragment, Canon Muratori, purports to present a list of canonical books received in the Catholic Church through the world, and also calls attentions to certain books which were not given canonical status. The scholarly concensus concerning this document is that it originated in the West. The limits for the date of its origin are determined by its statement that Hermas wrote "very recently in our times,"<sup>10</sup> and further identification of this with the times of Pius, bishop of Rome. This allows a choice in the period between 160 and 2???. Its attitude toward Montanism, which it regards as heretical, hardly allows a date much before the end of the century. The problem of dating the fragment is intensified by our ignorance as to whether the document was originally Latin or Greek. Wescott gives us the Latin text in his *On the Canon of The New Testament*. Without a word of comment or trace of a defense against expressions of hostility to the Apocalypse of John the author of the fragment states that the book is received. The author takes note of the opposition to the Apocalypse of Peter. It is an important factor that the author was not opposed to apocalyptic in general or he would have rejected the Apocalypse of John as he did the Apocalypse of Peter. Here we must note that, at least as far as the fragment was concerned the claim to apostolic origin was not an adequate defense nor reason for accepting documents as canonical. The Shepherd of Hermas was also rejected by the author of the fragment.

The whole attitude that at one time the Church possessed a canon of Apocalypses, which were accepted apart from any question as to their authorship and time of their origin is not grounded in fact, and particular the fragment under consideration goes against this position.

The Montanism of the West is not simply a later reproduction of the New Prophecy of Asia Minor. It made its way to Rome and Africa apparently after it became schismatic in the East. The modification of its belief and action enabled Montanism to enter into the Roman Church. Undoubtedly, the enthusiasm and rigorism as characteristics of western Montanism is due in no small measure to the fact that its history for two decades ran parallel with and often inseparable from the life of Tertullian.

In the writings which follow these stirring times Tertullian<sup>11</sup> has come out on the side of the Montanist, but as a Montanist trying to reform the Church from within.

We see accordingly that the Montanist prophecy confirmed Tertullian in his Chiliasm, and gave him the assurance that the coming of the Lord was imminent. Gaius' criticism of the Apocalypse seems to be based upon Montanist exegesis of it.<sup>12</sup> In Tertullian's treatise "On Modesty"<sup>13</sup> he discusses in chapter 12 to 19 the teaching of the Apostolic instrument on adultery, and in the final chapter refutes objections from the Apocalypse of John. The normative use of the work is apparent from the method of utilization. Tertullian never uses extra biblical Apocalypse as normative.

We may conclude that Tertullian agrees essentially with Irenaeus and the Canon Muratori with regard to the canonical significance of the Apocalypse.

We must now take into consideration the opposition to the Apocalypse. Gaius and the Alogoi were as was mentioned in the introduction, the brilliant opponents of the Apocalypse of John in the West during the second century A.D.

It was while Zephyrinus (199-217) was bishop of Rome that Gaius, a member of the Church of Rome, wrote a dialogue which recorded the arguments he had used in a dispute with a certain leader of the Montanists named Proclus.<sup>14</sup> This work was at the disposal of Eusebius, for he quotes from it more than once. Dionysius of Alexandria was apparently excerpting it in his criticism of the Apocalypse Hippolytus<sup>15</sup> (*kephalēa kata Gaion*) and the extant source of the fragments (Dionysius Bar Salibi) agree in reporting that these opponents of the Apocalypse ascribed it to Cerinthus, and there can be no doubt that the dogmatic motive back of this act was hostility to Montanism.

Gaius was also critical of the Gospel of John, but our meager extant sources do not permit use to examine the details of his criticism of the Gospel or the Apocalypse. The main thrust of Gaius' criticism centers around the tension between the Eschatology of the Synoptics and Paul (these were his criterion) and the specific statement in the Apocalypse concerning the details of the Judgment and Coming of Christ.

The details of our knowledge with regard to the criticism of the Alogoi rest ultimately on the single work of Gaius and Hippolytus' (of Rome) answer to it is confirmed in that all these sources reveal the work of a critic who is moved by dogmatic motives.

All of these sources attribute the Apocalypse to Cerinthus, a docetic Gnostic. None of these sources point out the Jewish elements in the Gnostic heresy of Cerinthus; therefore it would be very difficult for anyone to account for his writing the Apocalypse.

In the Alogoi we have the bold and unscrupulous attempt of certain extreme opponents of the Montanists to discredit certain writings of which the Montanists were particularly fond, even though these writings had long enjoyed a place of honor among the authoritative writings which were, at least, as early as the time of Irenaeus spoken of and used in normative manner.

The last witness to be mentioned concerning Western attitude toward the Apocalypse will be Hippolytus of Rome. His dependence upon Orenaeus is unmistakable, but he was not a mere repeater of another's learning. The contact Hippolytus makes with the Apocalypse is again the indirect attack upon Montanism.

His use of and regard for the Apocalypse are easily discovered from his exegetical treatise *On Christ and Anti-Christ* and *Commentary on Daniel*. Hippolytus, when he was still a presbyter in the Church at Rome, took a very active part in the anti-Montanist struggle of the West.

We may conclude that as an exegete, apologist, and polemicist the great Hippolytus took his stand upon the canonical Scriptures among which, the Apocalypse was numbered.

## SECTION TWO: The General Attitude in the East During the Period of Origen

In Alexandria and its area of influence, the Apocalypse experienced a somewhat different fortune. As early as the first decades of the third century its canonic position was very secure, it is equally clear, on the other hand, that the Alexandrian theology ultimately was a very weighty factor in lessening the regard for it in certain parts of the Church. The most important witness is Clement of Alexandria.

In a narrative recorded by Eusebius in a section devoted to the events of the reign of Trajan, Clement relates that after the death of the tyrant (Dometian), the apostle John as a very aged man passed from the island of Patmos to Ephesus; and this reference to his forced residence on Patmos suggests that

he believed that the visions of the Apocalypse were received at this time.<sup>16</sup> That Clement and the Church at Alexandria accepted the Apocalypse as Scripture is proved in a passage where he relates that certain women appealed to its description of the materials of the heavenly city in defense of their taste for precious stones, and he declares that they failed to understand the symbolism of the Scriptures.<sup>17</sup>

This survey of the evidence shows that circa 200 A.D. in Alexandria as in Rome and Carthage the Apocalypse was accepted as canonic. But this conclusion is somewhat premature, because Clement also utilizes the Epistle of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of Peter. The term *paradosis* applies to the witness of the Lord in the testimonies of the gospels, but also to the latter ecclesiastical explications of them.

The age of the Apostles is sharply separated from the succeeding period. The teaching of the Lord begins with Augustus - the preaching of His apostles at least to the end of Paul's ministry is completed under Nero. In contrast to this the heresiarchs like Basilides can trace their teaching only as far back as about the time of Hadrian.<sup>18</sup> - Clement does call the *Didache* - Scripture, but this may merely point out his ambiguous language; because he knows of only four canonical gospels but uses other records of the life of Christ. Even though Clement's statements are less decisive than the western fathers, this can be accounted for by the looseness of his language concerning apostolic and post-apostolic tradition. If this general attitude is not accepted, then the extant literature of Clement plainly contradicts itself on the matter under consideration.

The successor of Clement as head of the catechetical school at Alexandria will be the next consideration. Origen<sup>19</sup> (c. 185-254) literary activity extended over most of the first half of the third century.

Origen perpetrates the spiritualizing method of the school at Alexandria, but his testimony to the Canonic authority of the Apocalypse is distinguished both by the frequency of his appeal and the explicitness of his classification. That the Apocalypse had a secure place among the New Testament writings (as far as Origen is concerned) is confirmed by a passage preserved by Eusebius giving Origen's explicit expressions on the canon.<sup>20</sup> (Our paper is too elementary and cursory to discuss the very apparent differences in Origen's private opinion and that which he published in his works generally concerning the Apocalypse.)

This tension in no way points to an uncertain status for the Apocalypse at this time, because Origen uses it as normative and believes John to be a prophet.

Although certain books are still spoken of as disputed, the testimony of Origen shows that the Church was conscious of having received the New Testament from the tradition of the preceding generation.

Origen's eschatological viewpoint and his attitude toward Chiliasm are important for a proper evaluation of his testimony concerning the canonical status of the Apocalypse and the last witness (Dionysius) in this section of the paper.

Origen's allegorical hermeneutics plays an important part in his understanding of the Apocalypse. His viewpoint could be nothing but offensive to many of his contemporaries. His utter lack of sympathy with the Chiliastic expectations which were based primarily upon the Apocalypse, gives his unequivocal testimony to the canonical status of the Apocalypse.

The age of Origin was a time of tensions and persecutions under the policy of the Roman emperors and Egypt received its share of hostility.

Eusebius<sup>21</sup> relates how the opponents of Origen's hermeneutics found a spokesman in an Egyptian bishop, Nepos of Arisinae. In a work entitled, *Refutation of the Allegorists* Nepos defends the literal exegesis of the Apocalypse against that of Origen.

Dionysius,<sup>22</sup> bishop of Alexandria, who had been a pupil of Origen, settled this tension by a visit to the district where the difficulty was most intense and showed how the literalistic exegesis was untenable, and thus through his efforts restored peace.

The discussion is somewhat nubilous, but Dionysius has a pious regard for the work. Dionysius provides the framework of the critical analysis of the difference between the language, character, etc., of the Gospel and the Apocalypse. Dionysius did not believe John of tradition wrote the work, but he did not commit himself to another John as author.

There can be no doubt that Dionysius was first of all interested in destroying the influence of this writing which had given consolation to the Chiliasts.

He insists that the writer was holy, inspired, saw a revelation, etc., but at the same time his whole aim was to weaken the regard for it. In other words, no matter how much he affirms

that his remarks have nothing to do with the canonicity of the Apocalypse, he shows that this is his first concern. Origen's canon included the Apocalypse, and his student Dionysius realized that if his opinion that the Apocalypse was less worthy of respect was to gain ground effectively against the peculiar love for it on the part of the Chiliasts, its position in the Canon would have to be shaken. How successful he was remains to be considered in the next section.

### SECTION THREE: Development of the General Attitude Within the Patristic Period

In this concluding section I shall trace in a summary manner the history of the acceptance or rejection of the Apocalypse as having canonical status until circa the end of the fourth century, when the influence and authority of Athanasius in the east, and Augustine and the African councils in the west, the development of the canon came to a conclusion in the Catholic Church.

The fact that Eusebius championed the basic criticism of Dionysius caused certain eastern Churches to sustain their criticism concerning the Apocalypse.

Methodius<sup>23</sup> was an opponent of Origens theology. His frequent use of it as Scripture shows that the criticism of Dionysius and Origen had made no impression upon him. The criticism of Dionysius therefore failed to take root in Asia Minor, and as we shall see in Alexandria, but we must look to Palestine as the soil where it first bore fruit.

Caesarea, in Palestine, had stood under the sway of the Origenist Theology. Here Eusebius came under the spell of this Theology. Of all the men who were in a position to carry to an effective conclusion the criticism which Dionysius had begun, none enjoyed greater advantage than Eusebius. Emperor Constantine commissioned him to prepare fifty Bibles for the Church. This points to the general esteem the Church had for Eusebius. It is also vital that we recall his place at Nicea.

The prominence which Eusebius gives the criticism of Dionysius upon the Apocalypse by devoting to it a whole chapter in his *Ecclesiastical History* is motivated by more than historical interest. Eusebius is strongly inclined to the view of Dionysius that the Apostle John did not write the Apocalypse and

believes that the double mention of John by Papias makes up in part for the deficiency in historical foundation under which this hypothesis suffers.

We have already mentioned Eusebius' three catagories of literature recognized, disputed, and heretical. It is interesting to note that he lists the Apocalypse under both Recognized and Spurious.<sup>24</sup> Now this hesitating attitude can only mean that Eusebius was at odds with the Church. Personally he is quite ready to classify it with spurious works, but in deference to its acceptance as canonic not only in the west, but also by the leading teachers of the east, including Origen, he places it among the undisputed books. Although it may not be overlooked that Eusebius does not fail to mention testimonies to the use of the Apocalypse as authoritative.

It is particularly in Cappadocia of Asia Minor and in Syria that in the course of the fourth century, we meet with expressions of a hesitating or wholly negative attitude toward the Apocalypse. Two of the Cappadocian theologians, Gregory of Nazianzum (c. 389) and Amphilocius of Iconium (after 394), in giving lists of the New Testament books do not list the Apocalypse.<sup>25</sup> These witnesses make it apparent that among the influential theologians of Cappadocia the canonical position of the Apocalypse was insecure.

Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 386) held certain catechetical discourses as early as the middle of the century in Jerusalem, in the course of which he gave a list of the books of the Old and New Testaments which were read in the Churches should not be read in private either.<sup>26</sup> He is no doubt following Dionysius and Origen in their attitudes toward the Apocalypse.

Already in the second century the Apocalypse was accepted as an authoritative book in the Church at Antioch, but at the end of the fourth century it was evidently absent from the Bible of this Church. We must notice that in Antioch the Apocalypse was accepted (c 2nd century), because Theophilus uses testimonies from it in his writings.<sup>27</sup>

How are we to evaluate this rejection of the Apocalypse as a New Testament book in these eastern Churches? There are so many factors involved which could never be satisfactorially answered we can but contrast the eastern attitude with the Western acceptance of the Apocalypse.

There was no more commanding figure in the Egyptian (Alexandrian) Church during the fourth century than Athanasius,

who was bishop of Alexandria from 329 until his death in 373. In one of his annual Paschal Letters Athanasius included a list of the writings of the divine Scripture.<sup>28</sup> In distinction from Eusebius, Athanasius no longer speaks of anti legomena - there are only canonical books and he has no hesitation in listing the Apocalypse with the other New Testament writings. Sharply distinguished from these canonical books are those which were appointed by the fathers to be read for instruction. This unhesitating acceptance of the canonicity of the Apocalypse is characteristic of the Alexandrian Church, also in its later history.

After Hippolytus' refutation of Gaius there is no clear evidence of doubt as to either the Apostolicity or the authority of the Apocalypse. This seems to be the general attitude in the West, at least from the fourth century.

In the course of the fourth century the same high regard for the Apocalypse continues. With the reign of Constantine the Church entered upon a new period of development being no longer disturbed by persecutions.

Jerome (c. 419) was acquainted with doubts expressed with regard to the canonicity of the Apocalypse in the east, but is convinced that it has canonical and ecclesiastical authority. Jerome's translation of the Bible makes it apparent what his general attitude toward the canon was, because he included our present list including the Apocalypse.

Augustine (d.c. 430) cites the Apocalypse often in his *City of God*. In a passage in his work on *Christian Doctrine* he gives a list of the works in our present canon. The conformation of the Canon of the rest of the Church to that of Athanasius and Augustine was only a matter of time.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusions concerning the attitude of the Church both East and West concerning the Apocalypse.

Our main concerns have been to point out some of the positive and negative attitudes towards the Apocalypse and the circumstances under which the attitudes arose.

The factor of the nature of the Apostolic, Prophetic Offices are vital for understanding Montanism and Chiliastic thought in general.

It is also imperative to note how the above influences affected the attitude of various national Churches. The political forces involved in persecution gave impetus to the use of the Apocalypse and the distorted use created much of the negative thought. Since it is impossible to discover empirically the process of canonization we can only compare attitudes and the national Churches and their major theological emphasis.

We also noted that general apocalyptic<sup>29</sup> was not categorically compared with the biblical apocalypse.

But with all our historical investigation we cannot say that the development of the N.T. Canon and the history of the Apocalypse as a member of it, has been fully explained. For we cannot but recognize that behind and through this historical process there was a guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*Note:* The use of The Book of Revelation in the Apostolic Fathers. See *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*: A Committee of Oxford Society of Historical Theology, Oxford Press, 1905. This book discusses the text of *Revelation*:

- 1:7, 13 - p. 16
- 7:14 - p. 110
- 21:5 - p. 16
- 22:10 - p. 17
- 22:12 - p. 17, 58

A brief, broad outline might be helpful. Dr. Merrill Tenney has provided such an outline in his *Interpreting Revelation*.

The Prologue: (1:1-8)

Vision I: The Seven Churches of Asia (1:9-3:22)

Vision II: The Process of World Judgment (4:1-16:21)

Vision III: The Climax of Judgment (17:1-21:8)

Vision IV: The Eternal City (21:9-22:5)

Epilogue (22:6-21)

This framework was used in dividing our more extended outline into four sections in order to make study easier by dealing with a broad section at a time.

## FOOTNOTES

1. See Johannes Quasten's *Patrology*, Vol. I, The Beginnings of Patristic Literature, Newman Press: Westminster, Maryland, 1950, pp. 84-89-152-219-289-312; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. III, Loeb Classics, Harvard University Press.

2. Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in The Ancient*, Oosterbaan, and Le Cointre Goes (Holland) 1929. This is the finest statement in English on this problem.

3. See Theron's, *Evidence of Tradition*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, p. 89; Wescott's, *On the Canon of the New Testament* (Macmillan Co.: New York, 1889); F. W. Grosheide ed., *Some Early Lists of the Books of The New Testament* (Brill's: Leiden, 1948) pp. 20-24; *The Interpreter's Bible*, Volume 12 (Abingdon Press, pp. 351-354).

4. See for a good basic discussion H. A. Guy's *New Testament Prophecy*, Epworth Press: London, 1947; pp. 90-118.

5. See K. Lakes, *Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, Loeb Classics, Harvard University Press.

6. For a good survey of this movement and how it is related to our problem see Knox's, *Enthusiasm* (Oxford University Press, 1950) pp. 25-49; and *Encyclopedie Britannica*, Volume 15, article Montanism, pp. 750-751, 1957 edition.

7. For an excellent survey of the Alogoi and bibliographical literature see F. Cayre's, *Manuel of Patrology*, Vol. I Society of St. John the Evangelist, Desclée and Co., Paris, and Rome, pp. 106 and 132f., 1927.

8. This information is found in *Eusebius*, Vol. V, chp. 8:4, *ibid.*

9. *Ibid.* Vol. 1:58.

10. Johannes Quasten's, *Patrology*, Vol. II, The Ante Nicene Literature After Irenaeus (Newman Press: Westminster, Maryland, 1950) p. 208.

11. For this material see, *Ante-Nicene Father's*, Vols. III and IV - gives English translation of writings of Tertullian. In all this paper I shall merely give sources in which I did research. The essay is so short that I do not give many quotations because that would take up too much of the paper.

12. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III 28:2 (Loeb series: Harvard University Press).

13. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III - Tertullian's "Against Proxean."

14. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book II 25:6f; VI 20 (Loeb series, Harvard University Press).

15. See Quasten's, *Patrology*, Vol. II, p. 197.

16. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III 23:5f Loeb series, Harvard University Press.

17. See *Anti-Nicene Fathers* for Clement's statement - II 12, 119.

18. *Ibid. Stromata* VII 17, 106.

19. An adequate statement on Origen concerning our problem would require a volume, but the essence of the relation of his concept of tradition and the place the Apocalypse plays in this tradition see the *Patrologies of Quasten and Cayre* (directly mentioned) Hanson's,

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*Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, S.P.C.K., London, 1954; Danielou's *Origen*, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1955.

20. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI, 25, where he states that the New Testament books were divided into recognized and the disputed, and the Apocalypse is listed in the former group.

21. *Eusebius* VII 24:1f.

22. The information here given is found in *Eusebius, ibid.* 24:6f. As far as I know this discussion is only preserved in *Eusebius*.

23. H. E. W. Turner's, *The Pattern of Christian Truth* (Mowbray's: London, 1954) pp. 131, 143, 444, 450.

24. Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* III, 25:2ff.

25. See Westcott's *History*, *op. cit.*

26. *Ibid.*, and *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, extant works of Cyril of Jerusalem.

27. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* IV, 24.

28. See the *Patrologies of Quasten and Cayre*', *op. cit.* for extant materials of Athanasius' Paschal Letter.

29. See H. H. Rowley's, *The Relevance of the Apocalyptic* (Lutterworth Press, 1955 reprint - for the literature involved.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

Outline Follows the Division of Nestle's Greek Test—basically from Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (pp. 37-38)  
(Two Basic Divisions 1:9 - 11:14, and 12:1 - 22:5.)

### I. Prologue. Chp. 1:1-3

1. The writer's greeting to the Churches of Asia. vs. 4-8.

### II. Seven Churches of Asia

- 2-9. Messages to the Angeles of the Seven Churches. 2:1-3:22.

### III. Process of World Judgment

10. Vision of the Throne in Heaven. 4:1-11.
11. The Sealed Book and the Lamb. 5:1-14.
12. Opening of the first six Seals. 6:1-17.
13. Sealing of the 144,000 from the Tribes of Israel. 7:1-8.
14. Triumph of the Innumerable Multitude. 7:9-17.
15. Opening of the seventh Seal; the half hour's silence in Heaven; the first tour Trumpet-blasts. 8:1-13.
16. The fifth Trumpet-blast, or first Woe. 9:1-12.
17. The sixth Trumpet-blast, or second Woe. 9:13-21.
18. Preparations for the seventh Trumpet-blast: the vision of the Angel with the open booklet. 10:1-11.
19. Further preparations; measuring the Temple; the testimony of Many Witnesses. 11:1-14.
20. The seventh Trumpet-blast, or third Woe. 11:15-19.
21. The Woman with child, and the Great blood-red Dragon. 12:1-17(18).
22. The Wild Beast from the Sea. 13:1-10.
23. The Wild Beast from the Earth. 13:11-18.
24. Vision of the 144,000 on Mount Zion. 14:1-5 (c.f. 7:1-8).

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25. Three angelic proclamations, and a Voice from Heaven. 14:6-13.
26. Vision of the Harvest and the Vintage of the Earth. 14:14-20.
27. Preparation for the last Seven Plagues. 15:1-8.
28. Pouring out of the Seven Bowls. 16:1-21.

IV. Climax of Judgment

29. Vision of Babylon seated on the Beast. 17:1-8.
30. Interpretation of the Vision of Babylon and the Beast. 17:9-18.
31. Doom of Babylon. 18:1-24.
32. Triumph in Heaven; two Hallelujah Psalms; an angelic message. 19:1-10.
33. Vision of the Crowned Warrior. 19:11-16.
34. Overthrow and end of the Beast and the False Prophet. 19:17-21.
35. The Thousand Years of Satan's captivity and the Martyr's Reign. 20:1-6.
36. After the Thousand Years: release of Satan; war of Gog and Magog. 20:7-10.
37. Vision of the General Resurrection and the Last Judgment. 20:11-15.
38. Vision of a New Heaven and a New Earth. 21:1-8.
39. Vision of the New Jerusalem. 21:9-27.
40. Epilogue: Last words of the Angel, the Seer, and the Lord. 22:1-21.
41. Final Benediction.

## SECTION 1

### Text 1:1-3

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

### Initial Questions 1:1-3

1. What does the word *revelation* mean to you?
2. Was Jesus the source or the object (or both) of the *revelation* mentioned in vs. 1?
3. Does God's knowledge of future events *cause* them to happen?
4. What does the word *signified* mean in vs. 1?
5. How many different Johns are mentioned in the New Testament and which one is - "his servant John" in vs. 1?
6. What does a *witness* do?
7. Is the testimony mentioned in vs. 2 about Jesus, or is it his testimony?
8. How can we be *blessed* by reading the Word of God?
9. What spiritual preparations must we make in order to "hear the Words of the prophecy?"
10. In what sense can we keep the things written?
11. What does - "the time is at hand" mean? - for what?

## Commentary

## Section 1

The Prologue (1:1-8)

Chapter I-Vs. 1

The English noun *revelation* is derived from a form of the Latin verb *revelare* which means to draw back the veil. The Latin form was transcribed into English. The Latin term was the translation of the Greek (*apo* - from and *Kalupto* - to cover). The meaning being to remove the cover from anything, and thus basically equivalent to the Latin term.) The earliest use of the *revelation* was in 1303 by R. Brunno. (See volume VIII of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1933). The Greek term *apocalypse* always means something shown or observed plus the interpretation. The book of *The Revelation* is concerned with unveiling the will and purpose of the living God. How was the unveiling accomplished? John's next phrase provides us with the answer. The *revelation* is that which is given by Jesus Christ. The phrase "of Jesus Christ" can be either a subjective genitive (which means that Jesus is the object that is disclosed or made manifest); or an objective genitive (which means that Jesus is the source of the *revelation*). Both of these aspects must be kept in mind. The next phase makes this apparent. It states that "God (the father is meant as the definite article is used in the Greek Text) gave unto him."....The ultimate source of the *revelation* was the father, who gave (in a single act the verb is a first aor form) the *revelation* to Jesus Christ for the purpose of showing it to his servants (or slaves the term is a plural form of the ordinary term for a slave). What was Christ to show his servants? The next phase yields the answer to this question. Christ was to reveal to his servants "the things which must shortly come to pass." The term which is translated must is the Greek word *dei*, which expresses all manner of necessity. It expresses necessity in a mathematical sense, that is, it is absolutely essential for that which follows to come to pass. The text literally reads - "the things which must happen (or occur) with speed." It is most important that we see - the implication of the verb form of - the term translated happen (occur and/or come to pass). The aorist infinitive (the form of the verb) does not mean to begin to come to pass, but rather it speaks of a total completion, or complete fulfillment; the things

must happen "in their entirely." The source of the revelation was God; He revealed it to Christ, and now we note that Christ signified (aor, tense), or gave a sign and sent (*aposteilas* - aor participle) it through his messenger (tou aggelon) to his servant John. We now have a picture before us, tracing the genesis of the revelation from the living God to the mortal messenger - John.

#### Verse 2

"Who (John) bare witness (aor tense - *emarturesen*) of the Word of God." This probably refers to the content of the book of Revelation as well as proclamation of the gospel of Christ, which caused him to be banned to the island of Patmos.

Note: See John 1:1-18; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13 and the appendix on *The Biblical Doctrine of the Word of God* after the 19th chapter.

The second factor to which John "bare witness" was the testimony (*martyrian*) of Jesus Christ. The concept of witness plays a vital place in both the Gospel of John and The Revelation - (for other N.T. passages containing the term witness see Acts 1:22; I Pet. 5:1). The term witness and its various forms appears about 50 times, and about 40 times in the Epistles and the Revelation. The American Standard translators added the word *even* (italicized) which is not in the Greek text. The text literally reads "as many things as he saw." This clause is in opposition with "the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ," this clause marks these two features out as seen by John. The addition of *and* (not in the text either) in the K.J. version presents us with three separate aspects of John's work—"bare witness of the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw." This is wrong, if we take the last clause to be in opposition to the two preceding clauses. The verb *saw* (*eiden*) is used of the seeing of visions in the same sense that the Hebrew O.T. uses the noun *seer*, and the verb *see* or *saw*.

Note: The root meaning of the Hebrew verb is to see, but in the Prophetic literature it means to see supernaturally revealed visions.

As the book of Revelation is in the lineage of O.T. Apocalyptic literature, e.g., Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, we can better understand its imagery and message.

## Verse 3

In this verse appears the first of the seven beatitudes of The Revelation. They are found in the following passages:

1. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand. (1:3)
2. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them. (14:13)
3. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (16:15)
4. Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. (19:9)
5. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (20:6)
6. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. (22:7)
7. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. (22:14)

(Compare these promises of spiritual blessings with those in Matthew 5:1-12). What is revealed is the Word of God, and from this well of living waters may mighty blessings flow.

John declared that "he that readeth" or literally "the one reading" (*anaginōskōn*- a present participle) is blessed but what does he mean by this declaration? It is clear that John had in mind the reader of the word in public assembly. This was a practice of the Jewish Synagogues and was retained in the Christian assemblies. Specifically this does not apply to just any reader, but rather to the official reader. It is certainly true that any present day reader will be blessed by reading the Scriptures, but from a purely exegetical standpoint this verse does not so declare.

The blessing is also available to "they that hear the words of the prophecy." John makes it crystal clear that the hearers must continually listen to the Word of God - (literally "the ones hearing" - present participle - or the ones that keep on hearing). Our Lord has warned us all in His parable of The Sower (Luke 8:4-18)! He still warns us with these words - "Take heed

therefore now ye hear." How well do we hear the Word of God? The great paradox of hearing and not hearing was true in the time of Isaiah (chp. 6); in the time of Christ (Mk. 4:10f); and in the ministry of Paul (Acts 28:26-28); and it is still true today. But the reader of The Revelation has received a fresh warning that only "the ones who keep on hearing" shall be blessed and ultimately saved.

The noun prophecy comes from a verb form (*pro-phēmi-*) means both to speak forth in the sense of preaching, and to fore-tell about future events. (Compare the amount of preaching to a present audience, and the amount of precision predictive prophecy in both the O.T. and N.T. literature). The next clause shows us that those who keep on hearing are the same class as those who "keep the things that are written therein." John uses another present participle (*tērountes* - keeping plus *ta* - the things) in order to show, as in the case of hearing, that one must constantly keep that which he heard. The participle form of this term *keep* implies a diligent *care for* and not a mere preserving of that which was heard. The imagery of John's language makes it very plain that in order to be blessed by the Word of God - each hearer must actively participate and not merely observe the word as we would an opera or T.V. The Church is burdened today by too many auditors and too few who actually participate in the dynamic life of The Church. It is for this reason that many congregations could just as well be called "Worshippers Anonymous." What specifically are the hearers to constantly keep? John replies "that are written therein." (The perfect participle form - *to gegrammaena* literally means - *having been written* and therefore *stand written*). The perfect participle declares that the Word of God in The Revelation is finished; therefore, there will be no further revelation. What is the stated motive for "hearing and keeping" the Word? The season (*kairos* - means a fixed or specific period; *chronos* means a period of time whether long or short; *ōra* - time or period of nature) at hand is the motive!

Note: See the appendix in the closing pages on The Biblical Theology of Time and Eternity. . . . For basic discussion of the biblical vocabulary and its doctrinal import. (See the above appendix for a discussion of the contemporary effort of Werner Kümmel, [successor of Rudolph Bultmann] *Promise and Fulfillment*, Biblical Theology Monograph - to show that the term *eggus* used in this verse proves that the church expected Christ's immediate return and since this expectation was not realized, they and the N.T. were mistaken. N.T. Christians cannot accept this conclusion!)

The revelatory visions recorded in The Revelation cover the time from the first century and the historical situation of the seven churches of Asia to the coming again of Jesus Christ. In light of this fact, what then can the phrase "the time is at hand" (or near) mean? At hand or near for what? The answer to this begins to be given in the next section of the first chapter.

## SECTION 2

### Text 1:4-8

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and he made us to be a kingdom to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

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

### Initial Questions 1:4-8

1. Were the seven churches historical congregations?
2. What does the geographical term - *Asia* mean in the New Testament?
3. Is the nature of God being expressed in the phrases - *who is, who was, and who is to come?* vs. 4.
4. What are the *seven spirits* mentioned in vs. 4?
5. What do the names given to Christ in vs. 5 - *faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and ruler of the kings of the earth* imply about the person and work of Christ?
6. How is the love of God related to the *atonement* for our sins through the *blood* of Christ?
7. In what sense did Christ's atonement make us a *kingdom?* vs. 6.
8. What is the purpose of a Priest under the New Covenant? vs. 6.
9. What do the terms Alpha and Omega mean?

The Writer's Greeting to The Churches of Asia  
Verses 4-8

Verse 4

Now Revelation has been transmitted from heaven to earth  
The human medium of revelation addresses seven historical  
churches of Asia Minor in the name of the living God in Christ.

Note: See C. F. Wishart, *The Book of Day*; an excellent examination of the significance of the various numbers which constantly appear in *The Revelation*.

Why were these seven churches singled out for examination? The seven congregations listed did not exhaust the congregations in Asia - at the time of John's banishment to Patmos. There were congregations at Hieropolis, Colossae, and Miletus. We cannot give any categorical answer to the above question - why were only seven churches mentioned? There have been many answers given to the question, but unfortunately for the answers they were not grounded in biblical exegesis; therefore, we are not bound to accept their speculative answers.

What are the geographical boundaries of Asia as it is used in *The Revelation*? The term is found in *Aeschylus*, *Pindar*, *Herodotus*. The geographers of the fourth century B.C. also used the term Asia Minor. The term is also used in the Books Maccabees and it there means the territory of the Seleucidion Empire. The Territory which is signified in pre N.T. usage was identified, by the Romans, as that territory which Attalus the third, had controlled before the Roman conquest of his domain. In the N.T. Asia is always Proconsular Asia. Ramsay calls the "seven churches of Asia" representative only, because there were other congregations in existence at that time. This very narrow sense of the term Asia (in comparison to its pre-N.T. and/or contemporary use) certainly fits in with the biblical data (see Acts 19: 10 and 26). The boundaries of Asia were relatively small in N.T. times. (see any good recent *Bible Atlas* for the specific lines of demarcation.)

The salutation of "grace to you and peace" . . . is reminiscent of Paul's greetings. The salutation bids unmerited favor and the holiness of God through a holy life (peace). The source of the grace and peace is Christ. John states that it follows "from him who is, who was, and who is to come." Those who reject the Scriptures as the unique Word of God often appeal to this verse of *The Revelation* and assert that the author did not

know Greek grammar, because this verse is a maze of grammatical confusion.

Note: See this charge made by C. H. Charles in Volume I of his commentary - Introductory section - the grammar of The Apocalypse.

Two things can be asserted in reply to this charge - (1) Contemporary Linguistics completely repudiates the now antiquated view that there is any thing like an absolute grammar which is binding on the user of any language. This thesis still survives through classical scholars who are unacquainted with linguistic development; (2) John could not have said what he wanted to say (and did in fact state) on the basis of standard grammar. Each of the three terms is a proper name for God. The first proper name is translated as "him who is." This present participle is the best that human language can do to express the eternity of God. (The *ho-ōn* is the same expression used in the Septuagint for translating the Hebrew tetragram in Exodus 3:14.) The second name comes from the imperfect form of the finite verb - (Greek has no imperfect participle following the parallel structure of the first name - present participle form) - see John 1:1ff where the imperfect is used regarding the person of the Word incarnate.) The third proper name is literally translated "the coming one." This is a present participle and is not to be confused with a future form which might be translated "who shall be." The term is about almighty God, and to use a future would imply that He does not now exist, but that He shall exist sometime in the future. This name points to His coming again as in 1:7 and 22:20. The salutation is also "from the seven spirits that are before his throne." Though the symbolism makes this figure enigmatic, I believe that Trench is correct when he says that this must be "the Holy Ghost sevenfold in his operations."

Note: See R. C. Trench, *Commentary on The Epistles to The Seven Churches*, Macmillan, 1867, p. 9.

Hardly any other interpretation fits into the pattern between the Father and the Son (vs. 5) - other than that this is a symbolic phrase for the Holy Spirit.

#### *Verse 5*

Jesus Christ is mentioned after the Holy Spirit because of the fact that what follows (vs. 5-8) relates to His person. The first title is a messianic title (Ps. 89:37). The Christ is a faithful witness because He is the medium of the revelation and

he has delivered without modification the will of God for man through a banned prophet on an isolated Mediterranean island. He faithfully discharged His work as the redeemer of men. The term thus becomes descriptive of the nature of His testimony. The next title is also descriptive of a vital aspect of His messianic work. "The first begotten of the dead" is also used by Paul in Colossians 1:18. This title asserts His absolute and final victory over death. Others have been raised from the dead (e.g. Lazarus John 11), but to die again. Christ and Christ alone is victor over the grave never to fall prey again to the dark chambers of death. Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The word translated first begotten is composed of *prō* plus a form of the verb *tikto* - to bear or to bring forth. Though in classical Greek the meaning of *beget* is dominate, but in N.T. Greek the sense of *beget* is probably not found. There are one or two possible exceptions. The glory and majesty of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords shines through the third title. Through the triumph of the resurrection Christ is openly declared to be "the ruler of the kings of the earth." The glorified Christ reigns over every human domain. Swete aptly observes that the preceding three titles of Christ "answers to the threefold purpose of the apocalypse which is at once a Divine testimony, a revelation of the Risen Lord, and a forecast of the issues of history." (See his *The Apocalypse of John*, reprinted by Eerdmans, 1951, p. 7). See for further analysis of the titles of Christ in *The Revelation* in an appendix of this commentary.)

The first of the many beautiful doxologies to Jesus Christ appears in the next sentence of verse 5. The text literally reads "To the one loving us and having loosed us out of our sins by his blood."

Note: There is a textual problem here for those who want to consider the technical matters of the text see Jose Schmid, *Studien zur Geschicht des griechen Apokalypse - Textes*, 1955, 2 volumes - imperative for serious textual study.

The K. J. translation "unto him that loved us" is wrong. The imagery is beautiful here. John is asserting the fact that Jesus Christ constantly loves us (*agabōnti*, present participle) and loosed (or freed) us (*Lusanti* - first aor. participle from *luo* - to loose - not washed as the K. J.) once for all out of our sins,

this imagery reveals that we have been in bondage to sin (Romans 6:1ff) but are now set free by the atoning work of Christ on the cross. The necessity of the blood atonement of Christ is asserted in the last phrase of the verse - "by his blood." How are we loosed from our sins? The vicarious work of Christ is the answer. No man can be loosed from his sins by being good; if he is saved at all, it will be because he has surrendered to the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and Ruler of the kings of the earth.

*Verse 6*

What are some of the results of being loosed from our sins by the blood of Christ? John continues that Christ "made (epoiesen aor ind.) us a kingdom." The K. J. is wrong where it gives kings instead of kingdom. The term (basileian) means kingdom not king (this term is basileis). The N.T. does not apply the term king to Christians. We do not need to go to Luther's reformation doctrine of the "Priesthood of Believers," because its origin is in the N.T. (see I Pet. 2:9 - Royal priesthood) The kingdom of the King of Kings is the collective form of the committed community (The Church). Next, John asserts that the redemptive work of Christ has also made priests (*hiereis*) of each Christian. In the O.T. the office of the priest was a special office held only by a limited, select group of men.

Note: (See Hebrew Epistle chps 2:17f; 4:14f; 5:1f, 7:1f.) B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to The Hebrews*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan reprinted, 1950, see p. 210; J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of The Older Testament*, Zondervan Pub. House, 1962, pp. 372, etc. Oelher's older work in Old Testament Theology; also has an excellent study on the place and purpose of the O.T. priesthood. There are many more advanced works, but the ones mentioned above are written by men who believe the Bible to be the Word of God.

After Christ's atonement every believer becomes a priest. What does this imply? In the O.T. the priest was a special person whose function was to make mediation between God and the community of Israel and himself. Now the Christian does not need any special group, whether a clergy system or the Roman Catholic priesthood. Each Christian has direct and immediate access to God through Jesus Christ. The distinction between clergy and laity is abolished. The New Testament uses forms of the terms clergy and laity, but they are applied to the same group, i.e., Christians. Each member of the kingdom is a priest! John concludes verse 6 by announcing that Christians

are priests unto "his God and Father; to him be the glory and dominion for ever and for ever. Amen." The universality of God's glory and dominion are clearly implied in the use of the definite articles with each noun. Glory implies honor, praise to God. The word probably means to be placed out in public view under the best possible conditions. Dominion asserts the universal sovereignty of the living God. He is not merely sovereign over the kingdom, but over the entire universe - physical and spiritual. The phrase "forever and ever" is the only way human, timebound language can assert the eternity of God. (See appendix on *The Biblical Theology of Time and Eternity* for further discussion.)

#### Verse 7

To the preceding doxology, John adds the great and glorious declaration that the one who has all dominion and merits all glory is coming again. The cloud symbolism is used in Daniel 7:13; Matthew 24:30, etc.) His coming will be no secret! Every eye shall physically behold Christ's coming (*opsetai* - future tense of *horaō*). This verb denotes the result of seeing rather than the act of seeing. The compound relative "that they" covers the class of people who *pierced* (the verb form is aor. act. ind.) Christ. I take this to be that class of people of all ages from the actual crucifixion to His coming again who reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The aorist form of the verb could be construed to mean those who actually crucified Christ, but I believe that the remainder of the sentence militates against this interpretation. John continues to describe the response of mankind to the coming again of Christ as he states that "all the tribes (phule-tribes - linguistic groups) of the earth will shall mourn (wail) over him. Even so (Yes) Amen." It is apparent from this statement that no man or group of men shall be exempt from the hour of his judgment. The remorse of men is intense (the verb translated mourn shall be translated wail - it is fut. ind. mid. voice of *koptō*). John is led by the Spirit to use a verb which means to smite, to beat or pound one's self in mourning. This picture presents men wailing (beating on their chests), because they have rejected the only one who can forgive their sins. The use of the middle voice form of the word points out that the cause of mourning is within themselves and is not caused by some inflicted external anguish.

## Verse 8

The alpha and omega were the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The two titles (or one combined title) have the definite articles which assert the absolute first and the absolute last. The Lord God declares Himself to be the absolute first and last (that He continually makes that declaration is shown by the present tense verb to say *legei*). The three following descriptive titles of the Lord God are of the very same form as we found in verse 4. The term *pentokratōr* is a new descriptive term for God in The Revelation. It means all powerful, or completely powerful and is used only one time besides this instance in the N.T. - II Cor. 6:18. It is constantly used as a descriptive term for the Lord God in the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew O.T. In our age of power struggles we need to realize that power can be destructive as well as creative. Power can enable one to *take* what he wants or to *give* what he wants. It is in the latter sense (to give) that Paul asserts that "The Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation" (Romans 1:16).

Review Questions  
Prologue 1:1-8

1. What is the origin or source of revelation according to vs. 1?
2. What two factors did John bare witness to according to vs. 2?
3. If we desire the blessings of God what are some of the things we must do according to vs. 3?
4. Were there other congregations in existence besides the 7 churches of Asia which are listed?
5. What do the three messianic titles listed in vs. 5 mean to you?
6. What are some of the results of our being loosed from our sins through the blood of Christ in vs. 6?
7. Will any escape on the great day of His coming again, vs. 7?

SECTION 3

Text 1:9-20

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

of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not: I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angles of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

#### Initial Questions, 1:9-20

1. What *tribulation* was John speaking of in vs. 9?
2. Where is the island of Patmos located?
3. Why was John on Patmos?
4. Where are the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea located?
5. Is the symbolism of *seven stars* and *seven golden candlesticks* clearly defined in this section of scripture? vs. 20.

First Vision: The Seven Churches  
of Asia - 1:9-3:22

Vision of the Risen and Ascended Christ vs. 9-20

## Verse 9

John personally addresses his readers. He relates to his audience by identifying himself as a brother, and also as a participant (not a mere observer) as John used here a term *sugkoinōnes* - a partner with the strengthening prefix *sun.*) What was it that John co-shared with his readers? John writes *The Revelation* during a time of intense persecution of the Church. John states that he was a co-sharer "in the tribulation" of his readers. The term *thlipsei* means an affliction i.e., persecution.

Note: See Herbert B. Workman, *Persecution in the Early Church*; also appendix of this commentary on *Persecutions and the Early Church*.

But John also shared the glories of the King of Glory, and the precious promises for all those who continue till the end. Being in Christ enables one to endure (*hypomoneē* - endurance or patience) even banishment. John declares that he "was (*egenomen* - 2nd aor. mid. indicative) on the Island of Patmos." The use of the past tense suggests that John was not there when he wrote *The Revelation*. The middle voice form of the verb implies that he banished himself. It might be that John, like the other apostles (Acts 4:14-22), was requested to modify his message, that is, if he wanted to continue to preach in public. As a faithful ambassador, John declined such conditions for preaching; and thus banished himself to Patmos. John was on Patmos (an Island about 28 miles south, southwest of Samos) "for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." This translation is not strong enough. Literally, John wrote that he was on the Island because or on account (*dia* with the accusative has casual force) of the Word and testimony of Jesus. This situation was similar to Paul's when he declares (I Cor. 4:10) that - "We are fools for Christ's sake." Literally, Paul said we are morons because of Christ (also *dia* with the acc. case). Christ is thus the cause of the world's attitude that they were fools. This is also the theme of Fyodor Dostoevski's *The Idiot*. Our English word idiot is from the Greek word meaning isolated one or one who can not live in a social context i.e., to be alone.

*Verse 10*

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day (*tē kuriakē hēmera*). The phrase "on the Lord's Day" appears only here in the N.T. scriptures. This is not the eschatological phrase - "the day of the Lord" (II Thess. 2:2). The standard N.T. phrase for the first day of the week is *mia tōn sabbatōn*.

Note: See Acts 20:7; Matt. 28:1 - *eis mian sabbatōn* - toward one of the sabbaths. See the Appendix after this chapter - *The Lord's Day and Sabbath Controversy Revisited!*

The term translated Lord is *kuriakē* (imperial), and it is the same term found in I Corinthians 11:20 (*kuriakon* - concerning The Lord's Supper). John had prepared himself (mid voice - aor) to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and suddenly the holy silence was broken with the unexpected entrance of the voice of God. His voice was as the assembling tones of a war trumpet (*salpigos* - war trumpet).

*Verse 11*

The voice spoke directly and specifically to John, and commanded him to write (*grapson* - 1st aor. imperative the things that he was to see) in a scroll (*Biblion* - scroll rather than book). The use of the term book in our translation is an anachronism, because what we call a book was much later in developing than the New Testament period. The revelatory visions which were vouched safe to John and as he was commanded write so also he was commanded to send (*pempson* - 1st aor. imperative - active) the revealed information to the seven churches. (Note location of each city on the map.)

Note: Five of the seven cities were mentioned by Tacitus, *Annals*, 4. 53-56, p. 176-177; Modern Library edition, New York, 1942 - there was a debate over which of these cities was to be honored with the to-be erected Temple in commemoration of Tiberius.

*Verse 12*

John turned to see who the speaker was (or source of the voice) who had entered conversation with him (*met emou* - means a conversation and not merely one person addressing a listener). After he had finished the act of turning, he was in a single act seven golden lampstands - the imagery is taken from the lampstand of the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:31).

*Verse 13*

John declares that he saw one standing among (*en mesō* - in the middle) of the lampstands, and this royal person was like (*homion* - one like) the son of man (no definite article, but still the title of Christ and not merely a man) - See Daniel 7:13. This is one of the beautiful messianic titles used by the Lord Himself.

Note: See B. B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory*, reprinted Zondervan Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, N.D. - chpt. *The Witness of the Apocalypse*, pp. 286-297 (brilliant Calvinist - Bible believer of a past generation); for student grounded in the Word and able to evaluate the brilliant scholarship of one who does not hold a high view of the scriptures as revelation, see Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1956, chp. 10, *The Son of Man* - pp. 346-450 - also excellent contemporary bibliography; see also *Special Study* in this commentary on *The Titles for Christ in The Revelation*. The Interpreters Bible, contains the popularized negative critical attitude toward the scriptures. (Abingdon Press, 1954, Nashville, Tenn. Martin Rist and Lynn H. Hough authored the material on the Revelation. See page 375, volume 12, chp. 11:13 for a denial that Daniel's "Son of Man" concept is messianic. See the counter claim made by Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Eerdmans, 1949, p. 154.

The remaining imagery of this verse is kingly or priestly in origin (See Daniel 10:5; Isaiah 6:1). With great flowing picturesque language, John describes our marvelous messiah. The garments which clothe Him reaches from head to foot - (*podērē* - from pous - foot, and aor - to fasten). This is a robe of honor, and symbolizes a person of the highest standing. The next beautiful imagery is conveyed by the phrase (*perizōsmenon* - *mastos*) and speaks of the priestly garment. The priest was bound at the breasts with a golden girdle. There is no question but that this symbolism is priestly, and that it applies to our messiah, who is prophet, priest, and king. This golden girdle was used as a symbol of righteousness, and power, etc., in the O.T. (Isaiah 11:5, etc., in Ephesians 6:14 - The Christian's girdle is truth).

*Verse 14*

This verse continues the description of the one "like unto the son of man" (Daniel 10:6). As John continues to describe Daniel's Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9) he uses terms suggesting the pre-existing Christ (as John 1:1 asserts). The symbols of purity dance upon the stage of the great drama. The ancient of Days is set upon the stage of the human drama of sin and

salvation. John's next phrase was used over 700 years before the postman of Patmos sent heaven's message unto the Churches of Asia. Daniel said "His eyes were lamps of fire (Dan. 10:6). The imagery above probably relates to the eternality and purity of "the Son of Man."

*Verse 15*

The source of the imagery is still Daniel. The meaning of the term translated "burnished brass" (*chalkolibanō*) is not known for certain, but this fits the imagery very well. For the next imagery John reaches back into the Spirit inspired scroll of Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2, etc. Here the "voice as of many waters" flows to God's Patmos bound penman from the prophet beyond the Chebar (Ezekiel).

*Verse 16*

The one "like unto the Son of Man" hold seven stars in His right hand, "and out of his mouth proceedeth a two-edged sword." The imagery of the "two edged sword" is the Word of God (see Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15).

Note: For many O.T. examples of the symbol of the sharp sword see William Barclay, *The Revelation of John* Vol. I, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1962 impression, p. 63 - some excellent material in Barclay's works, but does not always show a high regard for the Bible as God's Word).

John takes us by the hand and leads us into the light of God's presence when he states "that his countenance shines (*phainei* - pres. tense - keeps on shining - see John 1:5) in the power of it." The 1901 text erroneously translates the present tense (*phainei*) "his countenance was (?) as the sun shineth in his strength." The use of this English past tense implies that the countenance used to shine but does not anymore. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Truly, Jesus is "the light that keeps on lighting every man that comes into the World" - John 1:9. Thanks be to God - Light shall prevail over darkness!

*Verse 17*

The effect of seeing one "like unto the Son of Man" was so awe-inspiring that John "fell (*epesa* - 1st aor. ind.) at his feet as one dead." The one who held "the seven stars in his right hand" now stretches it forth in a touch of mercy as "he placed his right hand on me saying: fear not (*mē phobou* - pres. mid.

imperative - the ability to obey the command was in the subject - thus the use of the middle voice literally stop being afraid!) The 1901 A.V. faultily translates the phrase "I was dead" (*egenomen* - 2nd aor. mid. act.) means rather that "I became dead" of my own free act (this is the significance of the middle voice). Christ was the only prey that death held no claim to, but for our redemption he "became obedient unto death" - Phil. 2:8. Through the glorious resurrection of Christ, the victim became victor "and behold (*idou* - look here) I am alive (literally living from present participle *zōn*) for evermore and, I have the keys of death and of hades." Christ is here asserting that He alone controls the realm of death and the realm of the unseen.

Note: See appendix on *Death* immediately following chap 2 for some brief thoughts: and see the *Special Study* in this commentary on the *Biblical Doctrines in The Revelation* for brief study on the Greek term *hades*. This English word is made by transcribing directly from the Greek word; it is not a translation of the term.

#### *Verse 19*

John is again commanded to write (*grapson* - aor. imperative). He was to respond to this command by instantaneous obedience (the significance of the aor. imperative). What was he to write? He was to record instantly "the things which thou sawest (*eides* - 2nd aor. ind. act) and the things which are (*eisin* - present) and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." The 1901 translation is wrong in translating this last verb as future. The form of the verb (*genesthai* - and aor. inf. plus *mellei* - about) literally means "are about to come to pass;" therefore, the phrase should read - "the things which are about to occur or come to pass." The "hereafter" translates "*meta tauta*" and would more clearly be translated "after these things." What things? The things which are about to occur after the things which are. This verse probably relates the division of the book. It is about things which were, are, and shall be!

#### *Verse 20*

The mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands is about to be unveiled. Christ identifies the "seven stars as the angles of the seven churches: and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." The word mystery (*mustērion*) as it is used in the N.T. is always related to the fact of

revelation, though this word has a long pre-biblical history. The implication of secrecy, as in the Mystery Religions, or the Dead Sea Community, is absent from the N.T. usage.

Note: For those unacquainted with this term and its special problems see B. F. Westcott's *St. Paul's Epistle to The Ephesians*, Eerdmans reprinted - 1950, pp. 180-81; there will be a *Special Study* on the Greek term *musterion* in this commentary. Further bibliographical information will be given there.

Who are "the angels of the seven churches"? No final, categorical answer can be given to this question, but we can declare that they are not to be identified as Vincent, Trench, *et al.* do. The word angel is a Greek word that also means messenger, with no supernatural connotation as with angel. Archbishop R. C. Trench maintained that these angels were the bishops of the seven churches. From a purely biblical standpoint this is an impossible claim because the N.T. is very clear about the polity of the Church. There is always a plurality of Elders (Bishops) in every congregation. The single bishop, or monarchical episcopate was most certainly a post-biblical development. There is no explanation which is fully satisfactory regarding the identification of the messengers of the seven churches, but what ever conclusion one draws, if honest, he must reckon with Swete's position. He states that "the Apocalypse uses *aggelos* some sixty times, excluding those in which it is followed by *tēs ekklēsios* or *tōn ekklēsiōn*, and always in the technical sense of a superhuman being employed in the service of God or of Satan. There is therefore a strong presumption that the *aggeloi tōn ekklēsiōn* are angels in the sense which the word bears elsewhere throughout the book." (Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Eerdmans reprint 1951, p. 22.)

The lampstands specifically and clearly identified as the Churches of Asia, and is a vital part of the imagery of chps. 2 and 3. Christ walks in the midst of the congregations and demands repentence, or else He will come and remove their lampstands.

Review Questions  
vs. 9-20

1. Was John personally involved in the great persecution of the body of Christ - vs. 9?
2. Is there a difference between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath - vs. 10?

3. Who commanded John to write and send the scroll to the seven churches - vs. 11?
4. According to vs. 12 - Was John merely a listener to the voice, or was he also engaged in the conversation?
5. What O.T. prophet is the source of the term "the Son of Man" - vs. 13?
6. What two characteristics of the Son of Man does the imagery of vs. 13 probably reveal?
7. To what does the imagery of the two-edged sword refer - vs. 16?
8. In vs. 17 John is commanded to do what?
9. What credentials of Christ were revealed in vs. 18?
10. What was John commanded to record in vs. 19?
11. Is it possible, from a biblical standpoint, that the angles mentioned in vs. 20 are the ruling bishops of each of the seven churches of Asia?

### *Special Study*

#### The Lord's Day - Sabbath Controversy Revisited

Why does confusion persist about the Lord's Day? How is it possible to confuse the Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day? In this scope we shall provide a background and bibliography for further, more detailed study.

#### The Sabbath Day in Historical Perspective

The brilliant Catholic director of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and editor of the *Revue Biblique*, Roland de Vaux, O.P., has placed all concerned with the Sabbath issue in his debt. (He is also an example of the R.C. Churches attitude toward her first-rate scholars who take some negative critical attitudes toward the scripture but never an extreme position). His classic work, *The Sociology of Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1961, pp. 475) provides us with the most recent research on this persistent but quite unnecessary confusion between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day.

The Hebrew word *shabbath* is not translated into English - rather it is transcribed into our English word Sabbath. In the Hebrew O.T. this word is used only in the context of the O.T.

religion (once used for entire week, Lev. 23:5). The O.T. also mentions the sabbatical year (occurs every 7 years - see Lev. 25:2,8, etc.). A longer term (*sahbbathon*) is used of special feast days, etc., but it is most important that we realize that these days did not always fall on a Sabbath. With Linguistic skill available to very few men in the world today, de Vaux repudiates the theory of a Mesopotamian origin for the Hebrew Sabbath. Roland de Vaux declares that the simplest etymology (root of the word) is the verb which means "to cease working, i.e., to rest." There are theories concerning a Babylonian, a Cannanite, a Qenite, a creation law, etc., source of the Sabbath. But what does the Bible say?

#### Biblical Origin of the Sabbath

Certain sources are still persistent in declaring that the Sabbath had its origin in creation (Gen. 2:2-3). If this is a true assertion, it would be difficult to find out why an inspired prophet Nehemiah (9:13-14) was not aware of it. He declares that God made known the Sabbath from Mt. Sinai. In support of Nehemiah's contention, it must be pointed out that there is no biblical record of a holy Sabbath being given or observed before the Mosiac period. We must hasten to declare that Genesis, chp. 2:2-3 is no counter example to my claim, because the term Sabbath means *rest* not *seven* (as is claimed by the adherents of The Akkadian origin theory). There certainly was a Sabbath (rest day), but from this claim one cannot validly conclude that it was a seventh day Sabbath (i.e., Sabbath's fell on other days of the week than on what we call Saturday). Involved in this problem is the very intricate issue of calendaration, but it is too technical for us to consider here. There is not one verse in the O.T. which even intimates that any of the patriarchs knew anything about or observed a seventh day Sabbath. The unlearned continue to bring to our attention that the Hebrew word *zakor* (Ex. 2:8) necessitates long history of the Hebrew holy Sabbath (note the term in the parallel passage Deut. 5:12 - *shamor* - observe). All that can be grammatically and logically claimed for these terms is that they call attention to the fact that a few weeks before (Exodus 16) they had received the religious, holy Sabbath through medium of special revelation. (For advanced Bible Students grounded in the Eternal Word see the views of H. H. Rowley, *Moses and the Decalogue*, Bulletin of John Rylands

Library. Also, Sigmund Mowinckel, *Le Decalogue*, T. Wever, Boekhandel - 1951, Netherlands. The first biblical declaration (Ex. 16:22-30) about the Sabbath Day is associated specifically with the giving of the manna (and later stated as one of the Ten Commandments, Ex. 20:8-3). Besides the theory held by all Sabbatarians, (some Baptists, 7th Day Adventists, *et al.*) the view already mentioned from the great work of de Vaux, is set forth as a live option - that is the Babylonian or Akkadian origin. This view must be rejected on critical linguistic and extra biblical grounds. Besides this the Babylonian *shabbatu* was determined by the phases of the moon, and thus did not necessarily fall on the seventh day. Their *shabbatu* was not a day of rest as was the Hebrew *Shabbath*. Neither did it have religious meaning, rather it was a day of evil omen.

(For further study, see R. H. Charles, *The Decalogue*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1926, pp. 118; also Robert H. Pfeiffer's ridiculous claim that the religious significance of *The Shabbath* was impossible for wandering Israelite monads. See his *Introduction to Old Testament*, Harpers, N.Y., 1941, p. 231; even the negative critic James Muilenburg acknowledges that *The Shabbath* was a religious institution founded by Moses. This is some concession from him. See his work vol. V *Interpreters Bible*, Abingdon, Nashville, 1956, p. 687.

### The Seventh Day Adventists and the Sabbath

This group of Sabbatarians attempt to escape the O.T. Doctrine of the Hebrew religious *Shabbath* by dividing the O.T. Law into moral and ceremonial law. They acknowledge that Christ nailed the Law to the Cross but only the ceremonial law, and the Sabbath Law is not ceremonial, but rather moral in nature. In fact, they identify the "mark of the Beast" of The Revelation with the change from the O.T. Sabbath which they attribute to the Roman Catholic Church, to the Lord's Day, Sunday. Is this a true claim? If the Lord's Day as a day of worship is found in the N.T. scriptures then it follows that the change was not effected by the Roman Catholic Church for the simple reason that no such institution existed at the time with all due respects to their claim to the contrary. (For an excellent popular style analysis of the Seventh Day Adventists' claim see Walter R. Martin, *The Truth About Seventh Day Adventism*, Zondervan Pub. House, p. 140-173, 1960.)

Note: For an examination of the attitude towards the Lord's Day - Sabbath, Lord's Day problem in the Patristic Literature, see Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy: Liturgical Studies*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1956; a few Patristic attitudes are also mentioned in Martin's work on *7th Day Adventism* mentioned above - pp. 152-4 - for brief discussion of the Sabbath and the year of the Lord see H. Riesenfeld, *Sabbat et Jour die Seigneur*, p. 210-217 in *N.T. Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, England, 1959.

### The N.T. and the Lord's Day

The N.T. is crystal clear about two things: (1) That the O.T. Sabbath is not the Lord's Day; (2) and that the Church, even though the book of Acts shows us that early Jewish Christians persisted in also worshipping on the Sabbath - (besides) the Lord's Day; in fact they worshipped everyday, - worshipped on the Lord's Day because that was the day when the Victim became Victor over sin and death. What does the term "the Lord's Day" mean? In a special sense, it is His day for His followers to gather to acknowledge Him as Lord of heaven and earth. The Old Testament religious Sabbath comes on the seventh day, but the Lord's Day is the first day of the week. Why and when was the change made? The Old Testament Sabbath and the New Testament Lord's Day were both commanded of the Lord, but for entirely different reasons, and for a completely different group of people. The Lord came forth from the realm of the dead to be our savior on the first day of the week and not on the seventh, that is why the change was made. The two days just had different purposes!

We cannot here critically examine the problem of chrolology in the Gospel records, but we must realize that the date of crucifixion plays a determining role in the time of the resurrection. Those who are spokesmen for Sabbatarianism claim that Jesus was crucified on Thursday or late Wednesday and not on Friday as this author would claim. The Gospel authors clearly tell us that Jesus was crucified Friday afternoon, because the preparation was without any question, the day before the Sabbath. (Literally Matt. 28:62 declares - "and on the morrow, which is after the preparation.") The crucifixion account in Matthew concludes with the burial scene (Matt. 28:57-61), and evening had come (*genomenes* - 2nd aor. participle). Then in the very next section (vs. 62-66 we read "then on the morrow which is the day after preparation." Preparation comes on

Friday (there can be no valid challenge to this fact) and vs. 62 declares that on the next day (the Sabbath) the chief priests, *et al.*, took further precautions against the man on the middle cross. Why? Wasn't he dead? Then we read about *Eis mian sabbatōn* (or towards one of the Sabbaths) the grave did not and could not hold its prey. The above Greek phrase is the standard New Testament phrase for the Lord's Day (See Acts 20:7). This was a day commemorating Christ's victory over death. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" and received information about the past, present, and future never before vouchesafe to mortals. Empirical historiography does not have access to this information. It came by way of special revelation!

Roland de Vaux states well the biblical distinctions between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day when he says that Jesus claimed "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:28); he could therefore abolish the Sabbath, and he did in fact do so, for the New Covenant which he brought abrogated the Old Covenant, of which the Sabbath was the sign. The Christian Sunday is not in any sense a continuation of the Jewish Sabbath. The latter closed the week, but the Christian Sunday opens the week in the new era by commemorating the Resurrection of our Lord, and the appearances of the risen Christ, and by directing our attention to the future, when he will come again. And yet Sunday does symbolize the fulfilment of those promises which the Sabbath foreshadowed. Like all the other promises of the Old Testament, these promises too are realized not in an institution, but in the person of Christ; it is he who fulfils the entire Law. Sunday is the "Lord's Day" the day of him who lightens our burdens (Mt. 11:28), through whom, with whom, and in whom we enter into God's own rest (He. 4:1-11).

Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institution*, McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., New York, 1961.

We have revisited this persistent and ill-founded controversy—now may we truly be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day!

#### SECTION 4

Text 2:1-7

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: 2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience,

and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; 3 and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary 4 But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. 4 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.

#### Initial Questions 2:1-7

1. Who is *he* who holds the seven stars in his hand and walks among the seven golden candlesticks - vs. 1?
2. How does the Lord commend the Ephesian Church - vs. 2, 3?
3. Were these commendable characteristics enough to save the Church from the purging power of Christ - vs. 4, 5?
4. What is our *first love* to be?
5. Does the Lord tell this Church that after all no one is perfect, therefore, they are not to worry too much about their spiritual condition - vs. 5?
6. Who were the Nicolaitans?
7. Is this message and warning applicable to us today?
8. If John was writing to the Church at Ephesus (singular in chp 2), why does John conclude with the plural - churches, vs. 7?
9. How long must a Christian remain loyal and continue to mature in Christ - vs. 7?

#### The Church in Ephesus Chapter 2:1-7

Dr. Merrill Tenney (*Revelation Interpreted*, pp. 50-69) has an excellent simple preaching - teaching break down of each of the letters to the seven churches. The analysis contains seven factors which are as follows: (from p. 51 of chapter 5)

1. The Commission
2. The Character
3. The Commendation

4. The Condemnation
5. The Correction
6. The Call
7. The Challenge

We shall not follow this analysis in our comments, but it might prove beneficial for outlines study of the seven letters. The first city which the Lord visited was the New York of Roman province of Asia. This great metropolis had heard the Apostle "born out of due time" preach Jesus Christ as saviour. Paul had resided in that city of sin three years (Acts 19:1-10; 20:17-38). The mystery cults flourished there. Their apparent self-satisfied attitude stood at marked tension with the man banned to Patmos just sixty miles away. Pliny called Ephesus the Light of Asia. The light of that city must be understood in view of its sanctioning the Temple of Diana where every vile act imaginable was committed. It was a religious city in need of a saviour fit for the problem of reclaiming souls from the sink-hole of sin. Only one other city in the ministry of the great Apostle received so much watering and gave so little increase, and that city was the imperial city itself - Rome.

It was to this proud, arrogant, religious city that John was *Commissioned* to write to the angel of the Church.

#### *Verse 1*

The speaker is identified as the one "holding the seven stars in his right hand." This was Jesus Christ (see imagery in 1:16)! The speaker's first hand knowledge of the congregation is brought out by the imagery latent in the word (*perapaton* - pres. part) "walketh." Literally it says - "the one walking around" observing the conditions. His knowledge is not second handed - hear-say or grape-vine information.

#### *Verse 2*

The personal knowledge of the spiritual condition of the church is further brought out by the verb "I know (*oida* - 2nd perfect with present) - sense. Here Christ's *commendation* of the Church seems, on the surface, to put that congregation in the fore of spiritual victory. "Thy toil" implies that they were an active (busy) congregation. The next very vivid descriptive term presents the congregation as engaged in an exhausting type of work. The term John used was *kopon* which means a work

which is very hard, i.e., requires much energy. This is indeed commendable - so far! Many contemporary congregations are also busy keeping its membership busy. The Church in Ephesus was also a paradigm of patience. Surely the Lord loves a Church which exemplifies characteristics like "the light Asia" does. This congregation was also morally alert. It could not bear evil men" (*bastasai* - aor.act.). (Paul uses a form of this term in Gal. 6:2 - "bearing each others burdens"). This congregation hated evil men to the extent that put them to the test and found them wanting.

Apparently, there existed in Asia more than one (plural of Apostles) who made the claim that they were Apostles of the Lord. The Ephesian congregation put them to the test (the passage does not say what constituted the test) and found that they were not Apostles. From this situation it appears that the Lord's Apostles (or at least many of them) were not personally known in Asia, or else this situation could have never come about. This congregation was so committed that they gave priority to the truth.

#### Verse 3

So concerned were the Christians in Ephesus to protect the name of Christ, that they did not grow weary (*kekopiakos* - perfect, ind.). The use of the perfect tense implies that they have been laboring for the Lord, and their concern enabled them to avoid becoming weary or tired of their work.

#### Verse 4

What possibly could be wrong with a congregation that worked so diligently to protect the purity of the Lord's name? This active church was condemned for departing from their first commitment. How could this be? John emphatically stated that this congregation was not merely in danger of or in process of leaving their first love; he stated that they had completed the act of leaving (*aphēkas*, 1st aor. act. ind.). This speaks eloquently against the denominational, anti-biblical doctrine of Eternal Security or Once in Grace Always in Grace.

Note: See Robert Shank, *Life in The Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance*, Westcott Pub. Springfield, Missouri, 1960. This is a very fine study by a Southern Baptist Minister, who once held the doctrine of Eternal Security, but after finishing this study, he rejected the doctrine. It has caused a great deal of discussion among Southern Baptists - both present and past generations.

The fact of the possibility of apostacy from the Christian faith is categorically claimed in this verse. The first love is Christ!

*Verse 5*

They were commanded (*mnēmoneue* - sing. pres. imp.) as individuals to remember. The singular form of the term translated remember makes it apparent that repentance is an individual and not a group matter. What were they to remember? Before they could be restored, they must recall "whence thou art fallen" (*peptokas* - sing. perf. ind. - expresses the state of completeness) and repent (*metanonson* - sing. aor. imp.). As the command to remember was singular and imperative, so is the command to repent - singular and imperative - do at once before it is too late! Each individual member of the Church in Ephesus was commanded to repent! The consequences of repentance would be a restored relationship with the Lord or their first love. Christ declared unless they repented (conditional *ei de me* - "and if not") he would come and will remove (*kinēsw* - fut. ind. act.) their lampstand (the lampstand was identified as the church - 1:20).

*Verse 6*

After that warning, Christ again commands them for hating the works of the Nicolatians. Who were they? The name is formed by combining *nikon* - to conquer, and *laos* - the people. Martin Kiddle is probably right in his views about the Nicolaitans. They were followers of Nikolaos, the "proselyte from Antioch" (see Acts 6:1-6). This view is at least the general patristic tradition. (See Martin Kiddle, Moffatt Commentary Revelation, Harper & Bros. N.Y., pp. 33-34 - In the liberal British tradition).

*Verse 7*

Jesus Christ warns and challenges the Church in Ephesus with these words (literally) "the one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches." Each individual is addressed, and charged with the responsibility of hearing (*akousato* - sing. 1st aor. imp.). Each individual is commanded to hear immediately! This is not mere passive listening, but an active response to what is heard. Does this command of the Lord fit any contemporary congregations, or any of the legion of church attenders? How many of us listen

to the Word and just attend to what we like to hear? There is as much a responsibility to God to prepare to listen as there is responsibility on the part of the one who prepares to speak. Often Churches act as though only the speaker is responsible to prepare to speak and they are free from responsibility to prepare to listen.

Though it is to the Church in Ephesus that the warning is directed the conclusion is reached for all of the Churches (plural).

The promises of the Lord are available only for (literally) "the one overcoming (*nikōnti* - pres. part. i.e., continual victory). "I will give to him to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God." It is not to the indifferent Church member or to the infrequent attender that the promise is given, but rather to the one (individual) who continually overcomes (is ultimately victorious in his Christian life).

Note: See Ragnar Leivstad, *Christ the Conqueror: Idea of Conflict and Victory in the New Testament*, MacMillan, N.Y. 1954; also *Special Study on Theme of Victory in The Revelation*.

#### Review Questions

1. Who is the speaker addressing the Church in Ephesus - vs. 1?
2. Does the congregation at Ephesus have commendable characteristics - vs. 2? What were they? Discuss.
3. Does being busy in Church work necessarily mean that we are pleasing God - vs. 4?
4. Is it possible to fall from the grace of God - vs. 4?
5. What was the initial condition for repentance as stated in vs. 5?
6. Does John declare in vs. 5 that individuals had actually completed the act of falling?
7. What would happen, if they failed to repent - vs. 5?
8. Is there a responsibility for each of us to prepare to hear and heed the Word of God - vs. 7?
9. Discuss the spiritual implications of the tense of the verb - "hear" in vs. 7.
10. Are the warnings of this section of scripture only applicable to the Church in Ephesus - vs. 7?

## SECTION 5

Text 2:8-11

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again 9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear not the things which thou are about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Initial Questions 2:8-11

1. How can a poverty stricken Church be rich?
2. What does the term *blasphemy* mean?
3. Does John believe that the Devil was a real person and responsible for evil?
4. How would being thrown into prison, try or test our faith in Christ?
5. Does the Lord expect us to be faithful, even to the point of surrendering our own lives?
6. What does the phrase - "the second death" mean?

The Church in Smyrna  
Chp. 2:8-11

Professor William M. Ramsay called Smyrna the city of Life; it was also the seat of the Imperial Cult. Smyrna has existed from a millennium before Christ to the present. Today it is a city of over 250,000 inhabitants. "The Glory of Asia" stood 35 miles to the north of Ephesus. Damascus had her "street called straight"; and Smyrna has the Golden Street. This street was lined with infamous temples to Aphrodite, Asklepios, Apollo, and to the mighty Zeus. From a Christian perspective, its most notable contribution to the world of the N.T. was a congregation of the Lord's people. Polycarp was bishop of this congregation soon after its basic departure from the biblical concept of the Church and its polity. What did our Lord think of this Church?

## Verse 8

John was commanded to write (see vs. 1) to the angel of the Church in Smyrna. Christ addresses this congregation as the first and the last, who became (*egeneto* - II Cor. ind.) in a single act - dead and lived (*ezmisen* - I Cor. mid. voice in a single act lived again of his own will; the force of the middle voice). The King James erroneously translates this as a present tense "is alive." With His credentials of the fact of His resurrection, Christ addresses this Church. What greater grounds could there be for His demanding obedient response to His Lordship?

## Verse 9

Christ acknowledges that He is aware of their affliction. (*Thlipis* - pressure, i.e., burden - pressing down). Their suffering was not unknown to their God. The Lord's vivid imagery is again apparent as He speaks of their poverty (*ptōcheia* - is a man who has nothing. Another term, *penia* means a poor man or a man who works for a living.) The great contrast was that this great commercial metropolis was rich, but the Christians were destitute.

In what way could a poverty-stricken congregation be rich? They were wealthy with the things that last - faith, etc. They were building for Eternity! It was their commitment to Christ which enabled them to withstand the railing (*blasphēmian* - from two Greek words which mean to speak, to hurt). It takes Christ given courage to maintain a progressive faith, when there were no physical signs of God's blessing (they were poverty stricken), and Jews of the synagogue of Satan were blaspheming their Christ by railing against them. The phrase "a synagogue of Satan" means that their assembly is dedicated really to Satan and not God.

In our day there are many learned documents written to set forth the thesis that contemporary anti-Semitism had its origin in the scriptures. They often fail to consider the Jewish enmity toward the cause of Christ (see Book of Acts) - as long as Christians were a minority group.

Note: R. Wilde, *The Treatment of the Jews in the Greek Christian Writers of the First Centuries*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1949; Jules Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, National Council of Christians and Jews, New York, 19, N.Y.; The Talmud speaks of good and bad Pharisees, but still Jewish and Liberal Christians continue to attach the biblical data with regards to

Christ's attack on the Pharisees, John's use of the term "The Jews, etc.: Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, The Jewish Pub. Soc. N.Y. second printing, 1961; David Daube, *The N.T. and Rabbinic Judaism*; Athelone Press, Univer. of London; H. Loewe, "Pharisaism," *Judaism and Christianity* volume I (ed. by W.O.E. Oesterley) gives summary of passages showing that Pharisees were opponents of legalistic Jewish religious as was Jesus. These give examples to what is found in the N.T.; C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*, pp. 202-232 for other examples - A. T. Robertson's work, *Jesus and the Pharisees* - very defective study. Use it with care! John (4:22) said that "Salvation is of the Jews." Yet today, there are three Jews who influence the world more than our Lord - Freud, Einstein, and Marx. But ultimately the Jew from Nazareth shall prevail!

#### Verse 10

In the midst of all their tribulation and persecutions, etc., Christ commands them "do not fear" (*phobon* - per. imper. mid.) the things there about to suffer." Had not they suffered enough for Christ's sake? Now He comes in person and tells them that things will grow worse than they are at present. That certainly was not a very comforting message. Christ declares that "The devil is about to throw some of you into prison in order that (this is a *hina* clause or a purpose clause, that is the purpose of their being cast into prison was) you may be tested" (*peirasthēte* - pl. 1st aor., passive voice, subj. mood). They were being put to the test (the implication of passive voice) in order to determine their ultimate committment. They were to have affliction ten days. Next, the Lord commanded that they be faithful (*ginou* - sing. imper. present - means that each individual in the Church was commanded), because their faithfulness unto death was a necessary condition for receiving the crown of life (*zōes*) not *bios*. Christ does not offer mere biological existence. (He offers Life! - a sermon suggestion - "Passing from Existence to Life.")

#### Verse 11

"The one continually having an ear let him hear what the Spirit keeps on saying to the Churches" (plural - therefore does not merely apply to the Church in Smyrna). The one who is continually victorious (*nikōn* - sing. pres. part. - the individual who constantly overcomes or is victorious) will by no means be hurt by the second death." What does "the second death" mean? From contemporary Jewish literature, we know that this means "damnation." Death of the body was physical death; death of the

God-given spirit, damnation by which it would be dead to all that it had been created for was "the second death" which could be avoided.

Note: For the Rabbinic literature, etc., see Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 1922-1961 - 6 volumes in 7 parts - volume 3 contains *Briefe des N.T. und Offenbarung*, 1924. An indespensable work for any serious background study of any N.T. book; see appendix III at end of this chapter.

### Review Questions

1. What credentials did Christ set forth as He began to condemn the Church - vs. 8?
2. How poor was this congregation - vs. 9?
3. Study James chapter 2 and 3, and discuss in light of this poor-rich congregation - vs. 9.
4. What does phrase "the synagogue of Satan" mean - vs. 9?
5. What did our Lord command that these Christians do in view of the coming, more intense, persecution - vs. 10?
6. What were the necessary conditions for "receiving the crown of life" - vs. 10?
7. How are we to hear the Word of God - vs. 11?
8. What does "the second death" mean - vs. 11?

### SECTION 6

#### Text 2:12-17

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:  
 These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword:  
 13 I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is;  
 and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith,  
 even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who  
 was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a  
 few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold  
 the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-  
 block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to  
 idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some  
 that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. 16 Re-  
 pent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make

war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

#### Initial Questions 2:12-17

1. Where was the phrase - "the sharp two-edged sword" used in *The Revelation* before this verse?
2. What was the teaching of Balaam?
3. Where is the Old Testament background for vs. 14 located?
5. Is it possible today that entire congregations like the 1st century Church in Pergamum needed to repent?

#### The Church in Pergamos Chp. 2:12-17

Pergamos, (the Greek form is Pergamum) stood approximately 55 miles N.E. of Ephesus in the valley of the Caicus. Pergamos was the capitol city of the Attalid realm. Later, the Romans made it the capitol of the province of Asia. The inland location of the city precluded it as a candidate for taking over the trade of Smyrna and Ephesus.

There are at least two things which should be remembered about Pergamos: (1) That it had a great library of 200,000 books, and the word parchment is derived from the city's name; (2) It was internationally famous as a center of Asklepios worship. Asklepias was the god of healing. Asklepios' chief descriptive title was (*sōter*) saviour. The emblem of this Asian saviour is the serpent.

Pergamos was the outpost metropolis of Greek civilization. Beyond the city's borders lie the hordes of barbaric Celts. It is particularly important for our study of the Revelation, to know that Pergamos gloried in the presence of the Temples to Athene, Zeus, and was a center of the Caesar Cult. Caesar claimed to be god, but the Church in Pergamos acknowledged only one saviour (not *asklepios*) and one God (not Caesar) but rather the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Verse 12

John is once more commanded to write (same form as the other instances). Who is speaking, and how is He described?

Christ is speaking as "the one having the sharp two-edged sword." He speaks the word of God, and it "shall not return unto Him void." (The nature of the Word of God, in both O.T. and N.T. will be traced in a *Special Study* in this volume.)

*Verse 13*

"I know where you dwell where the throne of Satan is." The word says that the Church was not to run away and hide but rather they were to dwell there permanently. (Here *katoikeis* or permanent resident versus *paroiken*, pilgrim or stranger.) The King James translation of *thronos* as seat is faulty. It means a throne from which he reigns as their 'lord.' There is no neutral ground - either Christ is our Lord, or Satan is our lord - which is it to be?

"And thou holdest (*krateis* - sing. pres. act. they were constantly holding on to the faith; and they were doing it individually (force of the sing.) the name of me." Semetic background is present here in the use of "name" which stands for the person. "And did not deny (*ouk ērnēsō* - sing. 1st aor. ind.) in one act of refusal to deny Christ, most of the individuals (the sense of the singular form 2nd per. sing.) held fast to "the faith once and for all delivered to the Saints." There was no compromise on the part of most church members in Pergamos (my faith). Christians at Pergamos held fast to Christ under heavy persecution, even under martyrdom. One martyr by the name of Antipas was singled out for special mention during the seige of hate. We know nothing more about Antipas than is mentioned here. We do know that Antipas held firm unto the end in the place where Satan continually dwells (*katoikei* - pres. tense). Satan did not merely drop in and out of this city, but it was his constant home base.

*Verse 14*

Their stand for Christ was a gallant one, but they permitted "the ones holding the teaching of Balaam" to remain in the Church's fellowship. This is ample warning that the Lord is not merely concerned with the Church as a whole, but for every single individual claiming membership in it. It will not do to have available a "good statistical report" of the church. Many congregations today look on the surface to be progressing and successful; but what of the belief and behavior of "every" church

member? It is not simply a matter of how many (even if statistically small) heretics are continually present in the Church life, but rather, are there any at all? Who was Balaam? (See Numbers 25:1-9; Jude 11; and II Peter 2:15.)

There were two heretical groups in this congregation - the followers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Condemnation was Christ's answer to the Nicolaite's contamination of this congregation. Who were the Nicolaitans? No absolutely final answer can be given to this question, but they were probably committed to some form of Gnosticism.

Note: An understanding of Gnosticism is also imperative for a study of the Johannine Epistles as well as The Revelation. For further study see J. Doresse, *The Secret Book of The Egyptian Gnostics*. Viking Press, New York, 1960; *The Biblical Archaeologist*, February, 1961 - Floyd V. Filson, *New Greek and Coptic Gospel Manuscripts*, pp. 2, Religion in Life, Winter, 1961-62 - William R. Schoedel, *New Gnostic Papyri*, pp. 99; Puech, Quispel, and van Unnik, *The Jung Codex*, Mowbrays, especially, van Unnik, *The Gospel of Truth and the N.T.* for a study in parallels; an excellent general study is R. Wilson, *The Gnostic Problem*, Mowbray, London, 1958. See also Jonas' two works, and Bultmann's *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, 1956 for a multitude of ridiculous assertions about the Gnostic origins of several N.T. ideas. Bultmann's thesis is invalidated, because he uses antiquated views of Gnosticism which have been destroyed by the *Nag Hammadi* finds.

#### Verse 16

Under the above circumstances, what can the Church in Pergamos do in order to become again acceptable to the Lord? Christ gave an immediate answer - "repent thou" (*metanoeeson* - sing. 1st aor. imper. each individual was commanded to completely repent immediately). Unless they fulfilled the necessary condition of repentance completely and immediately Christ says to them "I am coming to you quickly and will fight with (or against) them (*autōn* - them - not the entire church, but the guilty, repentent ones) with the sword of my mouth. The Word of God shall prevail!

#### Verse 17

"The one having (the appeal was always to individuals not to groups) an ear let him hear what the Spirit keeps saying to the Churches." To the ones who are continually victorious I will give to him the having been hid (*kekrummenou* - perf. pass. part)

manna, and I will give him a white stone." It is impossible to completely identify the "white stone" symbolism, but it no doubt was a mark of identification to be given to all faithful Christians. On the stone would be inscribed their "new name" having been written (*gegrammenon* - sing. pass. pt. p. - the new name had already been inscribed on "the white stone"), which no one knows except the one receiving (it is supplied because the participle - the one receiving needs an object).

### Review Questions

1. Pergamos was the center of what religious cult?
2. What could the phrase "where the throne of Satan is" mean - vs. 13?
3. What does the use of "the name of me" suggest - vs. 13?
4. Was the Church in Pergamos free from false teachers? What did the Lord command that they do about them - vs. 14?
5. What is the O.T. background of Balaam (see Numbers 25:1-9) - vs. 14?
6. What did the Lord require of the Church in Pergamos - vs. 16?

### SECTION 7

#### Text 2:18-29

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass: 19 I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first. 20 But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. 22 Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works.

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24 But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

### Initial Questions 2:18-29

1. What were the commendable characteristics of this congregation - vs. 19?
2. The Lord acknowledged that the Church in Thyatira was a progressing congregation. But they failed to keep the doctrine and life of the Church pure. Is there anything so insignificant that we can let it pass by when it effects the belief and life of the Church?
3. How is the individual Christian to be judged - vs. 23?
4. Was the whole Church at Thyatira infected with deadly disease of false doctrines of Jezebel?
5. To what event does the phrase "till I come" vs. 25, refer?

### The Church in Thyatira Chp. 2:18-29

The next congregation to receive the analytic glance of The Lord was the Church in Thyatira. Lydia, the first Christian convert from Europe was from Thyatira (Acts 16:11-15). Pliny called this city an insignificant city. Almost nothing is known of this city, therefore it is difficult to provide background information. But we do know that Thyatira was situated at the mouth of a valley which directly connected the Caicus and Hermus Rivers. A great road from the Byzantium (or Eastern Roman Empire) to Smyrna ran through this city making it easily accessible for evangelistic purposes. The province of The Lord utilized the great road-ways in the ancient Greek world.

*Verse 18*

I am sure that the congregation in Thyatira would never have forgotten the day the "postman of Patmos" delivered this letter.

A new title of our Lord appears here - "The Son of God." (We shall discuss the titles of our Lord in a *Special Study* at the close of this volume.) This is a categorical assertion of the deity of Christ. The remaining imagery of this verse is to be found also in chapter 1:14-15. There we were told that "one like unto the son of man" was revealing the plan of the ages to John.

*Verse 19*

The Lord highly praised this congregation. They exhibited self-less love and the faith and the service (ministry - we in the Restoration Movement need to make a serious study of The Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry immediately in this generation.) Christ declared that they were a growing congregation and they were doing more now than before. They were to be commended for not using the "past" as a measuring rod for what can or ought to be done for Christ. In the seventh decade of the 20th century many among us are guilty of using the past as a criterion of where we are now with respect to growth and visible success.

*Verse 20*

This highly rated Church had a surprise coming. Christ had something against them. What was it? They were not as concerned about the purity of their doctrine as they ought to have been. "The one calling herself a prophetess" Jezebel was seducing the saints. Christ said that you are continually permitting (*apheis* - sing. ind. present tense - each one of the congregation is charged with permitting this heresy to continue in the church). John's imagery takes us back to that infamous Jezebel, wife of King Ahab of Israel. She is so deceptive that she teaches (pres. tense - continuously teaches) and continuously deceives (*plana* could be either sing. subj. pres. or sing. ind. pres.) my slaves (lowly servants) to commit fornication (*porneusai* - 1st aor. inf.) or an act of fornication - the use of the aorist tense points to the fact that they had not repeatedly committed fornication) and to eat idol sacrifices." (Paul provides us with the revealed attitude toward eating idol sacrifices in I Cor. 8:1ff, 10:4ff.)

## Verse 21

Christ said "I gave her time in order that she might repent, (*hina*, clause or a purpose clause) but she did not wish to repent of her fornication.

## Verse 22

Look here, I am casting her into a bed, and the ones committing adultery (*moicheuontas* - adultery, this is not the same word as is found in vs. 20 - *porneusai* - fornication) with her into great affliction. This reveals the two actions of the Lord in Judgment "casting her into bed" and those guilty of immorality with her - "into great affliction." This act of judgment was conditional. Unless (*ean mē*) they shall repent out of her works (out of - *ek*; *autēs* - her, not their). Clearly repentence is not merely being sorry for some deed; true repentence results in changed behavior.

Note: The present author is preparing an exhaustive analysis of the vocabulary and theology of repentence for a work on *Biblical Theology* which he is writing at present. The basic Hebrew word, *Teshubah* does not mean precisely what the Greek *Metanoia* does. The Roman Catholic Church has finished the task, which was started by early Church Fathers, that of distorting the Biblical doctrine of *repentance* into the sacramental theology of *penance*. For a history of the doctrine of Penance see Oscar R. Watkins, *A History of Penance from the Whole Church to 1215*. This two volume work begins with the N.T. literature and moves up to 1215 A.D. Burt Franklin, New York 25, N.Y. reprinted 1961, originally printed in London in 1920.

Repentence was one of the great Biblical doctrines which caused Luther to revolt against the Roman system of works and mere penance. For his heated discussion see his letter to Stanpitz, May 30, 1518.

## Verse 23

"All the Churches (plural - not merely the seven churches but all congregations) will know of Christ's righteous indignation. He continues with an emphatic declaration "that I am the one searching (continually searching) the reins (literally *nephrous* - kidneys) and hearts, and will give to each one of you - according to your works." The organs of the body were used in Hebrew Psychology to refer to the seat or place of thoughts, feelings, etc.

## Verse 24

Christ raised His voice in warning those in Thyatira who had not committed the acts of immorality which are under his judgment. Those who were still pure did not know about (had not personally experienced "the deep things of Satan." This is probably another reference to evil Gnostic cults which dominated the Spiritual lives of so many in that congregation. They had apparently paid no heed to Christ's words "to be in but not of the world."

## Verse 25

Christ said that their burdens were so great that "I am not casting on you another burden." That great little word "nevertheless (*plēn*) what you have at this present time hold (*kratēsate* - 1st aor. act. imperative - they *plural* were commanded to hold on to it at all costs - do not surrender it) until I shall come (the particle *an* shows that the time of his coming is not certain). Christ promised that He was coming again - so hold on. The suffering will not compare with the glory which shall be those "that love His appearing." This also applies to the persecuted Christians on all far-flung mission fields today.

## Verse 26

Christ's immutable promises are here set forth - only for the faithful. The person who used to be a good church member will receive the wrath of God, not the crown of life. To whom are the promises given? "The one continually overcoming and the one continually keeping my works until the purpose of God has matured or been fulfilled. (*telous*, the end or that which is fulfilled or matured.) Christ will give the faithful servant power or authority over the nations (*ethnōn* - literally the Gentiles and probably in contrast to true spiritual Israel - see Romans chp. 9-11).

## Verse 27

The great Shepherd of the sheep "will shepherd them with an iron staff, as the clay vessels (or vessels of the potter) are broken (*suntribetai*, sing. pass. present ind.). The 1901 translation is not exactly correct.

*Verse 28*

"The morning star" is probably Christ. (See Rev. 22:16 - Christ says *ho astēr ho lampros ho prōinos* - the bright morning star.)

*Verse 29*

The conclusion to this letter is the same as the others.

**Review Questions**

1. What new title for Christ appears in vs. 18? What does it mean or imply about the person of Jesus?
2. Would most contemporary N.T. congregations feel satisfied with the commendations given to Thyatira by our Lord - vs. 19?
3. Was the doctrine of this congregation orthodox or right teaching - vs. 20?
4. What does Paul tell us about eating idol sacrifices in I Cor. 8:1ff? What does it say about the condition of the Church in Thyatira?
5. Name and discuss the two acts of the Lord's judgment mentioned in vs. 22?
6. What will the basis of judgment be - according to vs. 23?
7. What does Christ promise the faithful Christian - vs. 26?
8. Who is the morning star - vs. 28?

***Special Study*****The Word of God and Death!**

Hebrews 9:27 (Greek Text) - "And as it is reserved (or appointed) to men once to die and after this judgment" - (there is no verb *cometh* in the text.)

What is the Hebrew view of man? How does Hebrew anthropology relate to the Old Testament view of death?

The Old Testament view of a "wholistic man" antedates the contemporary views of man by over 3000 years. Faculty Psychology has fallen; and the dynamic view of man has prevailed since Freud. There is an irrefutable interaction between body and spirit. H. Wheeler Robinson's essay on Hebrew Psychology (see *The People and The Book*, ed. A. S. Peake, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925) clearly states the Old Testament case

for a dynamic view of man as interpretation of body and spirit. (See for an exhaustive study of Hebrew Psychology J. Pedersen's *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, Oxford, 1946-47, 2 volumes - These are indespensable volumes.)

The Old Testament doctrine of "corporate personality" is an essential aspect of biblical anthropology. The Old Testament view of the relation of sin (Adams and the individuals) to death is crystal clear. This view stands in irreconcilable contradiction with the naturalistic notion of death as a natural phenomenon. The scholarly works of R. H. Charles (*A Critical History of The Doctrine of A Future Life*, 2nd edition, 1913) (not the 1899 edition); L. B. Paton (*Spiritism and the Cult of the Dead in Antiquity*, MacMillan, 1921); Edmund F. Sutcliffe, (*The Old Testament and Future Life* - London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, LTD, 1946); Robert Nortin-Achard (*De la Mort, A la resurrection de' apres l'Ancien Testament* - Neuchatel et Paris Delachaux et Niestle, 1956) all agree in their critical evaluation of the available Old Testament materials. The classic work of Charles, and the work of the Catholic scholar Sutcliffe, and the protestant scholar Nortin-Achard concur in a negative critical attitude to the biblical literature. Those of us who believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God can readily learn the biblical view of death by a perusal of its pages.

The Hebrew term *nephesh* and its derivatives communicate the spiritual aspects of man. Another vital term which speaks of man's spiritual life is *ruach*. Ezekiel's valley of dry bones was inanimate until the four winds (*ruachoth*) brought *ruach* and life returned. *Ruach* and *nephesh* over lap in speaking of the volitional and emotional range of human existence. *Neshamah* (Gen. 2:7) is the God breathed factor of human life. There is no mind/body dualism in the Hebrew view of man. Other Hebrew terms which would require examination, if our study was to be thorough, are *dam* (blood), *basar* (flesh), *gevyyah* which is the basic term for body, living or dead, occurs only fourteen times in the Old Testament.

Greek influence is apparent in the doctrine of man in *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*. In this extra biblical literature the soul becomes mortal and it is pre-existent. This is strict Platonism! Rabbinic Judaism perpetrates the two views mentioned above in the *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*. The major difference between the above two bodies of Literature is found in the Rabbinic emphasis upon the heart as the battle ground between good and evil.

The New Testament view of death stands firm upon its Old Testament foundation. The New Testament doctrine of man and the resurrection includes the biblical teaching concerning the use of *psuche* (soul), *pneuma* (spirit), *sarks* (flesh), *soma* (body), *suniodesis* (conscience), *nous* (mind), *esu anthropos* (the inward man). Dr. S. D. F. Salmond's *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality* is still the best single source for study. Dr. Wilbur M. Smith's article on "resurrection," found in *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, 1960, pp. 448-456 is an excellent survey of the issues regarding the biblical doctrine of the resurrection. The New Testament teaching about man and the resurrection of the dead through the work of Jesus Christ is a unique phenomenon in the world of the apostolic church.

The Hebrew word for death - *maweth* and the Greek *Thanatos* both expresses observable, physical death.

From Genesis to Jesus the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Paul declares (I Cor. 3:21-22) that death is a human possession. This is one possession that men would gladly surrender! Paul asserts that unbelievers are "dead" because of sin (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Jesus declared that the Prodigal "was dead," but is alive forevermore (Lk. 15:24,32). John saw Jesus open the fourth seal (Rev. 6:8) and he saw Death on a pale horse and he had authority over one quarter of the earth. Sin is inseparably related to the biblical doctrine of death. Christian hope is grounded on the atonement of Christ and His victory over death the reigning monarch. Death has been dethroned by the work of Christ. Paul makes this apparent in Rom. 6:9, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him."

The biblical teaching is grounded in the resurrection of Christ which assures every Christian of the resurrection of the dead. The New Testament does not teach the immortality of the soul, in the Platonic sense, but rather the resurrection of the body.

Death be not Proud - for Thou art overcome! All the forged fetters of darkness could not hold its prey! The power of death has been dissipated; its strength has been spent. Paul says - "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." (II Tim. 1:10)

Contemporary Man is pre-occupied with death, and a repudiation of the Christian view of man, hope, death, resurrection. The Postman of Patmos was pre-occupied with declaring that because of Christ - "death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4)!

## SECTION 8

Text 3:1-6

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that livest, and thou art dead. 2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Initial Questions 3:1-6

1. Is it possible to be a very active and successful congregation and yet be spiritually dead?
2. What can you tell about a congregation who starts many worthy projects and finishes none of them - vs. 2?
3. Where in the Gospel records can we find the same warning as given here in vs. 3 - in the earthly ministry of Christ?
4. What do the "white garments of vs. 5 signify?
5. What is the "Book of Life" - vs. 5?

The Church in Sardis  
Chp. 3:1-6

The Church in Sardis received the most complete condemnation from her Lord, of the seven Churches. They are in a very serious spiritual condition, and they are consequently in grave danger of the Lord's judgment. He might come to judge Sardis as a "thief in the night" (Thess. 5:2) unexpectedly. There is only a small remnant at Sardis who shall share in Christ's triumph.

Sardis was the capitol of ancient Lydia until 549 B.C. The ruins of her great temple to the goddess Cybele is still observable. A small village exists today near the site of ancient

Sardis, its name is Sert. Ancient Sardis was wealthy from the gold and silver which she found in her rivers and hills.

*Verse 1*

The Lord addresses this congregation as He did the others. Christ told them that "you have (*echeis* - sing. pres. ind. - you have at present) a name that you are alive (*zēs* sing. pres. ind. alive now) but you are dead (*nekros* - i.e., pres. ind. dead right now). How is it possible that a congregation can think that it is alive and in reality it is dead? Is it possible that a large active church can be actually spiritually dead?

*Verse 2*

"Be thou (imperative - they were commanded to be watching) constantly watching and establish (*sterison* - 1st aor. act. imp. through one final act get the complete remaining things established) the remaining things that or which were about to die." Next, comes the most serious indictment of all to this very busy congregation. "For I have not found any of your works having been fulfilled (*peplē rōmena* - perf. pass. participle means - you started a lot of things but you never finished a single thing) before my God (literally God of me).

*Verse 3*

What could Christ say to a congregation that never finished anything it started? He commanded them to "remember" (see 2:5) how you have received (*eilephas* - perfect tense - means that they had permanently received) and did hear (*ékousas* - aor. tense - means the single act of hearing) and keep (*tērei* - pres. imp. commanded to keep on keeping) and repent (*metanoēson* - 1st aor. imper. commanded to completely repent in a single final act). Christ told them that (literally) "If therefore you do not watch, I will come as a thief, and you by no means know at what hour I will come on you."

*Verse 4*

The *alla* (but) is to contrast the general lack of spiritual concern and "the few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments." They were very careful, like Bunyan (in *Pilgrim's Progress*) not to soil their white robes. "They shall walk around with me in white (garments - not in text); because they are worthy." They are worthy, because of their close walk with

Christ - not through any self-righteousness. Christ is their righteousness!

Verse 5

Who are going to receive the white garments of righteousness? Christ responds immediately - "The one continually overcoming thus shall be clothed (to throw around) in white garments." These names alone will remain in "the scroll of eternal life." I will confess (*homologēsō* - future ind. act.)

Verse 6

Same Conclusion as the other Churches.

Review Questions

1. What did Christ mean by charging the Church of Sardis with being "dead" - vs. 1?
2. What are some of the spiritual implications of the charge?
3. Had Sardis really *received* the Word of God - vs. 3?
4. What does vs. 2 tell us about how the Word of God is to be handled by Christians - vs. 3?
5. What do we learn about the need for Christian growth - vs. 5?

SECTION 9

Text 3:7-13

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth: 8 I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name. 9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. 12 He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the

name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

### Initial Questions 3:7-13

1. What is the relationship between God's purpose and will and human efforts - vs. 7?
2. What is the "synagogue of Satan" - vs. 9?
3. What is the relationship between our loyalty to God and the availability of His power in times of trial - vs. 10?
4. What are the spiritual results for those that overcome - vs. 12?

### The Church in Philadelphia

Chp. 3:7-13

The congregation of the Lord in the city of brotherly love was the only one of the seven churches which was not condemned by Christ. Philadelphia was the second most important city in Lydia. It was situated southeast of Sardis. Under heavy persecution this congregation had remained loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the Lord had "caused a door to be opened." This Church kept the Faith!

### Verse 7

Christ is "the holy one," "the true one," the one having the key of David." Christ is the separated one. He is separated from sin, but not the repentant sinner. He is set apart to do the will of His father. The term *hagios* means holy in the sense of separation. In Isaiah, chp. 6:1ff we read of the thrice holy God of Israel.

The Greek language has two words which can be translated true (first one is *alēthēs*, second is *alēthinos*). The first word is applied to propositions or assertions which are either true or false, depending on the actual state of affairs. The second term means true in the sense of genuine. The word is formed with an *a privative* which makes the word mean to uncover or to reveal to the observer whether or not something is real or spurious - i.e., claiming to be true when it is not. The term true is one of the central words in all of John's works.

The third title comes from a quotation from Isaiah 22:22. This messianic use of this O.T. background enables Christians to be in the presence of the living God.

The next title is "the one opening (*anoigōn* - pres. parti., the one who keeps opening) and no one shall shut (*kleisēi* - fut. to be hard-hearted or to lack compassion) and shutting and no one opens (*anoigei* pres. ind. no one keeps opening).

*Verse 8*

Christ has placed a "door having been opened" (*ēneōgmenē* - perf. pass. participle) which no one is able (lacks the power because God has opened it) to shut it." This door was opened for them by God Himself, because "they kept on keeping" the Word of God ('my Word') and did not deny my name." Here the name stands for the person of God in Christ. The great door of opportunity has been opened by God and no man or congregation can ultimately shut.

*Verse 9*

Christ promises two things here, first that their persecutors will be humbled; second that in the general persecution that is coming upon the entire populated earth they will be spared. These two promises coupled with Christ's promise in vs. 7 concerning the door "having been opened (or which He caused to be open) constitute three hope creating words from the living Christ. The former two promises will be fulfilled - Christ "will make them to come and worship before thy feet" and the second promise is found in verse 10.

*Verse 10*

"Because you did keep on keeping the Word of my patience (endurance) I will keep you out of (*ek*) the hour of trial shortly to come upon the inhabited earth (*eikoumenēs* - the word Ecumenical means - dwellers in the household then figuratively - the populated earth.)

*Verse 11*

Christ announces "I am coming quickly; hold on to what you have and do not let go; in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) no one takes your crown." Hold so that no one takes your crown.

*Verse 12*

The imagery of this next promise was certainly available around Philadelphia. The ruins of some Temples left only the

supporting columns remaining upright. Christ has promised a vital place in the temple of God for every faithful Christian. The faithful will have the name of God and New Jerusalem inscribed on the faithful one. (See *Special Study* on Jerusalem: in *History and Symbolism*, also compare with Rev. 21:1ff.)

Review Questions  
Chp. 3:7-13

1. What do the titles for Christ given in vs. 7 tell us about His person and work?
2. In what way, if at all, is it possible for sinners to refuse to go through God's door of opportunity - vs. 8?
3. Christ made three promises to the faithful - one in vs. 7 and two in vs. 9. Discuss them and their relevance for the 20th century Church!
4. Does Christ's promise to come again give you courage for daily Christian living? If so, in what ways - vs. 11?

SECTION 10

Text 3:14-22

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

## Initial Questions 3:14-22

1. With respect to the Christian life is neutrality possible - vs. 15?
2. Is a *lukewarm* Christian life satisfactory to Christ - vs. 16?
3. Is there ever a stage of Christian maturation where the Christian need not or cannot develop beyond - vs. 17?
4. Is there any sarcasm apparent in vs. 18?
5. Does God really chasten or test those whom He loves? How?
6. Is every individual responsible before God's Word - vs. 20?
7. Does vs. 20 relate to us how vital, wonderful, and close our relationship with Christ will be?

The Church in Laodicea  
Chp. 3:14-22

The name of this city means "justice of the people." The congregation in this city attempted the impossible - they tried to be neutral with respect to their Christian commitment. Laodicea was generally condemned, but it was not a hopeless situation. They were helpless but not hopeless!

Much of the imagery in this section of scriptures comes from the surrounding country-side, i.e., hot springs, the "salve to anoint your eyes," etc. There was a great medical school there. They indeed "hath need of a Divine Physician."

Laodicea was situated about 40 miles S.E. of Philadelphia. (See Sir William Ramsey, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Nothing better available!) The only new title for Christ found in this verse is "the origin or source of the creation of God." See appendix immediately after chp. 3 - for a brief discussion of the crass distortion this title receives at the hands of The Jehovah's Witnesses Cult.

## Verse 15

Christ again asserts first hand knowledge of the spiritual condition of the Church in Laodicea. He charges that they are neither (*oute*) cold (*psuchros*) nor hot (*zestos* - boiling). They were attempting the deadly compromise! There can be no real commitment to Jesus Christ and be liturgically cold at the same time. A. T. Robertson says that "there is no real Christianity without enthusiasm." Christ must mean more to us than the valid conclusion of polemical arguments. There must be the

delicate balance between heart and head. Christ said that "I would that you were cold or hot"; one or the other but not lukewarmness. This message is still a warning to individuals and congregations alike. Being tepid (lukewarm) and a Christian is a contradiction in terms.

Christ does not actually declare that He is going to vomit them out; He asserts that He is *mellō* or about (or might do it) to do it. The imagery is very clear - tepid Christians do not set well with God.

*Verse 17*

Here we begin to take note of a self-sufficient congregation. What do they need with God. It is alright to be a Christian, if it does not interfere with our daily lives. The Lord did not feel about them, as they felt about themselves. What did Christ actually think of them, Christ said you are the wretched one (*talaipōros* - miserable one) and pitiable (*eleinos* - used only one other place in N.T. I Cor. 15:19) it means an object of pity - or a person (or thing) to be pitied, AND POOR (*ptōchos* - this term is used over 30 times in N.T. and expresses every degree of need and want) and blind and naked. This congregation thought of itself more highly than it had reason to so judge. Christ uses sarcasm in this verse. He had just shown them in the preceding verse their actual spiritual state was in radical contrast with the high opinion they had of themselves. Now, He begins to chide them! "I counsel you (rather than commands) to buy from me gold having been refined by fire." This ironic challenge is like a sharp shaft to the spirit. These people, who claimed to have need of nothing are really in need of the truly valuable things of life. The remaining part of this verse is built on *hina* or purpose clauses. God in Christ counsels them to buy Gold from Him - Why, "In order that or for the purpose that you may be clothed and "the shame of your nakedness may not be (publically) manifested." The imagery of this last clause fits nicely into the background of the city of Laodicea. One of the great medical schools of the day flourished there. "And eye salve to anoint your eyes in order that or so that you may see." How would they have responded to this chain of ironic rebukes (Holy Sarcasm)? How would a contemporary congregation respond to preaching like this?

## Verse 19

"As many as I love I rebuke (*elegchō* - put to the test) and I chasten (*paideuo* - training or nurture, see also Heb. 12:6) be hot (*zeleue* - sing. imper. pres. - each individual is commanded to get hot and stay hot, or really be spiritually boiling) therefore and you repent (*metanoēson* - sing. 1st aor. imper. each one immediately repent) in an act of repentance.

## Verse 20

After this scorching denunciation of the Christians in Laodicea, the Lord begins His exhortation to His erring children. Look Here! "I stand in front of the door and I knock;" Christ not only knocks, but also speaks, so no one will be able to say that they never heard the voice of the master. The conditional clause - "if anyone hears. . .and opens, then I will enter to him and I will dine with him and he with me." The reciprocal relationship generated by a human response is clearly brought out by the repeated (*meta* - with) proposition. It is not merely that we will have fellowship with Him, but He also with us.

## Verse 21

"To the one who is continually victorious I will give him to set (*kathisai* - aor. inf. to set down in a single act.) with me on my throne, as I also overcame (*enikesa* - 1st aor. act. in one final act Christ overcame) - His was no process of overcoming. We need not wait for the outcome; and sat with (*meta* - reciprocal relation) my Father on His throne." The thundering voice of Christ must be heard again not merely among the seven Churches of Asia, but must be heard around the world. "The one having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches."

## Review Questions

1. How do the Jehovahs Witnesses translate the title of Christ - "the source of origin of the creation of God, vs. 14? (See appendix immediately following.)
2. Do we show enough intelligent enthusiasm in our congregations?
3. What can be done about tepid Christians in our congregations - vs. 16?
4. How did Christ describe the Christians of Laodicea - vs. 17?

5. What is the reason for Christ's strong chiding in vs. 18?
6. Would your congregation like to hear this kind of preaching?
7. Note the marked contrast between Christ's rebuke and His sweet exhortation - vs. 20!

*Special Study*

The Christology of the Jehovah's Witnesses

We shall use the new translation of the New World Bible Translation Committee, which is the official work of the Jehovah's Witnesses, in our study of vital passages in the New Testament concerning Christ and the doctrine of Hell. This is an anonymous work and the J.W.s will not reveal names of those who did the translation. Our common ground in the discussion is the fact that they claim to believe that the Bible alone is their source of doctrine. Therefore whatever that Bible really says about the person of Christ and the reality of Hell is the divine standard for belief.

Many people (Unitarians, Jews, most contemporary Theologians) along with the J.W.'s deny the deity of Christ and the reality of Hell, but not for the same reason. Any competent scholar knows what the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have to say about both of these doctrines, but they are denied on grounds other than the statements of the Bible.

It is vital that we point out one more factor before we begin our examination of specific statements of the Bible relating to the two doctrines under consideration—in the literature of the J.W.'s one sees the names of competent Christian lexicographers, grammarians and exegetes used in defense of their strange manipulations of the Word of God, but we must remember that men such as A.T. Robertson, (S. Bapt. Greek Scholar and often quoted by J.W.'s) believed the scripture taught both the deity of Christ and the reality of Hell. Our real concern is, what do the authors of the N.T. teach!

Doctrine of Christ

The J.W.'s affirm that Jesus is the spirit-creature named Michael the first of God's creation, and it was through him as secondary cause that God created all things. This view is clearly revealed in their New World Translation. This position

was originally set forth by the Arian Heresy. The New Testament Doctrine of Christ stands in irreconcilable conflict with this presentation of the person of Christ.

Before we examine several specific passages from their translation we must say a word about their use of the term Jehovah. In their appendix on "Jehovah" (from page 759f) they list over two hundred times in the N.T. where they have inserted the name Jehovah into the text when it is not based on the Greek text. In the foreword they make an effort to show how the Greek text has been altered and that originally the term "Jehovah" appeared in the text. The serious fallacy in both their technical understanding and logic becomes apparent when it is pointed out that the best manuscript evidence put forward is a 14th century A.D. Hebrew text of Matthew.

Technically, the pronunciation of the tetragrammaton is unknown (no one knows if Yahweh, etc., is correct or not). The term which appears in English as Jehovah or Yahweh could have come from two Hebrew roots, one meaning become, the other to happen. Dr. W. F. Albright and Dr. T. W. Nakari, *et al.*, illustrate the possible differences in translation by emending the Hebrew consonants with, for example, first simple active or fifth stem (causative) vowels. The vowels used in most popular translations of *Jehovah* or *Yahweh* (it is apparent that the vowels in these two words are different) are arbitrarily taken from the Hebrew word for lord - *Adonai*. After the exile the name of God became so sacred that they did not pronounce it. The Hebrews reason - if there is only one God then we do not need a name because names are for distinction. To this day the name Yhwh is unpronounced in the services of the Hebrew Synagogues, even when it appears in the Scripture text, or prayer book.

The Church has from the N.T. period to the 20th Century affirmed that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh and the final, complete revelation of the nature, purpose, and person and will of God of the O.T. The J.W.'s deny this affirmation - so let us turn to the Scriptures and hear their testimony.

One of the passages listed where "Jehovah" appears in the *New World Translation* is *Mk. 1:3*. At *Mk. 1:2* (1901 R.V.) which is a quotation from *Mal. 3:1*, we note a change in the pronouns from the Hebrew of *Mal.* to the Greek of *Mk.* In the Hebrew of *Mal. 3:1* God is speaking and says "to prepare my way (or the way before me) and the pronoun is changed to refer to Christ

(thy face) in *Mk. 1:2.* (1901 R.V.) Here we have a passage of scripture containing *Yahweh* and it is employed by an inspired author in referring to Jesus Christ.

The New World Translation of *Acts 2:21* which is a quotation from *Joel 2:32*—"anyone that calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

(For those who desire to study the passages critically the following data is essential. In the Hebrew text, chp. 2 runs to vs. 27 - vs. 28 begins chp. 3, which contains 5 verses and the Hebrew Text contains chp. 4:1-21. The English Translation (R.V. 1901) places the 5 verses of chp. 3 with chp. 2 - therefore in the English chp. 2 runs to vs. 32. Chp. 3 of the Hebrew becomes the last vs. of chp. 2 of E.T. and Chp. 4 of Hebrew is Chp. 3 in E.T.)

In the Acts passage the reference is to Christ, but another passage uses the same quotation and is also unmistakably applied to Christ - *Romans 10:9-13*. Here Christ is source of fulfilling the Joel passage. The total misunderstanding of the N.T. use of the term Lord is at the heart of the perversion in the N.W.T. The term *Lord* is unmistakably used for Yahweh and without hesitation the full import is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

In John 1:1 of the N.W.T. we learn that Jesus is merely *a god*. It reads:

"originally the Word was, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was *a god*."

We must take note of their erroneous translation of "a god" because there is no definite article before the noun. Before we analyze this point we must remind the reader that John was a Jew who had been reared on strict Jewish Monotheism (belief in one God) and to speak of "a god" would have been nonsense and repugnant or idolatry. It would not be difficult to sustain, by many examples, Dr. Ernest C. Colwell's rule of the definite article - "a definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb".... The absence of the article before God (*theos*) of the last clause of John 1:1 in no way permits the translation found in the New World Translation "*a god*." Our standard English translation reads "and the Word was God," but the literal translation of the statement would be "and God was the Word." The appendix found in the N.W.T. in an effort to justify their distortion quotes thirty-five other passages in John where the predicate noun has the definite article in

Greek. These examples provide poor evidence for their translation of "a god," because all 35 examples show that the predicate noun stands after the verb. The examples quoted in N.W.T. from the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) merely sustain Colwell's rule of the use of the Greek article or the meaning of its absence.

Another passage which is distorted by the N.W.T. is Phil. 2:6-8 (vs. 6 - N.W.T.):

"Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God."

This is such a perversion of the Greek text that only an extended statement on each word would be an adequate reply - since space forbids this we shall comment upon two words from the context of vs. 6-8. The word translated "form" in verses 6 and 7 is (*morphe*). From Homer (classical literature) forward (*morphe*) is used in an outward sense or appearance. Plato uses (*eidos*) in contrast to (*morphe*) or intrinsic reality. This meaning is also present in N.T. Greek and this specific passage. In vs. 7 we have a reflexive pronoun (*heauton*) which clearly states that He emptied - not His attribute (as God) out of Himself, but Himself out of one form (God) into another form (slave or servant). It is essential to note the impact of this reflexive pronoun. He was *not* emptied by *someone else*; rather He emptied Himself. Even the Unitarian Lexicographer, Joseph Henry Thayer, who denied the deity of Christ, admitted that the Greek of this section of Scripture speaks of Christ's deity. (See Thayer's Lexicon, pg. 418 concerning verse 6 -

"yet did not think that this equality with God was to be eagerly clung to or retained."

This is one time the J.W.'s would not dare use the help of their Unitarian cohort, Thayer, as they do so often. Clearly the passage affirms the Deity of Christ as the Greek of Paul's Epistle stands in radical contrast to the English translation of this passage in the N.W.T., the official translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Paul's statement in Col. 1:15-17 is another disconcerting passage to the deniers of Christ's Deity. The N.W.T. Col. 1:15-17 states -

"because by means of him all *other* things were created in the heavens and upon the earth - all *other* things have

been created through him and for him. Also he is *before* all *other* things and by means of him all *other* things were made to exist!" (Italics mine)

We take note that the adjective "other" appeared four times and it does not occur even once in the Greek Text. The words "other" and "before" were inserted to emphasize that Jesus was also created. The J.W.'s are perpetrating the Colossian Gnostic heresy which Paul was seeking to destroy. This heresy affirmed that Jesus was a created being between God and Man. At no time does the New Testament apply the verb *to create* to the relationship of the Father and the Son. We do not find the Greek word (*prōtoktistos*) which means first-created, but the word (*prōtotokos*) which means first-begotten, and is used in the N.T. in reference to Christ. The adjective "first" gives Christ priority of status and time. Christ has priority over all created things plus His sovereignty over the same. In *Col. 2:9* (R.V. 1901) - Paul affirms that—

"in Him dwells (present tense verb - continually dwells) all of the fulness (*plérōma*) of the Godhead bodily."

This is a direct affirmation of deity!

The translation found at Rev. 3:14 is also warped to fit the Arianism of the J.W.'s (see N.W.T., vs. 14).

"the beginning of the creation by God." (Italics mine)

The Greek Text of the Revelation passage does not say "by God," but has the genitive case meaning "of God." The translation which appears in the N.W.T. would require a different grammatical structure with the preposition (*hupo*). As in *John 1:1*, the term (*archē*) appears here also. From the period of Homer forward it has the sense of beginning, first cause, government (as in *Eph. 6:12*.) The Greek scriptures declare that Christ is the *source* and *origin* of "all things"—not all "other" things as stated in the New World Translation.

The N.W.T. of *John 8:58* is the strangest misrepresentation of all of the texts we have mentioned so far. The translation says—

"Before Abraham came into existence, *I have been.*"  
(Italics mine)

The footnote calls this translation a perfect indefinite tense. No standard grammar or lexicon has ever heard of such a translation of a simple present tense verb (*eimi*). Jesus simply affirms His eternal existence before Abraham - He said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The passages in the N.T. which speak of Christ's subordination (e.g. I Cor. 12:1-2) only speaks of his self-emptying incarnation and not as the N.W.T. suggests, that Christ is less than God the Father.

The favorite book (*The Revelation*) of the J.W.'s has a doctrine of Christ which stands in marked contrast to their anti-Christian view of Christ.

Old Testament passages which speak of Yahweh are without hesitation applied to Jesus Christ (*Deut. 10:17* see *Rev. 17:14*, *Dan. 7:9* see *Rev. 1:14*, *Zech. 4:10* see *Rev. 5:6*). Jesus Christ has co-sovereignty with the Father, see *Rev. 11:15*; He also shares one throne, see *Rev. 22:1,3*. The author of Revelation identifies Christ with God, yet he knows nothing of two Gods. Here we see a strict montheism (belief in one God only). Another point which does not adjust well to the thought of the J.W.'s is that the author identifies the glorified Christ with the Christ of the self-emptying incarnation.

These brief statements necessitate our agreement with Dr. Bruce Metzger (see his article listed in the bibliography) that in light of their doctrine of Christ the J.W.'s can in no manner be termed Christian! (See following Bibliography for further study material on Jehovah's Witnesses.)

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Further Study See: Books and Booklets, etc., written by Jehovah's Witnesses, necessary for a primary understanding of their position. These are obtainable from *Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.*

*New World Translation of N.T.* in one volume. The O.T. is not yet complete, but four volumes containing Genesis to Lamentations are available. Their creedal position is easily determined in *Make Sure of All Things; What Do the Scriptures Say About Survival After Death?*; *The Trinity—Divine Mystery or Pagan Myth?*; *Hell Fire—Bible Truth or Pagan Myth?*; *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*: This is an annual report on growth and progress. *Jehovah's Witnesses: The New World Society*. This is their official history.

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Dr. Bruce M. Metzger, "The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus." This is an article in *Theology Today*, April, 1953, P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J.

William J. Schnell, author of *Into the Light of Christianity*, which effectively debunks brainwashing and heals affected minds of this malady, has in his possession 7,591 letters from converted Jehovah's Witnesses. Price of author's second and more important book is \$2.95. He now publishes the bi-monthly *Converted Jehovah's Witness Expositor* which is sent a whole year as a Missionary into the homes of your Jehovah's Witness friends for *sixty-five cents*. A new booklet *How To Witness to Jehovah's Witnesses* may be had for *fifteen cents* in *single copies*, or *\$9.00 in 100 copy lots* and is a great help in effectively dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses at your doors and in use of book studies in their homes. Order directly from *William J. Schnell, 2889 Guss Ave., Youngstown 8, Ohio, USA.*

## SECTION 11

### Text 4:1-8

After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter. 2 Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; 3 and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying

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

#### Initial Questions 4:1-8

1. Has there been a transition from earth (considering the seven churches of Asia) to heaven - vs. 1?
2. What does it mean to be "in the Spirit" - vs. 2?
3. Do you know the Old Testament source of the imagery of vs. 4ff? (See Ezekial, chp. I)
4. Wherein the Old Testament do we find the "thrice holy" praise of God - vs. 8? (See Isaiah chp. 6:3)

#### Second Vision: Process of World Judgment 4:1-16:21

The Vision of the Throne in Heaven  
Chp. 4:1-11  
(First Section 4:1-8)

##### Verse 1

"After these things (*meta tauga* - K.J. falsely translates "after this") I saw." What is John's point of reference when he says "after these things"? The immediate context would point to the vision concerning the seven churches in chapters two and three. The act of seeing (prophetic vision) provided John with the context of his vision.

It is very important to note the transition from earth, in the preceding two chapters, to heaven - H. E. Dana calls this the beginning of the "Drama of Redemption." (See his *The Epistles and Apocalypse of John*: Baptist Book Store, 1937, p. 112.) Chapter four sets the stage for the remainder of the book. Though we will not here enter into a technical discussion concerning the literary structure of the remaining sections of *The Revelation*, it is *highly probable* that the various scenes repeat the same things (i.e., from the general situation in John's Day to the second coming of Christ) from differing perspectives. Chapter five strengthens the foundation of Chapter 4 by revealing the sovereignty of God through the ultimate victory of Christ.

Note: There is nothing in the literary structure of The Revelation which implies that it is a *Drama* re: *Dana, op. cit.*, Ray Summers, *Worthy is the Lamb*, Broadman, Nashville, 1951; and Edward A. McDowell, *The Meaning and Message of the Book of Revelation*, Broadman, 1951; but it might make the preaching and teaching of the book simpler, and therefore more accessible to the general Bible Student.

John "saw" a door having been opened (*ēneōgmenē* - per. pass. part) in heaven." (See Matt. 3:16, Acts 7: where heaven is open - A.V.) The 1901 translation implies that John witnessed the opening of the door, but he "saw a door having been opened" - already before his vision.

Sermon Note: There are three important opened doors mentioned in The Revelation: (1) The door of opportunity - Rev. 3:8; (2) Door of the heart - Rev. 3:20; (3) the Door of Revelation - Rev. 4:1. For good teaching see W. Barclay, *The Revelation of John* - volume I St. Andrews Press, Edinburgh, 1962 - pp. 189. This two volume set is a very inexpensive set of paper backs.

Note the transition in imagery from seeing to hearing. John declares that "the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me (this verb of speaking breaks the silence), saying (*legōn* - the second verb is the act of addressing John) come up (*anaba* - sing. 2 aor. imperative - John was commanded to come up immediately) here, and I will show you things which must (*dei* - necessary, must) occur after these things. Immediately I became (*egenomēn* - sing. 2 aor. middle voice - John was in the Spirit in one immediate act) in (*the* not in text) spirit. (The King James and 1901 version place this clause with verse 2. It is concerned with the problem of verse divisions, and we need not discuss it further for our purposes here.)

#### *Verse 2*

John's vision placed him in the very Throne Room of the Universe. From here we are to have vouched safe to us the will and purpose of the Lord of history. We are here privileged to see the providential hand of the Living God in the things which pertain to earth until the coming again of Jesus Christ.

Before we begin our journey through these challenging pages of the Word of God, we must call attention to the many possible pitfalls and dangers. We must pay close attention to the specific words of the scriptures. We must avoid attempting to interpret the following material from some "anti-biblical system of interpretation," such as Dispensationalism, Premillennialism, Post millennialism, etc.

Note: We shall speak critically of these "systems of interpretation" in a *Special Study* of this textbook. We would like to call your attention to one specific source of scandalous distortion, i.e., *The Scofield Reference Bible*, the new edition. This is the source of much very irronorous "help" in interpreting the Word of God. Another, more general source of error can be found in the legion of popular works on *The Book of Revelation*. There are so many of these that a list here would be very impractical. One must wisely query—if that is so, why another popular work such as the present volume? This present, popular work differs from the hundreds of other popular study aid commentaries in that the author strives to stick to an analysis of the specific declarations of the "Postman of Patmos" by striving to throw light on the text through a word and phrase study. There are two very good but by no means complete studies of the vital vocabulary and fearful phrases of *The Revelation* in A. T. Robertson, *New Testament Word Studies*, Broadman, Press, and Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in The New Testament*, Eerdmans, 1946. These two older works, by two of the most competent Greek scholars of a past generation, can be used to great advantage, but there are so many words and phrases which they do not see fit to analyze, that further work along this line is called for. The present author believes this approach to be the safest way to begin studying this majestic work of divine symbolism, so as not to be led astray by the "clear and distinct systems of interpretation" mentioned above. The author is providing some additional biographical help so that the concerned student who so chooses, can go on to another stage of analyzing this revealed word.

John said - "Look here (or behold) a throne was set (*ekeito* - imperfect tense - means that John did not witness the placing of the throne. It was already there when he saw a throne) in heaven, and one sitting on (*epi*) the throne (*kathēmenos* - present part., continuously setting).

### Verse 3

John begins to describe the one sitting on the throne of the universe. This description is, of course, in human language. "And the one sitting was like an appearance to a jasper (*iaspidi*) stone. . . . It is most important that John sees no form for God in this vision (Exodus 24:10). This valuable stone was the first of the twelve stones placed in the foundation of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19). It was also used in the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:18). The stone was also used on the breastplate of the Highpriest (Exodus 28:20, 29:13). The imagery of this stone would therefore have been common knowledge in John's age. "And a sardius" was the sixth stone in the foundation of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:20). Its name is derived from its place of discovery - Sardis. "And there was a

rainbow round the throne".... The rainbow imagery is used here and in chapter 10:1. (See Ezekial 1:26,28 for the phrase round the throne.) "Like in appearance to an emerald." The beautiful imagery of this verse strove with the finest building blocks available in the human tongue to describe the throne room of the Lord of the heaven and earth. The materials which form the backbone of John's description have been taken primarily from Isaiah 6:1f, Ezekiel 1:1f, and Daniel 7:1f. Though the imagery is Old Testament, we must never forget that John's is a Christian and not a Jewish vision. John reaches into the past for his masterful imagery, in order that he might project far beyond the time of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, yea, even his own time, until the Messiah of the prophets and the saviour of John comes again.

#### *Verse 4*

"And round the throne were (verb added not in text) twenty-four thrones: and on the thrones *I saw* (added to translation - not in the text) twenty-four Elders sitting" (*kathēmenous* - present part., continuously sitting). Who were these twenty-four Elders? The number 24 occurs only in The Revelation and with respect to these Elders (see 4:4,10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4). The twenty-four Elders have no Old Testament counter part. Though there are many identifications suggested the present writer thinks that they are angelic beings who constantly worship God.

Note: See the brilliant discussion by the late Ned. B. Stonehouse in *Paul Before the Areopagus*, The Tyndale Press, 1957, chp. 4. The Elders and the Living-Beings in the Apocalypse, pp. 88-108. Dr. Stonehouse's (of the Westminster Theological Seminary) unexpected death robbed us what would have been the greatest conservative commentary on The Revelation.

"The twenty-four Elders sitting having been clothed (*peribeblemenos*, perfect passive part. - which means that act of clothing is complete and that the act of clothing was performed by someone else (passive voice)). (The prefix *peri* means that their garment was wrapped around them (see 3:5) "in white garments and on their heads golden crowns" (*stephanous* - crowns of lesser persons than kings). The ordinary word for the crown of a king is *diadema*. The distinction between these two words lost some significance in later Greek, but in *The Revelation* the distinction seems to hold.

See Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, 1952. *Stephanos* pp. 774; *Diadema*, p. 181.

#### Verse 5

"And out of the throne come forth (*ekporeuoutai*) present ind. the tense graphically changes to the present - keeps on proceeding) lightenings and voices (sounds) and thunders" (Exodus 19:16). This imagery can mean God's judgment, strength, etc. "And the seven lamps of fire are burning (*kaiomenai* - present, passive, participle) before (in front of) the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." Here the seven burning lamps are identified as (*ha eisin* - which are) the seven spirits and these have already been discussed in chapter 1:4.

#### Verse 6

The imagery of this verse plainly comes from Ezekiel 1:5-10; 10:5-20; and Isaiah 6:2-3. We must not permit ourselves to become lost in the details of the imagery. John is describing The Throne room of the universe and chooses that great imagery of the prophets.

#### Verse 7

John now identifies the four living creatures of verse 6. "The first is like a lion, and the second living creature is like a calf, and the third living creature having the face like a man and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle." Though the imagery cannot be identified with absolute certainty by anyone, I believe Swete provides the sanest statement - "The four forms suggest whatever is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in animate nature. Nature, including man, is represented before the Throne, taking its part in the fulfillment of the Divine will, and the worship of the Divine Majesty." Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John, op cit.*, p. 71, 72.

#### Verse 8

This imagery comes from Isaiah 6:1ff. The four living creatures "they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was; who is and the coming one." Isaiah's great vision in the Temple provided John with these powerful words.

## SECTION 12

Text 4:9-11

9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

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

Initial Questions 4:9-11

1. Who are the "living creatures" - vs. 9.
2. Is the imagery of vs. 10 that of lesser sovereigns surrendering completely to the Lord?
3. Who alone is worthy to receive the "glory and the honor and the power" - vs. 11?
4. What is the source of all created things according to vs. 11?

Verse 9

"And whenever (*hotan* - plus future tense implies constant repetition of the act of worshipful praise) the living creatures shall give glory and honour and thanks to the one sitting on the throne to the living one unto the ages of the ages; The same is the constant worship of God which takes place in The Throne room itself.

Verse 10

"The twenty-four Elders will fall (*pesountai* - future ind.) before the one sitting on the throne, and they will worship (*proskunesousin* - future ind.) the living one unto the ages of the ages, and will cast (*balousin* - future) their crowns (see comment on vs. 4) before (in front of) the throne saying: The "will cast" down their crowns relates their act of surrender or complete submission to the Lord.

Verse 11

Compare this verse with Paul's declarations in Colossians 1:16. The only one worthy to receive the continued praises

is the Lord God Himself. This verse is important for what follows in chapter 5. The declaration has been made that the only one who is found worthy of praise is almighty God, then in chapter 5 - we see that Jesus Christ is found worthy. This is a clear assertion of the deity of Christ.

Note: Compare vs. 11 with John 1:1-18 and Hebrews 1:1-4. Jesus Christ is there declared to be the source of creation. For an excellent analysis of those eighteen verses see, M.E. Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, Blackfriars Pub., 34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W. C. 1 M. E., Boismard's Commentary on *The Revelation* is one of the best Roman Catholic Commentaries available. We shall discuss this work later.

Review Questions  
Chp. 4:1-11

1. What is the point of reference when John says after these things - vs. 1?
2. How important is chp. 4 for the remaining parts of The Revelation - vs. 1?
3. What and who did John see - vs. 2?
4. What is the possible difference between *stephanous* and *diadēma* as discussed in vs. 4? Discuss the significance of the difference.
5. What Old Testament sources were mentioned for the imagery in vs. 6? Read the Old Testament passages, and then discuss.
6. Much of the imagery of The Revelation is taken from the Old Testament. Is there anything added as it is used in this Christian book which would enable us to see a transition from Jewish to Christian imagery?

SECTION 13

Text 5:1-10

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: 5 and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe

of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. 6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sing a new song, saying,

Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.

#### Initial Questions 5:1-10

1. In the World of the New Testament, what was the place of a seal on official documents - vs. 1?
2. What were the requirements which must be fulfilled before one would have been worthy to "open the book and loose the seals thereof"? The highest expression of manhood was unworthy!
3. Do these messianic titles (e.g., the Lion - that is of the tribe of Judah, Root of David) relate the Kingdom come through Christ with the Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic Kingdom?
4. What symbolism does the "Lamb standing as though it had been slain" call to mind - vs. 6? (e.g., sacrifice, atonement, etc.)
5. What view of the person of Christ is implied in His accepting the worship and praise of creatures - vss. 9-10?
6. What were the results of Christ's work mentioned in vss. 9-10?

#### The Sealed Book and The Lamb Chp. 5:1-14

5:1-10

*Verse 1*

John's vision continues-- "And I saw (*eidon* - aorist. - in a single act John saw) upon (*epi*) the right hand (hand - not

in text) of the one sitting upon the Throne a scroll having been written within and on the reverse side, having been sealed (*katesphragismenon* - perf. pass. part. - the prefixed preposition *kata* means sealed down) with seven seals." The seals signified the authentication marks of the document. Charles says that "a will in Roman law bore the seven seals of seven witnesses." He was an expert in the background sources of the Apocalypse. The imagery would have been meaningful to every literate person in the New Testament world.

The book that John saw is the title deed to earth. The book contained the judgments of the living God as represented in the seven seals of trumpets, and the seven vials of wrath." These judgments are essential in order to bring the earth under the control of the Lord of the universe. When the call to open the book is made public by "a strong angel proclaiming in a loud voice"; no one is found able, but the Root of David. The angel continued to proclaim (*kerussouta* - present parti. - continually proclaimed) and after extensive inquiry no one was found "who is worthy to open the scroll and to loosen the seals of it?"

#### *Verse 3*

"----- no one was able (*edunato* - imperfect) in the heaven nor on the earth nor underneath the earth to open the scroll nor to look at it." The entire universe declines the challenge! No man nor angel was found who could respond to heaven's challenge. Why? What were the requirements?

#### *Verse 4*

"And I kept on weeping much - (*eklaion polu* - perf. act. plus *polu* - this weeping was so audible that one of Elders kept speaking much to me.

#### *Verse 5*

"And one out of the Elders says to me: Stop weeping (*mē klaie* - neg. plus present imperative). Look here (behold)- The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David overcame" (*enikesen* - 1st aor. act. ind. - the victory was won in a single act, not in a process - overcame by one act! the root verb is *nike* - victory). The 1901 translates "hath overcome" and thus does not show the singularity of the victory act," "to open the scroll and the seven seals of it." The only one worthy was also the only one able to open the seals, the Son of God, the rightful sovereign of the universe. Who was able?

The Messiah, a descendant of Judah and David (Genesis 49:9; Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 1:17; Luke 3:31; Acts 2:30; Matthew 22:41-45) won the victory once and for all on the Cross. (See Isaiah 11 for the prophecy about the shoot of Jesse.)

*Verse 6*

Here we are taken to the very center of the Throne room. "And I saw in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the Elders a Lamb standing (*hestekos* - perfect participle) as having been slain (*esphagmenon* - perfect passive participle - this verb suggests violence and also sacrifice, both are involved in the cross and the atonement) having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God having been sent forth into all the earth." Here we notice the paradoxical imagery of a slaughtered Lamb, yet, standing. The great fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is without question in the background. The Book of Acts (8:32) identifies this Lamb as Jesus Christ. (See Edward Young, *Studies in Isaiah*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954, chp. 4 "Of Whom Speaketh the Prophet This? pp. 103-125).

*Verse 7*

"And he came (*elthen* - 2 aor. indicative - the single act - came) and has taken (*eilephen* - perfect tense) out of the right (hand - not in text, but implied) of the one sitting upon the throne." Christ came and has taken the scroll from the hand of the Father. His work on the Cross and the empty tomb has qualified Him to open the seals of doom which are about to be hurled upon the earth.

*Verse 8*

"When he (Christ) took (*elaben* - 2 aor. active - single act - took) the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell (*epeson* - 1st aor. ind. act. - fall instantaneously, those closest to the one sitting on the throne fell quickest) before (in front of) the Lamb," in an act of worshipful surrender those surrounding the Throne acknowledged the deity of The Lamb, "each one having a harp and golden bowls (plural) being full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." The *kithapa* (harp) probably signifies a lute or guitar.

## Verse 9

"They keep on singing (*adousin* - present tense) a new song saying: Worthy art thou to receive the scroll and to open the seals of it, because thou wast slain (*esphagēs* - 2 aor. passive) and didst purchase (*egorasas* - 1 aor. ind. act., through the act of being slain Christ did purchase by a single act) to God by thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation." Here we see the clear and categorical assertion of the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. Alien sinners can be restored to God, but only by acknowledging the Lordship of Christ. Forgiveness of sin is available only in Him. This fact makes missions and evangelism imperative!

Note: See the appendix and *The Lamb and His Blood in the Revelation* immediately following this chapter. For an excellent study on the vocabulary of redemption see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of The Cross*, Eerdman's, 1956—terms analyzed—Redemption, Covenant, The Blood, Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Justification.

## Verse 10

What was the result of Christ's work? See 1:6 for discussion of "kingdom" and "priests" and "they will reign."

## SECTION 14

## Text 5:11-14

11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,

Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

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

## Initial Question 5:11-14

1. Does the contrast between "every created thing" in vs. 13 and--unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever" clearly state the deity of Christ?

A New Segment of the Vision  
Chp 5:11-14

## Verse 11

John not only "saw" but declares "I heard a sound of many angels round the throne and the living creatures and the Elders, and the number of them was (*ēn* - imperfect) ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands." An untold number of worshippers surrounded the Throne. They expressed the thrill of the presence of God by drawing deep into their spiritual reservoir and continually sing the praises of God. The ability to sing God's eternal praises is one of the acid tests of real spiritual concern in our own Christian lives today. Oh, the dearth of great Christian music in our age! Why?

## Verse 12

In one united voice they shouted "worthy is the Lamb"—see 5:6. The victory of the Lamb in overcoming sin, hell, and the grave won for Him "the power." Power can be forgiving or taking. Christ's power is for giving eternal life or that which no man can attain for himself. Though there is only one article for all the characteristics mentioned, I agree with Vincent that the "one article includes all the particulars, as if they formed but one word." Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 492.

The next thing Christ receives is "the riches." II Cor. 8:9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Christ is worthy to receive all the riches of glory for His work of redemption. The others of the "seven excellencies" are wisdom, strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings. These last glorious attributes are added beyond the great praise to the Lamb by the Elders, etc., in 4:11. The doxology which is offered to the Lamb is more exhaustive than the doxology to the creator in the concluding verse of chapter four. No one could compare these great doxologists without concluding that there is

no other single place in scripture where the deity of Jesus Christ is more emphatically declared.

*Verse 13*

Now the whole universe is marshalled together to sing His praises. Here we see a marvelous affirmation of the deity of The Lamb. In chapter 4:8-11 we noted how the "living creatures" worshipped "the one sitting on the throne." Now we see a clear act of worship which is received by one other than the Father. Who is it? John heard them "saying: To the one sitting on the Throne and to the Lamb the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the might unto the ages of the ages." No angel ever accepted worship in the biblical records (see 19:10 - where the angel refused worship) contrary to the claim of Jehovah's Witnesses Theology. Jesus is never called an angel in the apocalypse, or any place else. (Some identify Jesus with the angel of Yahwah in the Old Testament, but we cannot enter that discussion here. This thesis cannot be exegetically established). The characteristic attributed to the Father (chp. 4) are here attributed to The Lamb!

*Verse 14*

The four living creatures said *amen* to the praises of members of the universe, i.e., creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and now the occupants of the Throne room of heaven says *amen* to these glorious words of praise. "And the elders fell (*epasan* - 1st. aor. ind. fall in a single act.) and worshipped (*prosekunesan* - 1 aor. ind. - worshipped in a single act). The worship of the Lamb (chp. 5:8-14) is composed of three songs: (1) The Song of Creation (4:9-11); (2) The Song of Redemption (5:8-10) and (3) The Song of the Universal Chorus (5:11-14).

Note: See the Special Studies for sermon suggestions on the biblical doctrine of worship, and a sketch of an outline for a sermon series.

Review Questions  
Chp. 5:1-14

1. What was the significance of seals in Roman Law - vs. 1?
2. Who was found in vs. 2 that was able to open the seals?
3. How did John respond to the failure to find one who was worthy to open the seals - vs. 4?

4. One was found worthy and able. What messianic terms were used to describe Him - vs. 5? Read the O.T. passages given. Discuss.
5. From what vantage point does John receive the vision mentioned in vs. 6?
6. What is the Lamb of Isaiah 53? Where in the N.T. is He identified - vs. 6?
7. Why was the Lamb worthy according to vs. 9?
8. Who is found worshipping the Lamb according to vs. 13?
9. Read and discuss the content of the three songs said to the Lamb - vs. 14!

*Biblical Theology of Worship*

*Why Go To Church?*

*When You Go, Do You Find?*

- I. Anticipation of receiving something by preparation?
- II. Participation versus the religious observer?
- III. Spiritual Satisfaction?

Conclusion: *Why Do You Go To Church?*

*Recovering The Thrill of Worship*

At least these five elements are present in the biblical doctrine of worship.

- I. Recollection: The Church exists and we are saved, because of something God in Christ has done. (The events of the Gospel).
- II. Recollection generates Thanksgiving.
- III. This necessitates that we Participate by being spiritually mature enough to accept the forgiveness of Christ.
- IV. Real Participation means that we are also engaged in Proclamation.
- V. Proclamation genders expectation (and vice versa).

Conclusion: James S. Stewart of Scotland, the greatest preacher who uses the English tongue said of the American Churches—'they seemed to have lost the original spark or thrill of worship."

*Do We Leave as We Entered?*

Introduction: We go into the House of God troubled or burdened! How do we come out?

- I. Act of Reverence.
- II. Act of Fellowship.
- III. Act of Dedication.
- IV. Act of Renewal

Conclusion: If we seriously examined our worship life as Christians, what would we find out about our real relationship to Jesus Christ?

### *Special Study*

#### *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship*

is much broader than a few hours each week being set aside for corporate worship. Archaeological evidence is irrefutable that Church buildings were a later innovation. Many people have the false notion that an hour or two on the Lord's Day exhausts the biblical requirements of worship.

- I. The Place of Worship.
- II. The Times of Worship.
- III. The Content of Worship.

Excellent insight can also be gained by studying the vocabulary, both Old and New Testaments, which are translated singularly by our English word - worship. It is highly improbable that one English term can adequately translate several words from either the Hebrew Old Testament or the Greek New Testament.

### *Outline*

#### *Seminar: Biblical Theology of Worship*

Introduction: Hebrew and Greek Vocabulary of Worship.

- I. Antecedents to Old Testament Concept of Worship. Worship among Neighbors of Israel.
- II. Worship in Historical Perspective: Worship in Various Periods of Old Testament History.
  - 1. Law - Genesis, chapter 1-11  
Genesis, chapter 12ff.  
Pentateuch
  - 2. Historical Books In Promised Land - Joshua - Judges  
- Ruth
  - 3. Prophets - Worship
    - a. True Worship
    - b. False Worship

- 4. Wisdom - Wisdom Literature - Worship
- III. Post Old Testament Literature and Worship
  - Intertestamental Literature and Worship
- IV. Antecedent Worship Concepts of New Testament Period in environment
  - Greek
  - Hebraic—Judaism
  - Roman
- V. Worship in The Gospel Records and New Testament Proper
  - 1. Synoptics - Matthew, Mark, Luke
  - 2. John
  - 3. Acts
  - 4. Epistles - Pauline
  - 5. Epistles - Johannine
  - 6. Epistles - General Epistles
  - 7. Hebrews - Revelation

Theological Vocabulary of Worship: O.T. and N.T.

Vocabulary - Multiple Hebrew Vocabulary - One English Word - Worship

- 1. Persons
- 2. Places
- 3. Ceremony
- 4. Personal/Corporate Worship
- 5. Revelation - Worship
- 6. Worship and The Word
- 7. Worship and Holy Spirit
- 8. Worship and Spiritual Preparation
- 9. Worship and Spiritual Maturation
- 10. Necessary and Sufficient Aspects of Worship
- 11. Worship as an Activity: Intentionality of the Participants
  - (Behaviorism and Activity): A Real Human Act or Mere Activity and Worship.
- 12. Worship and Biblical Doctrine of Unity
- 13. Preaching and Worship
- 14. Teaching and Worship
- 15. Baal Worship - Hosea
- 16. Vocabulary - Idol, Image - types of graven, carved
  - Grove
  - High Place
- 17. The Ten Words and Idols - Deut. 5: Ex. 20:
- 18. Jewish Architecture
- 19. Roman Catholic Translation of Decalogue

- Latin
- Trent on Idolatry
- Aquinas
- Catholic Use of Idols
- 20. Standard Denominational Churches
- 21. Free Churches
- 22. Worship in The Protestant Creeds
- 23. Ecumenical Theology Worship
  - A. Ministry
  - B. Sacraments
- 24. Conscience - Worship - Offense, Offended, Offender
  - I Cor. 8 - Romans 14: - Commands, Imperative moods
  - More than one conscience involved!
- 25. O.T. Prophecies of worship in the Messianic Kingdom and Dispensationalism's Hermeneutics
- 26. Use of Matthew
  - Literal fulfillment - return to O.T. Sacrificial system, Temple, etc.
- 27. Cornelius - Acts 2
  - Acts 10
  - Synagogue - Paul in Acts
    - Paul's consistency and synagogue participation
- 28. Criterion and Method for determine the Essential from the non-essential Aspects of Biblical Christianity.
- 29. What is universal, necessary, sufficient for Christian Worship!
  - A. Commands
  - B. Examples Same also for Restoring N.T. Church, e.g.
  - C. Expediency Imperative form e.g., Acts 2:38
- 30. Worship and Biblical Doctrine of Truth
  - emunah* means truth, faith, trust
  - Re: Worship in Spirit and Truth
- 31. The Biblical concept of worship and the problem of non-Christian concepts of worship and the problem of missions.

#### Brief Annotated Bibliography on Worship

Hlion T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship*, Abingdon, Nashville, 1954. Good, basic work giving historical perspective.

N. Micklem, editor, *Christian Worship*, Oxford, reprinted, 1954. Made up of 15 articles divided into 3 basic sections: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Studies.

Louis M. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, SPCL Press, London, 5th edition, 1956. Covers the Latin (Western) Liturgy to the time of Charlemagne.

*Interpreter's Dictionary of The Bible*, Article on Worship, Vol. 4, pp. 879-90, Abingdon, Nashville, 1962. This Dictionary was written by scholars who do not accept the Scriptures as the very Word of God, but this article is very good and has bibliography.

*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15, pp. 710-713. Robert Appleton Co., N.Y., 1912. Official R. C. position with bibliography.

Consult any major Bible Dictionaries such as *Hastings, 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*; also consult the *Jewish Encyclopedia* for article on worship. There is a vast literature on Worship but there is no competent work on the biblical doctrine worship, especially the N.T. doctrine. We hope and pray this gap will be filled by one committed to Biblical Christianity.

### *Special Study*

#### The Lamb and His Blood in The Revelation Chapters 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11

The word blood occurs in the following four passages:

Chapter 1:5 - "*en tō haimati autou*" - "by his blood."

Chapter 5:9 - "*hoti esphagēs kai ēgorosas tō theō en tō haimati son*" - "because thou wast slain and didst purchase to God by thy blood."

Chapter 7:14 - "*en tō haimati tou arniou*" - "in the blood of the Lamb.

Chapter 12:11 - "*dia to aima tou arniou*" - "because of the blood of the Lamb."

John the Baptizer addresses Jesus as the Lamb (*amnos* - the ordinary word for Lamb - John 1:29 and 36) or God, which taketh away the sin of the cosmos." C. H. Dodd denies that John could have had in mind the passover lamb, and the lamb of Isaiah 53:1ff. How Dr. Dodd came by this amazing information is not revealed in his work. For those interested in examining Jewish interpretation of Isaiah 53 see S. R. Driver, A. Neubauer, *The Fifty Third Chapter of Isaiah According to Jewish Interpreters*, volume I, *Texts*, ed. by Driver and Neubauer; Volume II, *Translation*, same as above, Oxford University Press, London, 1876-77.

In The Revelation the term *Lamb* is used of Christ twenty-eight times. The fundamental idea is always sacrificial. It is

very significant that of all the N.T. Literature it is only in John's Gospel and The Revelation that we find references to the *Lamb of God*. (We need not consider the problem of the different terms for Lamb in John (*he amnos*), and in the Revelation (*to arnion*) respectively). In the Revelation the Lamb has two vital characteristics. He is first of all the sacrificial Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world"; secondly He is the conquering Lamb. (See Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to The Theology of The New Testament*, Harper & Bros. New York, 1958, pp. 225-229 - neither a liberal nor conservative study).

Through the symbol of the lamb, John was able to transmit the marvelously complex soteriological and Christological teaching in one symbol. John also combines the glorified and suffering aspects of our saviour's life. The imagery of the death of Christ always moves in the realm of exaltation and glory. In the Revelation we see the beautiful correlation of the death and glory of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The Lamb never appears except in the grand scenes of enthronement pageantry. In John's vision of heaven he saw the redeemer as "the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the shoot of Jesse." In a lightening flash John identifies the object of his vision, then immediately he changes the imagery from a Lion to a Lamb. In the very Throne room of the universe John declares that he saw "a Lamb standing, as having been slain" (5:6). The divine paradox seems inconceivable—how a Lamb can stand, and look as if it is slain at the same time. This great imagery was meant to convey ideas; it was never meant to torture the imagination.

The relationship of the saint's victory and the blood of the Lamb is specifically stated in the second vision (7:9-17). John saw a great multitude in white robes, and these "have washed their rubes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (7:14). These have passed through the great tribulation victoriously. But their victory was not attained by their own blood, but rather "the Blood of The Lamb."

Everywhere in *The Revelation* the Blood of Christ is asserted to be the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world. In the great vision of the elect (7:9-17) the *Lamb* has become the great *Shepherd* who is leading the redeemed to the water of life.

The Christian's victory over Satan and his darkness is directly attributed to the power of the "Blood of the Lamb" (12:11). All evil is oversome in Christ's victory. His was the only

sacrifice in the history of man in which the victim became victor through the act of being the victim. This is the paradox of the ages, and will not be unraveled until He comes again, and we speak with Him.

We must also note that John calls the Apostles, "the Apostles, of the Lamb," (Rev. 21:14). Here we see that the ones sent (apostles) went as ambassadors of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the cosmos."

It is very possible that the hymns to the Lamb in *The Revelation* were songs of the apostolic church. (See J. Bonsirven, *Theologie du Nouveau Testament*, Paris; Aubier, 1951, p. 193). We can still hear the ancient saints singing: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood." In this same vein a more recent saint, Isaac Watts (1647-1748) sings the same glorious song.

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed, and did my  
Sov-reign die?

Would He devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?

or

When I survey the wondrous cross, On which the Prince  
of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on  
all my pride.

See the following for brief outline studies of the *Biblical Doctrine of the Blood*.

*A Companion to The Bible*, edited by J. J. von Allmen with introduction by H. H. Rowley, Oxford University Press, New York, 1958, pp. 38-41. Only those who can discern what the biblical doctrine actually is should consult this mediating work.

*A Theological Word of the Bible*, ed. by A. Richardson, MacMillan and Co., New York, 1950, pp. 33-34.

*The Apostolic Preaching of The Cross*, Leon Morris, Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 108-124. He discusses the views of B. F. Westcott's Sandy and Headlam, *et al.*

*The Meaning of the Word Blood in Scripture*, A. M. Stibbs, The Tyndale Press, London, 1958 reprint. A very good, brief study by a British Evangelical. Excellent place to start studying this central biblical teaching. This is not a technical discussion.

## SECTION 15

Text: 6:1-2

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

Initial Questions 6:1-2

1. After the Lamb opened one of the seals John was commanded to "come" and then he saw what - vs 2?
2. What does the "crown" symbolize?
3. Who is the "he came forth conquering, and to conquer" - vs. 2?

The Opening of The First Six Seals

Chp. 6:1-17

First Part of the Vision Chp. 6:1-2

All that has gone before was preparatory for this moment of the breaking of the seven seals. We should note the outline that John follows through the next six chapters. The first four seals will be broken at once, and will together form one picture. Then the 5th and 6th seals will be broken, together structuring one complete picture. Then there will be some intermediate material leading finally into the breaking of the 7th Seal. The 7th Seal, in turn, is the introduction to the 7 trumpets that follow. The same general outline is followed concerning the seven trumpets. This structure is the product of the Semitic mind, which runs through the same picture again and again. Therefore, we must not apply the logical canons of Western thought of this book.

After the seal had been opened, John heard one of the four living creatures saying - Come (*erchon* - present imperative - a command to come). The symbolism of the horse is related to the first four seals (see Zechariah 1:8ff; 6:1ff) as the symbol of the horse is used in the scripture, it is always connected war, conquest, strength, etc. (See also Rev. 9:7; 14:20; 18:13; 19:11.)

Though we would not be dogmatic about the identification of "the rider on the white horse," we do not concur with Lenski (*Interpretation of St. John's Revelation*, Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio, 1935; an excellent commentary by late conservative Lutheran), and W. Hendriksen (*More Than Conquerors*,

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, 1952 - a fine popular statement by excellent conservative Presbyterian Scholars), that the rider on the white horse is Christ. Oscar Cullmann is also mistaken in this identification (see his *Christ and Time*, pp. 169ff). It is improbable that the rider on the white horse in chp. 6:2 is the same person as the rider on a white horse in chp. 19:11ff. From a mere consideration of the symbol one could draw the conclusion that the two riders are the same, but in view of the context the identification of the two riders with the Christ seems to this author to be highly unlikely. (See Swete, *op cit.*, p. 86.)

A. T. Robertson (See N.T. World Studies) is probably right in identifying the rider on the white horse with the white horses of Persian Kings and Roman conquerors in their processions of victory. This particular identification would certainly be understood by John's readers, and in the light what follows it can stand as an undogmatic interpretation. The rider is prepared for conflict. This rider carried a heavy war bow. And the one sitting on it having a bow and was given to him a crown, (*stephanos* - victors crown see 4:10) and he went forth overcoming (*nikon* - present participle - constantly overcoming) and in order that (*hina* - clause or purpose clause) or for the purpose that he might overcome (*nikēsē* - 1 aor. subjunctive).

In view of this one conquering we can do no better than to remind ourselves of Paul's words to the Church at Rome. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Romans 8:37)

## SECTION 16

### Text: 6:3-4

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

### Initial Questions 6:3-4

1. The opening of the second seal revealed what - vs. 4?
2. Who gave the rider permission "to take peace from the earth - vs. 4?"
3. What does the great sword symbolize?

## Verse 3

The second seal was opened and the second living creature commanded that John "come" in order to see the content of the second seal.

## Verse 4

War is the content of this seal. "And another horse went forth, a red horse (horse implied but not in text - the horse was flame colored - *purros* from pur - fire) and to the one sitting on it was given (*edothē* - 1 aor. ind. pass. the pass. voice - means that someone else give or permitted him to take peace from the earth, and the aor. tense means that this power was given in a single act) to him to take peace out of (*ek*) the earth and in order that, (or for the purpose that - another *hina* clause) they shall slay one another - (reciprocal killing - each other), and a great sword was given (passive voice) to him. The word translated sword (*machaira*) is used in the Septuagint for the sacrificial knife used by Abraham (see Genesis 22:6,10).

This condition of war is probably a precursor to Harmageddon (chp. 16). Jesus' great discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world in Matthew 24:1-51 will provide much insight for this section of *The Revelation*. James speaks of the ultimate source of war (chp. 5:1ff). Ours is an age when war has become normal. What does this say of the spiritual foundations of western civilization? Who is involved in this war mentioned in this verse - Church against world, or nation against nation?

Note: War and Peace are two dominate themes in 20th century thought. The prophet of Israel taunted "You cry Peace - Peace, when there is no Peace." Men still cry peace, and we are participating in a most precarious peace. Shall evil or righteousness prevail? The Revelation was written to give the answer that righteousness shall prevail over persecution, pain, and war, because God in Christ won the victory over darkness. This is one of the central reasons for the resurgent relevance of *The Revelation* in our day. It is a book for times of crisis. (See Pedersen's monumental work on *Israel*, Oxford University Press for an excellent analysis of the concept of *peace* in the O.T.)

Christ is the righteousness of God! The root of the Hebrew term for righteousness means three things: (1) righteous one; (2) innocent one; (3) victorious one. Christ's victory stands in marked contrast to the grotesque, barbaric Greek understanding of victory. There shall be no *Peace* upon the face of the earth

until the *Prince of Peace* reigns in every mortal heart. Peace cannot be brought about by a "One World Government"! If men want ultimate Peace, it is to be found in the *wholeness* of the holiness of God in Christ.

## SECTION 17

### Text 6:5-6

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

### Initial Questions 6:5-6

1. What does "the balance" symbolize - vs. 5?
2. Wheat and Barley is very scarce and expensive - vs. 6. What does this imply?
3. Where in the Old Testament does this symbolism of the scarcity and expensiveness of basic food stuffs originate? (See Ezekiel Chp. 4:16; 5:16f.)
4. Why the command not to hurt the oil and wine?

### Verse 5

The third seal revealed "a black horse, and the one sitting on it having a balance in his hand." Black signifies famine and weeping (see Jeremiah 4:28; 8:21; Malachi 3:14 - where mourning is literally "in black.") The rider on the black horse carried a pair of scales (*zugon*). What was the purpose of this scale or balance? John hurries to inform us!

### Verse 6

John heard one of "the four living creatures saying: a choenix (a measure of some kind) of wheat for a denarius (about a penny), and three measures of barley for a denarius; and the oil and the wine do not harm." Famine is the key to this imagery. Food was scarce, and what was available had an exorbitant price tag on it. Though our present day inflation would make the prices vary considerably, we can see the picture from

I. T. Beckwith's, (*The Apocalypse of John*, MacMillan, N. Y. 1919, p. 520 - excellent, a must for advanced study.) statement that grain sold at twelve times its regular cost. We can see the picture better when we know that a denarius was a day's wages. Here we clearly see the results of war. Wheat, barley, oil, and wine were the staple foods in Asia Minor and Palestine in the first century. Luxuries were unavailable, and even the staples were not abundantly available. Only those who survived with enough money could purchase the scarce food items. What does this imply for those who could not afford the high cost of famine and suffering? Scarcity is the ultimate cost of human conflicts (See Leviticus 26:26 and Ezekial 4:16.)

## SECTION 18

### Text 6:7-8

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

### Initial Questions 6:7-8

1. Who was the rider of the "pale horse" - vs. 8?
2. Who followed behind this rider?
3. How extensive were his powers and how great his authority - vs. 8?
4. How is the devistation spoken of in vs. 8 - related to the will and purpose of God?

### Verse 7

John was again commanded to "come" and see the content of the seal.

## Verse 8

He saw - "A pale green horse, and the one sitting upon it, his name (was) Death, and hades (transcribed from the Greek term *hades* - this is not a translation of the term) followed with him,".... The name of this rider, following the Semitic pattern was called by his chief characteristic. Semitic names were always descriptive of a major attribute of the bearer. What follows war and famine? Plagues and pestilence are always hard on the heels of war and scarcity. This rider is described as pale, livid, corpse-like. The imagery is ghastly! "And was given (pass. voice someone else gave them this authority - it was not an intrinsic characteristic,) to them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with famine and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth." (*hupo* instead of *en* indicating actual agents) See Ezekiel 14:21 and the judgments discussed there). John reveals this terrible situation which comes upon the Christian and unChristian alike. Does faith in Jesus Christ make any difference when intense evil is inflicted upon the earth? Our Faith must be the victory! The third verse of that grand old hymn is very much to the point.

*Faith Is the Victory!*

To him that overcomes the foe - white raiment shall be  
giv'n;  
Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in  
heav'n;  
Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with  
love aflame;  
We'll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus' con-  
qu'ring name.  
Faith is the Victory----Faith is the Victory----  
Faith is the Victory that overcomes the world.

## SECTION 16

## Text 6:9-11

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

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

#### Initial Questions 6:9-11

1. Where were the souls of the slain found - vs. 9?
2. Why were they slain - vs. 9?
3. Does vs. 10 relate the cry of those impatient for justice? (Note Habakkuk's cry in the Old Testament.)
4. What does the "white robes" of vs. 11 signify? Who received them?

#### Verse 9

The fifth and sixth seals go together. When the fifth seal is opened, the martyrs are standing under God's altar, crying for vengeance. They are told that they must wait for God's appointed time. The altar imagery is taken directly from the tabernacle (Exodus 39:39; 40:29). This is the altar of sacrifice (*thusiastēriou*). This is the term used in Acts 17:23 (an altar to an unknown god). We must not lose sight of the imagery that the souls were underneath or covered over by the place where the sacrifice for sin was made. John saw "the souls of the ones having been slain (*esphagmenōn* - passive perfect participle - the term has a sacrificial significance, and implies violence) because of (or on account of - *dia* with the accusative has causal force) the Word of God, and because of (same structure as previous phrase) the witness which they had. The reasons for their being slain were the same for John being banded to Patmos.

#### Verse 10

The martyrs cried for vengeance! The O.T. prophet Habakkuk asked God the same thing regarding the apparent victory and prosperity of the wicked—"How long?" Abraham asked the Lord of Heaven - "will not the judge of the whole earth be righteous (or do righteously?) Why do the martyred saints cry for vengeance? How does this passage fit in with the contemporary resurgence of the heresy of universalism (that everyone is going to be saved ultimately)? With great volume "they cried saying: until when (how long), master, the holy and true, judgest

thou not and avengest blood on them dwelling on the earth?" The word translated master here is *despotēs*. The word *despotēs* is used in Jude 4: and II Peter 2:11 referring to Christ. In our language the word despot carries a bad connotation. Why did the Spirit choose this term? A despot is one who controls everything (note this term in Acts 4:24 - in times of persecution). There is not much hope left, unless God is all powerful, and that His will and purpose will ultimately prevail.

*Verse 11*

(Note how often the passive voice - "was given" is used in this section of scripture. This means that God allows certain things to occur but He is still in command of the reigns of the universe. The martyrs received a white robe. A *stolē* (robe) was a long festive dress. It was for special occasions only. "And it was said to them in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they should rest (stop drying and also rest in spiritual peace) yet a little season until should be fulfilled also the fellow slaves of them and the brothers of them the ones being about (*mellontes* - about to occur) to be killed as also they." God told the saints to rest, because others would also be martyred for their faith in Christ. Things will grow worse on the earth, not better and better in every way.

## SECTION 20

Text: 6:12-17

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

## Initial Questions 6:12-17

1. What is the O.T. source of the imagery of the sixth seal - vs. 12? (See Joel chp. 2:1ff)
2. The devestation was so terrible that the habitants of the earth did what - vs. 15?
3. Is there a hiding place from God?
4. Is it paradoxical to speak of the "wrath of the Lamb" - vs. 16?
5. Who will be able to stand in the day of God's wrath - vs. 17?

## Verse 12

The sixth seal is the revelation of God's day of wrath (6:12-17). The imagery in this section of scripture is taken almost verbally from the biblical sources. The earthquake comes from Matthew 24:, the sun black and the moon turned to blood (Joel 2:31 - note Joel chap 2:28f was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost), the star fallen from heaven like figs from a fig tree (Isaiah 34:4), the sky rolled up like a scroll (Isaiah 34:4), the rulers of the earth hiding (Isaiah 2:10), calling for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them (Hosea 10:8), are all familiar images to signify the end of the present world order.

The relationship of the structure of *The Revelation* to the great eschatological discourse of our Lord (Matthew 24:4; 25:1ff; Mark 13:5-37; Luke 21:8-36 - see also Luke 17:20-37) is acknowledged by every competent scholar.

Note: We now have a paradigm of conservative, scholarly research in the work of Herman Ridderbos, a brilliant Dutch Calvinist. *The Coming of the Kingdom*, Presbyterian Reformed Pub. Co., 1962, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - this is a must for all concerned with the eschatology of The Synoptic Gospels and specifically with the passages mentioned above on our Lord's discourse on "the last things." Dr. Ridderbos is acutely aware of all top level critical scholarship as he enters the arena with C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology" (no ultimate wrath, judgment, nor hell), Oscar Cullmann, a mediating Lutheran scholar of the first rank, R. Bultmann, the father of contemporary theology which utilizes the categories of Existential anthropology to reinterpret the scriptures, and K. Barth, the architect of the greatest systematic presentation of a theology since Calvin. Thank God for a man that is committed to the Word, and is also alert to every scholarly work in the field!

Then these things begin to occur - "they say to the mountains and to the rocks: Fall ye (*pesete* - 2 aor. imper. - the rocks were commanded to fall - do it now) on us and hide (*krupsate* - 1st aor. imper. they also commanded that the rocks

hide them - tense of urgency) us from the face (the presence of - a Semitic manner of speaking) of the one sitting on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." The judgments of God are so severe that the rich and poor, the strong and the weak, strive to "hide," but there is no hiding place. Why?

#### Verse 17

"because the great day of their wrath came (*elthen* - 2 aor. ind. - it came in a moment - there was no time to prepare for it - now!) and who is able (can) stand - (*stathenai* - 1st. aor. inf. passive voice) who will be permitted to stand?) For the great day (*hē hemera hē megalē*) see Joel 2:11; Zephaniah 1:14; Jude 6). This powerful vision was presented to us with the paradoxical elements of "the wrath of a lamb." Lambs are not full of wrath, but "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" is full of wrath for those who deny His vicarious atonement for sin.

Swete answers the concluding question "who is able to stand?" with the words of Christ found in Luke 21:36. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (1901 - R.V.)

This scene speaks eloquently against the hideous heresy of universalism, which is rearing its ugly head again - in high and low places. (See the brief discussion in appendix after this chapter.)

#### Note: Sermon Suggestion - *No Place to Hide!*

Introduction: David Bradley reported his experiences in the bomber which dropped the first nuclear weapon on Japan. He wrote a book entitled - *No Place to Hide*. This is even more true of "the one sitting on the throne and wrath of the Lamb." No one will be able to stand!

I. Men seek *Security* today as never before, but will not find human forms of security adequate for that hour.

II. Men are *alienated* today as never before. They try to hide in the escape mechanisms of this world, but even the sea and the graves cannot hide us from "the wrath of the Lamb."

III. Men are seeking *prestige* by attaining the *status symbols* of our day. We try to hide from our real selves. Before we can respond to the Gospel we must know who we are before God, in order to become what we ought to as followers of Christ. Rollo May says, in his *The Meaning of Anxiety*, that man's ultimate concern today is to know the answer to the question - "Who am I and what is the meaning of my existence?"

Conclusion: What is *Your* answer to the question "Who Can Stand?" While those outside of Christ cry for the mountains and rocks

to fall on them and hide them, those of us in Christ have a rock that is cleft for our hiding place.

*Rock of Ages*

Rock of Ages, cleft for me; Let me hide myself in thee;

Not the labor of my hands can fulfill the law's demands;

Nothing in my hand I bring: Simply to thy cross I cling:

Note: We are under obligation to Leon Morris for his excellent survey study of *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment*. Tyndale Press, London, 1960. Now in hard back and handled by Eerdman's, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Many people deny the objective wrath of God, ultimate judgment, an ultimate Hell, but there are many different reasons given for rejecting these doctrines. The unitarian-Universalist coalition deny the validity of Hell, because the nature of God (they say) necessitates that everyone be ultimately saved. The Jehovahs Witnesses deny the reality of Hell, but for a different reason; they say that Hell is not a biblical doctrine. The vast majority of contemporary theologians deny the existence of Hell, because of their new views of revelation.

Dr. Morris' book is divided into four chapters:

1. Judgment in the O.T. Shaphat.
2. Judgment in the O.T.; other words than Shaphat.
3. Judgment in the N.T.; A Present Reality.
4. Judgment in the N.T.; A future Certainty.

Dr. Morris deals sagaciously with the best critical literature which strives, but vainly, to show that the Bible does not speak of an eschatological wrath, and ultimate judgment. Morris brilliantly, but simply, shows the fallacious reasoning of those who would empty the biblical declarations of their ultimate truth.

Review Questions for the Entire Chapter 6

1. What is a possible identification of "the rider on the white horse - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbol of "the red horse" mean - vs. 4?
3. Discuss some of the spiritual factors involved in War - vs. 4.

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4. In our World does it look like evil or righteousness shall prevail - see vs. 4?
5. What is the purpose of the third seal - vs. 5?
6. Discuss the inter-relationship of war and scarcity as it is a present reality in our world.
7. How meaningful is our Christian Faith in times of crisis - vs. 8?
8. What were the reasons given for the saints being slain - vs. 9?
9. Discuss the problem of evil with respect to God's justice, righteousness, and power - vs. 10.
10. Why were the saints told to rest - vs. 11?
11. Discuss the inter-relationship of Matthew 24:1ff, and this section of The Revelation - vs. 12/
12. Who does "their wrath" refer to in vs. 17?

### *Special Study*

The Gospel, The Gulf of Guilt, and  
Resurgent Universalism!

Scripture: Luke 13:22-30

22. And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. 23. And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved?

Text: Romans 3:26

I say of his righteousness at this present season that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.

On April 11, 1961, another trial began in the city of Jerusalem, Palestine, which, like another trial in that city 1,929 years ago, was concerned with Justice, Righteousness, Guilt, and Forgiveness. The Jewish Court today, as during the trial of Jesus, sought only justice. What is Justice?

Adolf Eichmann, chief of the Gestapo of Jewish Affairs, was responsible for the liquidation of six million Jews! There is no punishment fit for the crime; a crime primarily committed on a little farm in Eastern Poland - Auschwitz! He was set out for all to see, as was Jesus. The world waited for the day when

Eichmann would take the stand - what would he say? What could he say? When the bench gave him permission to take the stand, his first words were - *Ich bin unschuldig!* (I am *not* guilty). Eichmann's reply raised the fundamental problem of the gulf guilt, and how this gulf is to be bridged - if at all. Nothing less than the Christian Gospel is at stake!

The Church of Jesus Christ is on trial again! It has been summoned by mankind to justify its existence. How can the cause of Christ face up to the phenomenon of a dynamic, resurgent universalism? In fact universalism is advancing at such alarming rate that the Evangelical fortnightly, *Christianity Today* is sponsoring a call and challenge to Bible believing preachers all over the world to reply to the cancerous heresy by a higher level proclamation of the Word. Yes, indeed the Church is on trial as never before in her history; so also is the Christian view of the need of fallen men, and his inability to meet his own need. This Twentieth Century trial, as did a first century Jerusalem trial, exemplifies three crucial matters, from a biblical perspective. Something is radically wrong with man; (1) The Offense is Sin; (2) The Offender is Man; and (3) The Offended is God! How can reconciliation be brought about? How can the injured grant peace of forgiveness to the injuror? What makes forgiveness possible?

There is an insidious disease which has reached epidemic proportions and is paralyzing the spiritual and evangelistic life of the Church; its name is universalism. This strange forbidding term and its implications for biblically oriented Christians must be diagnosed, and prognosis given - immediately - if a revitalized and commission-bearing church is to speak prophetically, and live redemptively before our generation - on behalf of God in Christ.

We can plan our spiritual counter-attack better after we have a more intelligent understanding of the high strategy of hell. The demoniac strategists of the realm of darkness are heralding to contemporary man - that all men are already saved. A most consoling message! The sole purpose for the community of the committed to fulfill is to announce that fact--far and wide. Universalism is that doctrine that declares a complete restoration of *all men* to a *redeemed* relationship with the living God (the theological term is *apokatastasis panton*). There are so many adherents of this doctrine today that as intelligent, concerned Christians we must be brought to the

realization that this position cuts the spiritual nerve center of the Christian faith, and the possibility of Evangelizing the world in fulfillment of Christ's final commission "Go into all the World."

Possibly, we can have a clearer vision of this position which is held by both theological giants, and many pew paddlers alike; the doctrine of universalism asserts that the gulf is bridged solely because the nature of God is love and holy love cannot indict sinful man with eternal condemnation. This position implies that God's wrath and judgment are solely corrective and restorative. This deceptive error is that punishment is curative or deterrent, and not as deserved!

Contemporary Universalism asserts three things; (1) The omnipotence of God necessitates the universal salvation of man; (2) The sovereign Lordship of God in Christ is meaningful only if this Lordship necessarily entails the redemption of all men; (3) The irresistibility of the Word of God necessarily means the redemption of all non-Christians, Satan, and his angels of darkness.

As early as Origen the doctrine of restorationism was being spread abroad. He hoped that all men would be redeemed; he also thought that Satan and fallen angels would be stored. Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, and Theodore of Mopsuestia also held that the purpose of punishment is to reform and not condemn. Augustine's repudiation of this doctrine sowed the process of its dissemination. During the 18th and 19th centuries revival brought this wretched heresy into sharper focus than before. This theological aberration gave birth to the philosophical mutation - transcendentalism. The pantheistic tendencies of the period spawned a new breed of preachers. These went far and wide repudiating future punishment or hell. Their words were soothing - as even the unpenitent, belligerent sceptic was informed that the holy God would not be thwarted even by their overt animosity to all things holy.

Those who maintain universalism today, do so but at the expense of the Bible as the Word of God. The new prophets of universalism have been called by a god who is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the father of Jesus Christ; and have been commissioned to proclaim a message not authorized by the holy Scripture. Every major contemporary theologian has been schooled in the doctrine of universalism, and has learned well his lessons.

Reinhold Niebuhr would have us believe that man is only in an existential predicament. Sin can be painlessly extracted from this predicament and then the patient can go back on the shores of eternal bliss. God is love; His nature precludes that the separation be eternal. Complete restoration is inevitable!

Another creative Athenian, Dr. Paul Tillich, provides fallen man with sanctified certainty that his redemption has been gained. This voice in the wilderness has compelled many to go out to hear him and have stayed to be anesthetized into spiritual insensibility by his new healing balm - universalism. His disciples have returned to the pew with a new zealous defiance toward any call to a closer walk with the master of men. Dr. Tillich's redeemer is a *tertium quid*, neither man nor God! I humbly suggest that Dr. Tillich's pointer symbol (Jesus is the symbol of Christ pointing men to God) will be powerless to grant forgiveness to the sinner and provide security to the day of the wrath of God. If the universal redemption of all men is to be accomplished, I doubt that this prophetic voice is spokesmen for a saviour adequate for the task.

Another architect of contemporary theological thought is Dr. Karl Barth. He is a specialist in anesthetizing his theologically inclined auditors. His doctrine of grace which reveals its irresistible power in the triumph of election in Christ. All men are elected to eternal life in Christ, whether they are aware of it or not!

The great and the small among the fraternity of theologians maintain, with a concerted voice, that God's love necessarily results in the redemption of all men. This assertion must be challenged, if the church is to be rallied from her deadly sleep. The great physician must be beseeched immediately to empower His body again, if the impotence caused by this spiritual sleeping sickness is to be overcome. The spokesmen for the complete restoration of men are growing more numerous. There are many, both high and low, on the ecclesiastical ladder who maintain this fallacious doctrine. Dr. Nels F. S. Ferre declares in favor of universalism in these words as he defines *agape* (one of the N.T. words translated Love) "as indiscriminate kindness to all" (p. 57 - *Christ and The Christian* - Harper, 1958). He categorically asserts that salvation is universal in actual extent. (*Ibid.* pp. 246-247). He calls the doctrine of the second coming of Christ "the darkest of all umbrellas," because it makes sense of hell and eternal punishment and thus

repudiates his doctrine of God as *agape*. (See p. 33, *The Sun and The Umbrella*). Can the gulf of guilt be bridged in this manner? It will not do merely to assert that God has so bridged the gulf of guilt. Is it actually bridged in this manner? We turn now to consider the position of those who maintain the universal restorations of all men on the basis of the new unbiblical views of the nature of revelation, and the nature of God as *agape* (in the special sense of their new definition), and in our final point we will consider some of the biblical doctrines which are not in harmony with the complete restoration doctrine.

### I. Contemporary Universalism in Grounded in a Non-biblical View of the Nature of Revelation

How does God reveal himself? Most contemporary theologians deny that revelation is propositional. By propositional revelation we mean that the words and sentences in the Bible are very revelation. Those who maintain the doctrine of universalism, at least in its modern dress, deny that the Bible is the Word of God. They set forth an anti-biblical view of revelation as they speak ambiguously about events as being the revelation, but since there are no infallible records (according to them), the information from the first century Christians (The New Testament) is of no greater value than the theological systems of Doctors Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, Niebuhr, or Ferré; in fact, they are of less - to many. If this thesis is true, then let us trace the steps historically which led to this new view of revelation and makes universalism so feasible within the framework of its theological presuppositions.

What are the major attitudes toward the nature of revelation found in contemporary thought, and in what ways do these effect the problem of universalism? In order to deal with these questions, let us retrace some of the more crucial steps in the development of the contemporary mind.

The New Testament clearly reveals an apostolic insistence on revealed truth. The Apostolic Fathers of the second and third centuries were preoccupied with proving the validity of the Christian religion against Jewish and pagan rejections of Jesus as Christ. The paramount issue revolves about the relation of reason to revelation. The traditional position (from Apostolic Fathers to the modern period) has been that reason and revelation constitute two distinct sources of knowledge or truth.

Contemporary insistences on a single source of knowledge react violently to this claim.

The Jewish Philosopher-Theologian, Martin Buber has provided many Christian theologians with a new view of religious knowledge. His view is clearly set forth in his small, popularly written work - *I-Thou*. He maintains that we come to know people in a different manner than we know things. This means that we never necessarily know God through scripture, or evidence of any kind. Commitment becomes totally an irrational leap. This position completely rejects the uniqueness of the Christian revelation. Salvation then becomes available to anyone open or responsive to the Thou (supposedly God). Salvation is no longer dependent on the work of Christ on the Cross and empty tomb. Revelation is no longer content or revealed information, but rather an encounter of man with God, not mediated through the language of scripture, or anything else.

The contemporary anti-biblical attitude toward revelation leads us to consider a correlative doctrine - the nature of God as *agape* (as defined in the new theology), and if this is His nature, then *no one* can thwart His redemptive love, therefore,

must be saved; therefore, man's acceptance or response to God has nothing to do with man's salvation. Yet, the personification of this redemptive love declared "Marvel not at this; for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29; R.V., 1901). Negative Biblical criticism and the so-called assured scientific results play a role in the rejection of the Bible as the Word of God, but we will by-pass this particular problem and move to specific declarations of major theologians - concerning their repudiation of the Bible as the very Word of God.

Archbishop William Temple was a giant among the theological Philistines. He declares against the unique status of the Bible in these words—"What is offered to man's apprehension in any specific revelation is no truth concerning but the living God Himself." (See *Nature, Man, and God*, p. 322). This is a categorical rejection of the propositions of the Bible as very revelation. Emil Brunner said "the fate of the Bible is the fate of Christianity," but he is very hard on this object - which determines the fate of Christianity. The Bible of Brunner, Barth, Bultmann, and their disciples is a document capable of yielding

the doctrine of universalism; but we must not confuse their Bible with the one on which the church has kindled her evangelistic compassion for centuries. Much of the contemporary Church's zeal for the lost has been dissipated, because it has been served from the source of "the power of God unto salvation." This conclusion leads us to consider a second problem which arises out of the first - the nature of God as Love.

Advocates of "open membership" maintain, implicitly and explicitly, a view of revelation which stands in marked tension with the biblical data. When one maintains that we must not allow even baptism to be a stumbling block to a person seeking to become a member of the Church of Christ, he is maintaining an implicit view of the will of God. How do the advocates of "Open Membership" know that it is more Christian to accept the pious unimmersed as fellow Christians than to deny to them the aforementioned status. Though we cannot here consider the intricacies of the contemporary debate concerning the nature of revelation, theological language, etc., we can assert that those who maintain the view mentioned above, do so by implying a new gnostic source of religious knowledge. Those of us who deny the validity of open membership have a right to demand that they clearly articulate a defensible view of the nature of revelation and religious discourse. This has not been observed, at least by this present author. It follows logically that if universalism is a true doctrine, then a discussion of immersion versus no immersion is ultimately non-sensical.

## II. Contemporary Universalism Also Entails a Non-Biblical View of the Nature of God which is Inseparable from the New Views of Revelation (Not Content but the Encounter of Persons)

What is God like? How can we know the nature of God? The contemporary universalists maintain that He is love, but what does this mean? If revelation is not content or information (re: Scriptures), how do they know that God is love in the sense that His love necessarily entails the salvation of every man? No biblically oriented Christian would deny that the love of God is *necessary* for our salvation, but would deny that it is the *sufficient* condition of our salvation. How do they know that all men will be saved? Where do the universalists obtain this information? We must take up the promethean task of challenging

all universalists with the query - how do you verify your assertion that the nature of God precludes that anyone can be lost, if you are cut loose from a rational view of revelation? If revelation is rational, i.e., propositions contained in the scripture, then we can assert that we know the nature of God is love, because the revelation provides this information, and at the same time gives us abundant evidence of the nature of the love of God. But is the biblical doctrine of love to be equated with the contemporary view of love as entailing the universal redemption of man? The Scripture speaks of both the love of God and the condemnation of the alien sinner. We would never find out from a critical study of the scripture texts that all men are saved, and that our sole responsibility is merely entailed in our telling them so. Quite the opposite is the case! One said to Jesus—"Lord, are they few that are saved?" Though we believe the Bible is unique revelation, we are not here concerned with the mere proof-texting of biblical animosity toward universalism. We will choose a book which contains an extensive doctrine of the love of God, I John; and we now turn to learn what he has to say about the nature of the love of God. We will examine John's theology of love to see if this section of scripture adheres to the contemporary theological definition of *agape*—that is, that God's love is of such a nature that no man - not even the unrepentant sinner, will be eternally condemned. If we find that the Biblical doctrine love is not in harmony with the redefinition of *agape* by the theologians, then we can only say that their new view of the love of God stems from their new view of revelation, and therefore, stands in the sharpest tension with both the biblical doctrine of revelation, and the love of God revealed therein. John develops the first epistle around three basic tests of life - *fellowship, love, and belief*. Though the entire epistle repudiates universalism, our immediate attention will be directed to the place of love in the life of redemption. John tells the universal church that - "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him." (I John 2:9 - 1901 R.V.). John declares that only the ones who continue to love (present tense verb) continues to abide (Present tense verb) in the light. This entire work was written to give criterion for distinguishing between the *redeemed* and the *unredeemed*! He again raises his voice against the universalist message as he states, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death."

(3:14, 1901 R.V.). The love of God obligates man to love; therefore, there is at least this condition, which must be fulfilled before the love of God is redemptive. In the great section on the test of love (John 4:7-12) we are confronted with the demands of holy love. God is defined as *agape* or love! This sounds like what the contemporary theologians are saying, but here God's redemptive love is conditioned. This becomes crystal clear in vs. 12—"if we love one another, God abideth in us...". The condition which must be met, before God promises to continually dwell in the believer is clearly pointed out in John's use of the conditional "if we love one another." "We love, because he first loved" (vs. 19). This great paragraph on the love of God shows three things—(1) That the love of God is not indiscriminately redemptive; (2) and that therefore the biblical doctrine of the love of God is not the doctrine of the love of God which the universalists teach; (3) the universalist's *agape* theology must be the result of a new view of revelation, because it does not stem from the biblical theology of the love of God. This great sketch of scripture clearly demarcates the relation of the love of God to the problem of Sin, truly a problem fit for God! The two questions which we asked at the beginning of this section—What is God Like? and How Can we Know the Nature of God?—receive mutually exclusive answers in the Bible and in the works of contemporary universalist theologians.

We now turn to a third consideration - some biblical doctrines which cannot be harmonized with the doctrine of the universal salvation.

### III. There Are Many Biblical Doctrines Which Flatly Contradict the Doctrine of Universalism:

What do universalists reply to the biblical doctrines of the wrath and judgment of God? Marcian taught in the second century, that the Old Testament reveals solely a God of wrath and the New Testament solely a God of love. This assertion tells us more of the level of Marcian's biblical knowledge - than it does about the biblical teaching concerning the wrath of God. The *locus classicus* of the biblical doctrine of the wrath of God is Romans 1:19-32. Here all of mankind is brought under the wrath of God. We must here assert what is very clear in the text that we are here reading of the "objective" wrath and not a "subjective or emotive" wrath.

The desert herald, John the Baptizer, thundered out these words to unrepented Pharisees and Sadducees—"Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come" the same time no one can take seriously the biblical records, and reduce the wrath and judgment of God to a present reality, emptying these doctrines of any future or eschatological import. All judgment is not condemnatory in nature, but the biblical authors take special care to distinguish this fact from condemnatory judgment which will befall all who are not found in Christ. Paul provides us with the message of divine mercy - "Therefore, there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1).

The contemporary *agape* theologians have set aside the biblical doctrines of justice, righteousness, wrath, judgment as though they were not there or as though they are in irreconcilable tension with the biblical doctrine of the love of God. Why and how do they choose only a part of the biblical doctrine of the nature of God to the exclusion of other parts? The New Testament as does the Old, speaks of the justice, righteousness and love of God as though they are inseparable. Exegetically, universalism is untenable! How then can we account for the wide spread adherence to this doctrine by most top ranking theological eschalon? Contemporary theologians, controlled by alien philosophical and/or theological presuppositions, hold that these doctrines are contradictory.

Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian Orthodox Existentialist, states that, "The justification of hell on the ground of justice... is particularly revolting and lacking in spiritual depth" (see p. 267 - *The Destiny of Man*.) Berdyaev is actually claiming that the biblical teaching that "God is love" is precluding justice. The very work which gives this definition of God - I John - militates against Berdyaev's interpretation of the significance of the doctrinal assertion that "God is love." John maintains that the nature of God as love obligates man - if he is to be among the redeemed. John is no universalist, but Dr. Berdyaev is! You will have to choose which one you follow!

This new non-biblical view of the nature of God is clearly revealed in the universalism of C. H. Dodd. The nature and purpose of the atoning work of Christ receives radical alteration at the hands of some master theological surgeons. The new understanding of the nature of Christ's atonement is a genetic aberration. Dr. Dodd was largely responsible for the change in

translation from *propitiation* to *expiation* in the Revised Standard Version, and New English Bible, etc. What is the theological difference between these two terms? *Expiation* involves an atonement for a thing; *propitiation* involves atonement to a person! The contemporary theological foundation for favoring *expiation* is most apparent in the so-called *agape* theology: that God is love, and cannot and does not demand atonement to himself in order that reconciliation of the sinner can be effected. This idea is not only foreign to the New Testament, but rather it stands in diametric opposition to the biblical doctrine of atonement. The use of *expiation* in Romans 3:25, etc., clearly reveals the contemporary attitude toward the nature of God; that God's nature precludes His demand for propitiatory sacrifice. We must never cease from declaring that though God's nature demanded propitiatory sacrifice; and that He was that sacrifice in the person of the Lamb of God! The biblical doctrine of the objective wrath of God, which leads to the condemnation of the person outside of Christ on the day of Judgment, has no place in a concept of atonement based on expiation. The apostolic declaration that new power became available to men in Christ is central for the biblical doctrine of *Kerygma*. What was the origin and extent of *newness* on the earth? What was the relation of *Kerygma*, and the source and power of newness? In the fulness of time God made available in Christ a *new power* to become sons of God. God made a *new covenant* with men and this covenant was inseparably related to the death of the testator - the Christ of the Cross and empty tomb. (Heb. 8 and 9). This *new covenant* brought into possible existence a *new life*. This new quality of life transcends mere existence. Paul pictures the new life of one who has died to sin in Romans 6:1-7. We are entombed with Christ by the instrument of baptism - in order that we rise to "walk in newness of life" (vs. 4). This beautiful section of scripture plainly reveals that this "newness of life" is conditioned; therefore, it is not indiscriminately available to all men as universalism asserts.

Newness of Life is made available to man through the preaching of the Cross. The paradox of *The Skandalon* (I Cor. 1:18-25) is that it is the power of God - only to those who are saved; it is a stumbling block to the Jews, who thought that there was some other way to be redeemed; it is foolishness to the Gentiles (nations or Greeks), because it was intellectually absurd that man's only possibility for salvation was made available

through a crucified savior on an ignominious cross. This new life was a separated life. Here the tension with universalism is sharply focused. This is no sacred-secular distinction; because of a re-interpretation of the kingdom and lordship of God based on a complete restoration of man to God. The newness of life is the quality of life available only to the *new man*. The Ephesian Epistle gives us a divine perspective from which to see the new man in Christ. The construction of the Church (chp. 2) was to destroy *unwanted walls* which divide the creation of God. "That he might create in himself of the two one new man...and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross" - (Eph. 2:15-16 R.V. 1901). In a burst of glory Paul discloses that the new man is not to walk as the Gentiles, and he admonishes us to "put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." (Eph. 4:24). His radical distinction between "the old man" and "the new man" clearly stands in opposition to the indistinguishable line between old and new man in universalism.

The *new man* makes up of the people of God. In universalism the whole earth is ushered into the kingdom indiscriminately, but the Scriptures speak of an "elect race, a royal nation, a people for God's own possession" - (I Peter 2:9). The three adjectives *elect*, *royal*, and *holy* cry out against a complete restorationism. Beginning in the ancient records of Israel we take note of the development of a special people of God. The development culminated in the construction of the Church of Jesus Christ - spiritual Israel (Romans, chp. 9-11). Christ himself demarcated two distinct groups of men - "the sheep and the goats." From the beginning to the end the Bible repudiates the doctrine that *all* men are children of God. The old liberal theologians spoke often about the "universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man," and so do their successors, the contemporary preachers of universalism. In apostolic preaching the saving power of Christ was extended to all hearers as conditioned. But all who heard did not hear! The Paradox of seeing when they cannot see was illucidated by Isaiah (chp. 6) by Christ, (Mk. 4:10f), and by Paul (Acts 28:26-28). All three declared that their hearers were conditioned by their "cultural ears"! But we must never forget that only those who hear and believe the same shall be saved.

That the Lordship of God, revealed in Christ, was conditionally set forth is clear from the first occasion of apostolic

preaching. When Peter and the eleven finished holding high the magnificent master - men cried - "Men and brethren, what *must* we do?" (Acts 2:14ff - the word translated *must* is from the Greek *dei* which expresses all kinds of necessity). The reply came - not that the love of God was unconditioned, but rather that the seeking sinner must do something to lay hold on eternal life. Peter said "Repent"! (This is in the imperative, or command mode.) Christ...except ye repent! He continued and declared "and be baptized everyone of you." (This part of his reply is also in the imperative mode—"be baptized.") This was not a suggestion or a mere request, but a command! The results of obedience would be—"the remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit." After every example of Apostolic preaching - men were challenged to *decide* for Christ. His saving power is available only to those who decided to stand without the gate and suffer with Christ. To decide for Christ means to cut through or away the possible alternative of denying His redemption.

There is no possible way to eliminate *orgē* from the Bible, even by the most radical critical surgery, - "only he who continues to the end - the same shall be saved." The contemporary *agape theologians* manipulate the biblical data to fit into their theological molds which were formed by existentialists and phenomenological views of man, and the human situation, not the biblical doctrine of love, son, man, forgiveness, etc.

The *raison d'être* of the church is to evangelize all men everywhere, and bring them to saving knowledge of Christ. In the March 1st, 1963 edition of *Christianity Today*, Dr. Ferré graciously but vainly attempted to reply to Dr. Kuhn's analysis of Dr. Ferré's view of universalism. Dr. Ferré quoted the Scriptures in his effort to show that universalism is clearly a biblical doctrine. Since this is not a self-evident claim, it would require extended critical discussion. (For a recent study of alleged Pauline universalism see Paul Munch, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*. This is an excellent refutation of supposed Pauline Universalism).

Dr. Ferré's universalism is clearly delineated in his statement - "to attribute eternal hell to God is literal blasphemy, the attributing of the worst to the best. From such blasphemy may God deliver everyone." p. 24, *Christianity Today*, March 1, 1963. It must be apparent that what constitutes blasphemy and the nature of God, according to Jr. Ferré, has not been

vouch-safed in the Scripture, but if at all, through some other revelatory medium unknown to most of us. Contemporary universalism is merely voicing again the words of a Dostoevskian archangel who has reappeared in our midst, and bids all men give him ear. "I refuse my mission if the torture of an innocent child by the brute is to be the ransom of the world." Often, neither the thoughts of men nor archangels voice the word and will of God! The time of the tyranny of words is again upon us! The revelation of God declares against the indiscriminate redemption of man; and the voice of the theological oracles echo and re-echo that redemption of all men is a fact - go and declare it. The oracles of our age of naturalistic humanism are declaring that man is the absolute. Man is infatuated with himself and is seriously ill with self love, like Goethe's Werther.

Bertrand Russell said that the only thing that would save western civilization is Christian love; but he too wants Christian love without God's Christ. The gulf of guilt has been bridged, but only for those in Christ! The *Hound of Heaven* is seeking the lost, and it is His love that persists—while human hybris (pride) intensifies. Francis Thompson gives us thrilling insight into the nature of the love of God: a God who loves sinners, and judges the unrepentant, has announced in His Word that the unredeemed will be lost. Let us retrace the steps of *The Hound of Heaven* as we challenge every hearer to receive Christ as Lord of life and death, time and eternity. These steps are strewn with the tears of Christ who came to be our saviour, and who will, if necessary, come again to be our judge. "Not everyone who sayeth unto me Lord, Lord will enter into the Kingdom of God but he that doeth (present tense - keeps on doing) the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy by thy name and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21-23, R.V., 1901).

CONCEPT OF RESTORATION OF ALL  
THINGS IN THE KERYGMA

A Study in Biblical Theology - Outline Taken from  
Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia,  
Curtis Pollok Harper Jr., May, 1958. - T.H.M. Thesis

Consummation of God's Purpose for  
Man and the Rest of Creation

I. Proclamation of Restoration

Old Testament Prophecy of Restoration

1. Isiah 65:17-25
2. Isiah 35:1-10
3. Ezekiel 47:1-12
4. Amos 9:8-10
5. Hosea 2:18-23
6. Isaiah 11:1-5
7. Genesis 1 - 3

II. New Testament Teaching

1. Romans 8:18-23
2. I Cor. 15:36-49
3. II Peter 3:3-13
4. Revelation 20:11-21:1 - 22:5
5. Acts 3:18
6. Ephesians 1:10

*Apokatastasis Pantōn* - Reconcile Completely, refer to  
John 1:1-4 - come to own (things neuter plural - back again)

III. 1. Reconciliation of Persons

2. Reconciliation of Cosmos
3. Reconciliation implies previous estrangement!

Prefix - do again. *Anakephalaiōsasthai* - to sum up all  
things in Christ.

Eph. 1:10

Col. 1:20

IV. Pattern of Restoration

1. First Prophets
2. Apostles - Preaching
3. Pauline Epistles - Ephesians and Colossians
4. Revelation of John

## SECTION 21

Text 7:1-8

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the sea of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel:

- 5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;
- 6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand;
- 7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand;
- 8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;  
    Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Initial Questions 7:1-8

1. From where was the angel ascending who had "the seal" of God - vs. 2?
2. For how long were the angels of destruction to be detained - vs. 3?
3. How many were sealed - vs. 4?
4. Were there any Gentiles sealed - vs. 4?
5. Was there a tribe of Joseph - vs. 8?

## 142 THE SEER, THE SAVIOUR, AND THE SAVED

Sealing of the 144,000 from the Tribes of Israel  
Chp. 7:1-8

### Verse 1

Note the change in the picture between chapters 6 and 7. What might follow chapter 6 more naturally would be a vision of the ultimate triumph of the Church. John gives us this vision after the seven trumpets have sounded. Before we hear the note of victory, John goes through the whole process again in the series of the seven trumpets.

Who will be able to stand? Here we get the answer. John saw "four angels holding (*kratountas* - holding back or keeping under complete control) the four winds of the earth, in order that (*hina* clause or purpose clause) wind (no definite art.) should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Here we see the symbol of God's sovereign power over the universe.

### Verse 2

Another angel "coming up from the rising of the sun, having a seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given (to them) to harm the earth and the sea." God sent another authorized messenger from the east (from the rising of the sun) to command that the other angels hurt not the earth.

### Verse 3

They were commanded not to harm the earth - "until we may seal (*sphragisōmen* - 1st aor. act. subj. - by a single act) the seals of our God on their foreheads."

These angels are from the imagery of Zechariah 6:1-8. John had used this passage before, and gave it a different application. The destruction of the earth would not be allowed to happen until the number of the saved is determined.

### Verse 4

John declared that he "heard the number of the ones having been sealed (*esphragismenōn* - passive, perfect, participle - the act of sealing is complete and was done by God). 144,000 having been sealed out of (*ek*) every tribe of the sons of Israel."

The Jehovah's Witnesses are not among the 144,000 as they so arrogantly claim, because these had already been sealed in the New Testament period. The sealing was not a future act as

the form of the verb signifies (pass. perf. part.). The symbolism asserts that there were twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. If taken literally, this means physical Jews. We must keep in mind the New Testament redefinition of the term Israel and its significance. (See especially Romans chps. 9-11, Galatians, and G. A. Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament*, Uppsala, Sweden, 1946; study also the theme of the Remnant in both Testaments.)

#### Verses 5-8

Whether the figure of 144,000 is literal or figurative, we can still understand the basic import. If we take the number literally, it is specifically applied to Jews - or the twelve tribes of Israel. The list of the tribes given here is not found in the Old Testament form. Levi (vs. 7) is included here, but was not actually a technical tribe. Dan is omitted, Manasseh is put in his place, but as a son of Joseph he is included in the Joseph tribe mentioned in verse 8.

### SECTION 22

#### Text 7:9-12

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

Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Initial Questions 7:9-12

1. Are there only Jews present in this next scene after the sealing of the Israelites - vs. 9?
2. What does the waving of palms signify - vs. 9? (See Triumphal entry of Christ - Matt 21:1ff.)
3. Does vs. 11 clearly state that only God is worthy to be worshipped? (Not angels, nor Mary, nor any one else.)

Triumph of the Innumerable Multitudes  
Chp 7:9-17

## Verse 9

I take this picture to be of the Church triumphant in heaven. They have prevailed over persecution, and death because of "the blood of the Lamb." The Elders gave this explanation of the vision in verses 13-17, in imagery, taken from many Old Testament sources (Isaiah 49:10; Isaiah 25:8; Ezekiel 34:23). Immediately after this comes the opening of the seventh seal (8:1). People from "every nation (*ethnous* - used in contrast to Israel) and tribes, and peoples, and tongues standing before the throne, and before the Lamb having been clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." These palm branches were strictly Jewish imagery from the Feast of Tabernacles. They were signs of victory. Note the use of palm branches in Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The situation was in divine hands, therefore, not hopeless!

## Verse 10

"And they cry with a loud voice saying: Salvation to our God sitting on the throne and to the Lamb." The multitude praised the Father and the Lamb for saving them. Christ is here called saviour; this is another clear affirmation of the deity of the Lamb.

## Verse 11

The high eschalon of heaven assembles around the throne and "worshipped God."

## Verse 12

These high praises flow out of the heart of those closest to the "one sitting on the throne." The imagery would be well known to John's readers, as the symbolism of oriental kings.

## SECTION 23

## Text 7:13-17

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence

came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

#### Initial Questions 7:13-17

1. Who are those in white robes - vs. 13? (See chp. 6:11)
2. What was the great tribulation - vs. 14?
3. How were the robes made white, and what does this say concerning the atoning Blood of Christ and its relationship to the forgiveness of sins - vs. 1?
4. How long does the service to the Lord last according to vs. 15?
5. Who is the shepherd in this scene - vs. 17?

#### Verse 13

One of the elders identified the multitude. "These having been clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence come they?"

#### Verse 14

"And I have said to him: My Sir (*kurie*) usually means *Lord*, but here it refers to one of the elders and not God), you knowest. And he told me: these are (the ones coming *erchomenoi* - present middle participle, continue to come) out of (*ek*) the great affliction"--Charles says - "The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the great tribulation." "And washed (*epluman* - 1st aor. active ind. they were washed in a single act not a process) their robes and whitened them (see Isaiah 1:18) in the blood of the Lamb." Who is the unnumberable multitude? They are the redeemed!

#### Verse 15

"Because of this fact of being washed (*dia touto* - therefore) they are in front of the Throne of God, and serve (*latreousin* -

present ind. continually, publicly serve. This is the word from which liturgy comes - public worship) him day and night in his Temple, and the one sitting on the throne will spread (his) tent (*skenosei* - word for tent or tabernacle) over them." The tabernacle was the special dwelling place of God. Now people from every nation are members of the body of the redeemed. God's people are no longer limited to physical Israel. Where ever the Gospel is preached and men respond to Christ there is God's dwelling place. God's faithfulness is crystal clear. He will take care of His own. We may betray God, but God will never betray us!

*Verse 16*

God's own will never hunger nor thirst. God's sovereignty will reign both in the universe and the hearts of the blood bought saints.

*Verse 17*

All reason for human sorrow is gone. The Lamb is Victory and great Shepherd. Every single tear will be wiped away by the Living God. Such tender care! The picture is not that redeemed sinners are so happy that they wipe away their own tears, but God loves them so much that He wipes mortal eyes clear of every single tear.

Next comes the seventh seal, and then follows the seven trumpets, which retrace the same basic ground of the seven seals but this is not mere repetition. A greater sense of urgency, a better vantage point of the completeness of the divine purpose and a sharper focus on the fact of God's complete control over the universe is revealed.

Review Questions for Seventh Chapter

1. What is the basic change which takes place between chp. 6 and 7?
2. From what direction is the other angel coming in vs. 2?
3. Read Zechariah 6:1-8 and discuss its use in vs. 3.
4. Is the list of the 12 tribes of Israel correctly given in vs. 5-8?
5. What does vs. 9 imply about our missionary efforts?
6. What does the imagery of vs. 14 tell us?
7. Why are the redeemed before the throne in vs. 15? What are they doing there?

## SECTION 24

## Text 8:1-6

And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth; and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings and an earthquake.

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

## Initial Questions 8:1-6

1. What does the trumpet signify - vs. 2?
2. What were trumpets used for in the New Testament world?
3. Does vs. 3 and 4 contain biblical justification for the Roman Catholic doctrine of the power of the prayers of the dead saints?
4. What does the casting of fire upon the earth signify - vs. 5?
5. Who prepared to sound the trumpets - vs 6?

Opening of the Seventh Seal: The Half Hour's Silence  
in Heaven; The First Four Trumpet Blasts  
Chapter 8:1-13

## Verse 1

As with the seven seals (5:8-10), before the trumpets sound there is an initial vision of the function of the prayers of the saints. Here we see the power of the praayers of the righteous to avail God's intervention in the events of history (8:2-5), described in almost the same way as before.

The first four trumpet blasts are (vs. 6-12) closely related as were the first four seals. (The figure of the trumpet is used by Paul - see I Thess. 4:16). John's imagery comes primarily from Exodus 10:; the records of the Egyptian plagues.

John declares that "when (*hotan* - indefinite particle - giving us a picture of indefiniteness) he opened the seventh seal there came silence - (*egeneto sigē* - 2nd aor. middle voice) in heaven about (*hōs* - indefinite - about) a half hour." Heaven was silent; there was no speaking or singing.

#### Verse 2

John next saw the seven angels "who stand (*hestēkasin* - perf. indicative) in front of (before) God." They receive the seven trumpets. A new period of woes begins.

#### Verse 3

"On (*epi* or above) the altar (*thusiastēriou*). The problem here is whether this altar is the "brazen altar" (as 16:9) or the altar of incense (as 9:13). The angel takes the place of the priest at the altar in John's imagery. The priest took fire from the brazen altar to light the censer. (See Swete, *op cit.*, p. 108) for good discussion of this point; also the extensive discussion of Charles). The angel was given the incenses "in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose) he will give (it) with the prayers of all the saints".... The imagery relates that the holy incense was to be added so the praayers to that they could both (incense and prayers) ascend before (or in front of) the throne of God. Note how the martyrs were *praying* in spite of their trials and martyrdom for the Faith. What can we learn from their prayer life?

#### Verse 4

"The smoke of the incenses - went up (*anebē*) with the prayers of the saints."

#### Verse 5

The angel cast (*ebalen* - 2 aor. active - ind. - in a single momentary act the fire was cast!) The judgment of fire covers "the entire earth (*eis tēn gēn*, Ezekiel 10:2); and there occurred (*egenonto* - 2 aor. ind. middle voice) thunders, and sounds, and lightenings, and an earthquake." This same phenomenon occurred when the first four seals were opened (6:12ff).

**Verse 6**

The angels have put the trumpets to the mouths (prepared themselves) "in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they might trumpet (*salpisōsin* - 1st aor. subj.)

**SECTION 25****Text 8:7**

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

**Initial Questions 8:7**

1. What followed after the sounding of the first trumpet?
2. Why the symbolism of limitation, i.e., one-third of the earth, trees, and green grass - vs. 7?

**Verse 7**

This imagery is unquestionably taken from the Egyptian plagues recorded in Exodus 9:24 (see also Joel 2:28f).

The first four trumpets are discussed in seven verses; the last three are called three woes, and are described in TWENTY-seven verses. The first four are very similar and are not extensively discussed; the last three are described in greater detail. The first four affect the properties belonging to nature; the last three affect mankind.

"One-third of the earth, and one-third of trees, and all green grass was burnt." This destruction which has been cast on the earth destroys extensively as a warning to sinful man. Among the trees were those which provided food for the land, i.e., olive, fig, etc.

The imagery of this section symbolizes the custom of the day regarding the court of king. The king is God, and mankind is called to learn of His judgment, which is limited but severe.

## SECTION 26

Text 8:8-9

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

Initial Questions 8:8-9

1. What followed the sounding of the second trumpet - vs. 8?
2. What particular part of creation was effected?
3. How extensive was the destruction - vs. 9?
4. What place does the sea play in the life of man?

Verse 8

The first trumpet sounded for the affect on the earth; now the second trumpet sounds and the marine area is affected.

John does not assert that a burning mountain fell into the sea, but rather he says that "as (*hōs* - a simile - as or like a mountain) a great mountain burning with fire". . . . This could have been the imagery of a great meteorite. This fire brand affected the habitant of the fish. Fish were counted as a vital source of food in the first century. The imagery of the sea was no doubt the Mediterranean Sea. One third of the sea became blood. This symbolism could have come from the first Egyptian plague (Exodus 7:20-21)

Verse 9

The extent of the destruction is here revealed. "One third of all living (*psukas* - see appendix immediately following this chapter) were destroyed (*diephtharēsan* - 2nd aor. passive - were destroyed in a single act).

## SECTION 27

Text 8:10-11

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the

waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters, because they made bitter.

#### Initial Questions 8:10-11

1. Life is impossible without water. How much of this life-sustaining fluid was defiled - vs. 10?
2. What does wormwood mean - vs. 11?
3. What did the wormwood do to the waters?
4. How long could life be prolonged without the water which we take so much for granted?

#### Verse 10

The drinking water of man was affected by the events that followed the third trumpet. Man cannot long survive without water. John declares that the burning object (as a lamp) fell on "one third of the rivers and onto the fountains of the waters." The fresh water supply was attacked like in the Egyptian plague.

#### Verse 11

This imagery comes from Jeremiah 9:15. "The name of the star (in vs. 10 the word used was lamp) is called wormwood" (see Deuteronomy 29:18; Amos 5:7). Note that John does not say that the water is mixed with, but turned into wormwood. This event is lethal for the continuance of human life. The symbol of wormwood signifies the "bitter sorrow" (Lamentations 3:19).

### SECTION 28

#### Text 8:12

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

#### Initial questions 8:12

1. Destruction was now reaching into what parts of creation - vs. 12?
2. How vital is the light and heat of the sun for the sustaining of human life?

3. How had the destructive forces effected the order of the solar system? Who sustains the order that we take for granted?

*Verse 12*

The imagery comes from the ninth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:21). After the fourth angel sounded the universe's source of light, heat, and energy, which sustains plant and human life, was affected.

John declared that one-third of the sun, moon, and stars "was struck"—"in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) the third of them might be darkened." This was to effect the length of night and day.

The first four angels have now trumpeted. Each devastation which followed their blast, affected nature. We must not lose sight of the fact that nature was attacked at the most vital points which related to the on going of human life.

## SECTION 29

**Text 8:13**

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

**Initial Questions 8:13**

1. What does woe mean - vs. 13?
2. In view of our present involvement in a hymanistic, naturalistic, and rationalistic effort to provide a perfect society upon the earth quite distinct from God's power and purpose, what can we make of the declaration that there is more and worse to come?

*Verse 13*

There is an innovation between the fourth and fifth trumpet. John has a vision of "one flying eagle." What message does the eagle bring? Why the symbol of an eagle? It is an O.T. image for vengeance or wrath in general (see Deuteronomy 28:49; Hosea 8:1; Habakkuk 1:8). The eagle was also a bird of prey. What is the message of this bird of prey? The one eagle was flying "in mid-heaven (*mesouranēmati* - this means the meridian or the place the sun occupies at noon.) SAYING WITH A

LOUD voice, Woe, Woe, Woe to the ones dwelling (*katoikountas* - present participle the one now dwelling or dwelling at present) on the earth." This vision demands both seeing and hearing (contrast some of John's visions - were seen - some heard). The next phrase tells us why the eagle was crying Woe, Woe, Woe. "By reason of (literally *ek tōn loipōn* - from or out of the remaining) the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels being about (*mellontōn* - about to) to trumpet. The triple woes stand for the three remaining trumpets. Things have been bad, but they will get worse. John's message of the progressing forces of destruction is in harmony with Paul's teaching (II Tim. 3:12). There will be more destruction and it affects will be worse than the last.

#### Review Questions for Entire Chapter 8

Much of the material in this chapter is self-explanatory within its context.

1. What effect did the great persecution have on the spiritual and general prayer life of the saints - vs. 3?
2. What is the major source of the imagery in vs. 7?
3. What was destroyed and how extensive were the destructions - vs. 8, etc.?
4. How vital was shipping for the Palestine of John's day - vs. 9?
5. What does the symbol of Wormwood signify - vs. 11? Discuss the appropriateness of the symbol.
6. How important, chemically speaking, is the light of the sun for the existence and continuity of life (animal, plant, and man - vs. 12?)
7. Why was the image of the eagle used in vs. 13?
8. What was the message of the eagle - vs. 13?
9. Compare and discuss the teaching of Christ (Matt. 24), Paul (especially I and II Thess.) and John in this passage regarding their doctrine of "the last things."

#### *Special Study on the word Psukē*

(From Verse Nine the Form is *Psukas*)

This term translated soul has a long history. It is a very important term in the vocabulary of the Christian view of the nature of man. It is completely distorted and misunderstood by

many, especially the rapidly growing cult of the *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

*Psukē*, throughout the history of its use in extant Greek writers is dominately a vital term, i.e., a word carrying with it the idea of life, and until Aristotle, who applies the term to plants, life involving some measure of consciousness, or possibility of consciousness.

The term means life, loss of which is death, sometimes of lower animals, but usually of men. This meaning is common from Homer to Xenophon.

*Psukē* means by metonymy, the joy of life. Euripides uses it in this sense in *The Medea* (Loeb Classic Library, Harvard University Press, *Euripides*). The term also means "a shade," the soul of man existing after death, or departing from the body in death. Homer uses it with this significance. (See Homer, *Iliad*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press.) This use clearly implies that the *psukē* exists in the body; since otherwise it could not depart from the body, and exist separately.

The term *psukē* also has the significance of a natural metonymy. The conscious element in man standing for the man himself - Sophocles uses it in this sense (Sophocles, extant play *Oedipus at Colonus*, Loeb Classical Library, *op cit.*)

A new meaning of this term appears in Aristotle. *Psukē*, here denotes the principle of life in lower animals, plants, and the universe. (Aristotle, volume I, Loeb Classical Lib. *op cit.*) Plato's conception of the *psukē* is influenced by his doctrine of *eidos* (ideas or forms). Plato ascribes *psukē* to the sun and stars, and the universe as well as to man (see Plato, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, etc., Loeb Classical Library, *op cit.*)

Aristotle devotes three books of his *De Anima* to a discussion of *psukē*. It has no existence apart from the body. His rejection of Platonic dualism is inseparably related to his use of this term.

Heraclitus said that the origin of all things "is soul (*psukē*), and with this agrees Diogenes Laertius. According to them, all things are full of souls and demons, and that no one can possibly find out the limits of the *psukē*.

Polybius uses the term *psukē* as synonymous with life, loss of which is death. (See his *Histories* Loeb Classical Library)

It would be no serious problem to show the term in its historical development, but our purpose here is to give a brief sketch and provide bibliography for further study.

It is most important to point out that the N.T. authors use *psukē*, and that they follow Hebrew usage. The O.T. or Hebrew concept is not the concept that appeared in Judaism after the coming of Hellenism. We can not here even briefly consider the Hebrew psychological vocabulary, but we will provide information for study in our annotated bibliography.

See C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*; H. W. Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*; the Classic Franz Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1867. Unsurpassed by anything today, with one exception, Pedersen's *Israel*.

For the N.T. usage of *psukē* and its various forms see Moulton and Geden, *Concordance to The Greek Testament*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, reprinted 1953, pp. 1022-1023.

For preSocratic usage see Hermann Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition by W. Kranz, three volumes, 1951-52 printing, originally Berlin, 1912.

*Psukē* often means the self and this follows the common Hebrew (*nephesh*) manner of expressing the individual ego or self. In contexts where the word means self it would be wrong to translate *pseukē* (or *nephesh*) as soul. James 1:21 is one of many places where a soul is the possession of a self. (Literally - "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and superfluity of evil in meekness receive ye the implanted word being able to save your (*humōn* - of you-showing possession) souls (*psukas*).") (See also I Peter 2:11 and 25; James 5:20.)

In the O.T. vocabulary *nephesh* is used 756 times and *ruach* 378. (See S. Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae*. Full information in following bibliography.)

We cannot here consider the thesis that Paul's psycyological vocabulary was that of Hellenism. For now, we only make this pontification - Paul's psychological vocabulary was not that of Hellenism! Paul's and John's usage is in absolute harmony with the O.T. data. For those so inclined to study this problem see the following bibliography for the tools of research.

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## SECTION 30

Text 9:1-12

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. 2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. 6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. 11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath the name Apollyon.

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

Initial Question 9:1-12

1. How intensive is the torture to be which is coming upon men who do not have the seal of God?
2. How severe does pain become before one seriously wishes that he were dead?
3. How are the locusts described in versus 7-10?
4. Is the power of the locusts limited?
5. Who is the angel of the abyss?
6. What does the names of the angel of the abyss mean? (In Hebrew is is Abaddon, and in Greek it is Appollyon.)

The Fifth Trumpet Blast, or First Woe  
Chapter 9:1-12

Verse 1

The fifth trumpet sounded. John saw "a star having fallen (*peptokōta* - perf. part - the star is already down, it is not in the process of falling) onto the earth, and was given to it the key of the shaft (*phreatos* - a long shaft leading to an abyss; (John 4:6 - Christ at the well uses the term *pēgē* or foundation, and at John 4:11 the term *phrear* is used), of the abyss." Often these well-shafts were not locked in first century Palestine, but John's readers would have understood the imagery when he spoke of a covered and locked shaft leading to the well or deep hole proper. There is no Greek word here that could be translated as "the bottomless pit" as we find in the K.J. (See Charles, *Eschatology*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, p. 198, for discussion of the imagery of the abyss in the Book of Enoch.)

We must be clear that God is still sovereign over the universe, and that the key to release further destruction "was given" (*edothē* - 1st Aor. Passive, ind. - the passive voice means that someone (God) gave the key to the star, probably Satan) to Satan. God is *permitting* the coming events to occur!

Verse 2

"And he opened the shaft of the abyss; and smoke went up out of the shaft as smoke of a great furnace".... This smoke was so dense that he darkened the whole atmosphere (Genesis 19:28; Ex. 19:19).

Verse 3

"Out of the smoke came forth locusts to the earth".... The imagery comes from the eighth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:14f) Joel 2:1ff). The fifth trumpet brings a scourge that does extensive harm, but the sixth trumpet brings actual destruction. The locust (9:1-12) and the horsemen (9:13-21) signify a worsening situation which is coming upon the earth.

God permitted them to have "authority as the scorpions of the earth." The torment of these scorpions came from their sting. Their sting was not lethal as is apparent from vs. 5 and 6. (Probably power here in both places. The Greek word

means both authority and power, but the authority is grounded in the power.)

#### Verse 4

"And it was said to them in order that (*hina* clause - for the purpose that) they shall not harm the grass of the earth, nor every (any) greenstuff, nor every tree, except (*ei mē* - but only) the men who have not the seal (*sphragida* - mark of distinction) of God on the foreheads." The personification of the scorpions is clear. They were told not to kill, but to torment men.

#### Verse 5

God gave them permission to torment men. John said "in order that they shall be tormented (*basanisthēsontai* - future indicative passive voice) give months;". . .the suffering was to be limited. The nature of the suffering is now defined. "The torment is as the torment of a scorpion, whenever it stings a man."

#### Verse 6

The suffering will be so intense, that "men will seek death and by no means will they find it, and they will long to die" (*epithumēsousin* - fut. act. - this is a form of *epithumeō*, the word for lust or intense desire.) Men shall desire death more than any thing else, but there is no release from their suffering because even "death flees" (*pheusei* - present, ind. continuously flees from them) - as though men are chasing it, but cannot catch it.

Physical death cannot bring them relief from their suffering, because it is spiritual suffering caused by their not having God's mark on the foreheads.

Note: See the present author's *Death Be Not Proud!* in the Christian Standard, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 6, 13, and 20, 1963. Contemporary man is preoccupied with two things: (1) The problem of death; (2) Rejecting the biblical view of man and death. In the above popular statement an attempt was made to direct the attention of every N.T. Christian to consider the insight into *Death* the areas of *Anthropology, Archaeology, Literature, Philosophy, Psycho-Sociological, False Doctrines*, and the *Biblical view of man and the phenomenon of death* can provide. The brief section on *The Biblical Doctrine of Man and Death* are included as an appendix in this present volume.

*Verse 7*

John describes the locusts as "like horses having been prepared for war, and on their heads as (*hōs* - as or like - John does not say that they actually had crowns) crowns like gold, and their faces as (*hōs* - same as above) faces of men." We have here imagery of war horses. (See Joel 2:4ff). The imagery of crowns probably signifies war helmets, because John's language makes it very plain that they did not wear actual crowns.

*Verse 8*

The appearance of the locusts is further described. "They had hairs as (*hōs* - as or like) hairs of women".... This imagery probably represents the antennae of the locusts. "And their teeth were as of lions" (See Joel 1:6).

*Verse 9*

The locusts were so large that they resembled horses wearing battle armor. There were so many of them that John's imagery comes from "the sound of many horsed chariots." This was a large chariot carrying many men or a very fast charger chariot pulled by many horses. The rustling wings of the locusts sound like the shuffle of the feet of the infantry charging in battle.

*Verse 10*

The "tails like scorpions" were to sting men and the sting "is to harm men five months." In Palestine certain species of locusts are born in the spring and die in late summer or early fall. This is a period of about five months. The imagery would have been immediately recognized by John's readers.

*Verse 11*

At this point the realism of the imagery breaks down. Real locusts have no leader, but these have "a king, who is the angel of the abyss." (Not bottomless pit as the King James translates.) His name in Hebrew (*Hebraisti* - used only in Johannine literature - John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; Rev. 19:16) *Abaddon* (means Destruction, see Job 26:6, Psalm 88:1) and in the Greek his name is *Apollyon* - destroyer. (The Septuagint regularly translates the above Hebrew term by *Apoleia* - one form of destruction.) It is impossible to settle the question of whether John's personification is Death or Satan. But the general picture is clear.

*Verse 12*

This hideous imagery tells only of the first woe. There are two more to follow, and they will be progressively worse!

Note: The Principalities and Powers. Ours is an age when men deny the existence of Satan and his angels of darkness. Baudelaire describes Satan extremely well in these weighty words. "The Devil's cleverest vise is to convince us that he does not exist." Paul says "he turns into an angel of light."

The evil which has come upon the earth is inexplicable apart from the power of darkness! Thanks be to God light shall prevail! (See Merrill F. Unger, Biblical Demonology, Van Kampen Press, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 1952).

Note: John Bunyan's *Apollyon*. Bunyan's great work, *Pilgrim's Progress* reveals what baptized imagination can do in portraying great biblical themes. When Christian leaves the Palace Beautiful he descends into the Valley of Humiliation. There Bunyan's Christian does battle with *Apollyon*. Bunyan's imagery departs somewhat from the biblical data, but he brilliantly points Christian's encounter. (Read *Pilgrim's Progress*, and for an excellent interpretative work see Henri Talon, *John Bunyan, The Man and His Work*, Rockliff, London, 1951.

## SECTION 31

## Text 9:13-21

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is

in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. 20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

#### Initial Questions 9:13-21

1. Where is the river Euphrates located?
2. The river Euphrates is the Eastern boundary of what Empire?
3. Where did John get the exact number of the armies of horsemen which he gives in vs. 16?
4. How did the rest of mankind respond to the devistation of the plagues - vs. 20?
5. What spiritual condition of mankind does this section of scripture reveal?
6. What are some of the relationships between the tragedies which come upon mankind and his willingness to repent?

#### The Sixth Trumpet Blast or the Second Woe Chapter 9:13-21

##### Verse 13

"And the sixth angel trumpeted" and John heard "one voice" speak to the sixth angel. What did he say"

##### Verse 14

The angel was authorized to "loose (*luson* - 1st aor. active, imperative - commanded - to release at once) the four angels having been found at the great river Euphrates." (See Genesis 15:18 for extent of the hand of promise). Beyond the Euphrates, to the east, lay the great Empires of The Assyrians and Babylonians (The great river is also mentioned in 16:12). The flooding waters of the Euphrates is symbolic of the judgment of God (see Isaiah 8:5-8; Jeremiah 17:13).

##### Verse 15

God's control over the universe is again declared by John. The having been prepared (*hetoimasmenoi* - perfect, passive

voice - participle - the preparation of the angels was both complete and performed by someone else other than the angels themselves) angels "for the specific time" in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) they should kill one third of mankind" (*men - in the plural*). It must be pointed out that the definite article (the) appears only before hour and not before the words day, month, and year. The significance being that the angels were prepared for God's will and purpose or whenever God choose to reveal His "time." The fifth trumpet revealed terrible torture; the sixth trumpet calls forth death. The situation worsens.

#### Verse 16

"And the number of the army (literally, bodies of soldiers of the cavalry (*hippikou* - the collective singular noun horsemen) was (not in text) two thousands of thousands; I heard the number of them." John is not claiming that he saw this mighty, monstrous army, but rather that he "heard" the information. The destructive demons were cavalry rather than infantry.

#### Verse 17

Now John asserts that the following information and imagery was provided in a vision. The hideous imagery which John uses is really self-explanatory. The defensive armour of the riders consists of fire (*burinos* means fire, not fire colored.) The riders are first described then their mounts are pictured as having "heads like (*hōs* - as) heads of lions." They too were equipped with "fire and smoke and sulphur." (See the description of the destruction of the cities of the plains - Genesis 19: 24,28.) Who were the warriors? What is John's source for this imagery? Beckwith (see his work already mentioned, p. 565) is probably correct in stating that the imagery refers to the Parthians. Swete concurs with this identification (see this commentary p. 123). This is a very possible source of John's imagery, but as much of the symbolism found in The Revelation, it cannot be identified with certainty. John thus describes the great invasion from the East. The most serious threat to the law and order in the Roman Empire was the Parthian Empire across the great river Euphrates.

*Verse 18*

"By (*apo* - from, in the sense of source) these three plagues were a third of men killed." The plagues each have the definite article pointing out the distinct and separate sources of death. "Out of (*ek* - sense of origin) the fire, and the smoke, and the sulphur proceeding) *ekporeuomenou* - present participle constantly proceeding out of their mouths.

*Verse 19*

Following the imagery of the scorpion, which John used previously, he now states that the "power of the horses is in their mouth and tails".... Out of their mouths come fire, etc., and out of their tails comes poison which is deadly for man.

*Verse 20*

God had permitted these plagues to come upon sinful man in order that he might repent and ultimately be saved. Apparently idolatry had captivated the remaining two thirds of mankind. John says that these "not even repented (after all the torture and death) of the works of their hands, in order that they will not worship demons and idols of gold, and silver, and bronze, and stone, and wooden, which can neither see, hear, nor walk (see Daniel 5:23).

*Verse 21*

The powers of evil dominated the majority of mankind. All of the tragedy which had been inflicted upon man had not yet brought him to his knees in repentance. If hard times and severe persecution does not cause men to turn to the Lamb of God - What will? God's sole purpose in allowing plagues and death to haunt man was to bring him to a knowledge of his lost condition and need for the saving power of the "Blood of the Lamb...; but all was in vain; because "they repented not of their murders, nor their sorceries, nor their fornication, nor out of their thefts." All of these evils are clearly and publically condemned in The Revelation as resulting in Hell for the unrepentant. (See also Galatians 5:16ff.)

## Review Questions for Chapter 9

1. Discuss the evil which is described in chp. 9 in view of God's righteousness, justice, mercy, love, and man's need of redemption.

2. Read Exodus 10:14f, and Joel 2:1ff, and then discuss the imagery used in vs. 3.
3. How does man respond to the torment mentioned in vs. 6?
4. What is the "kings" name and what does it mean in vs. 11?
5. What does the use of both the Hebrew and Greek names (translated) tell us about the transition from Hebrew to the common language of Greek - vs. 11?
6. What does vs. 15 tell us about the purpose of God and His control over the universe?
7. Discuss the spiritual significance of suffering and its relationship to repentance - vs. 20?
8. Why does God's appeal harden some hearts and brings others to saving knowledge of Christ?

Note: *Stopped Ears!*

Text: Acts 7:57 - "And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and rushed with one mind on him."

When do we stop our ears?

- A. Series of sermons on hundreds of biblical themes.
  1. Baptism.
  2. Planned Giving.
  3. Christian witnessing: Evangelism/Missions
  4. Lord's Supper.
  5. Victorious Christian Living.

Conclusion: When they could not take the Lord's Word anymore, "they stopped their ears." What about *you*?

## SECTION 32

Text 10:1-11

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders

uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

#### Initial Questions 10:1-11

1. As John was preparing to write, what was he commanded to do?
2. When is the mystery of God to be finished?
3. What does the term *mystery* mean in the New Testament?
4. Were the prophets of vs. 7 Old or New Testament prophets?
5. What does the command to prophecy mean in vs. 11? Does it mean to preach or to fore tell the future, or both?

Preparation for the Seventh Trumpet Blast:  
The Vision of the Angel with the Open Booklet  
Chapter 10:1-11

*Verse 1*

The second and third woes (final woe) are yet to come! It will be so terrible that another angel appears to announce it! This angel is the representative of both Christ and God the father. Keep in mind the previous woe, and its torment and death. These did not bring sinful man to repentance! Here we note the first of the intermediate visions before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. How shall the coming devastation affect man and his spiritual relationship to the Lamb of God?

The symbolism leans heavily on that of Daniel 12:7, though it has been modified by John.

We must recall that the opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (see chp. 7). Here the sounding of the seventh trumpet (chp. 11:15) is preceded by a new series of visions (chp. 10:1 to 11:14). John states that "another angel... having been clothed with a cloud." The symbol of the cloud is the vehicle for God's heavenly beings descending and ascending (see Zephaniah 1:15; Daniel 7; Psalms 103, 104; Rev. 1:7, 11:2, 14:14f, and in this verse) "the rainbow on his head" - (see chp. 4:3) probably represents God's faithfulness to His people. God told man in Genesis that the rainbow would be a "sign" that He would never again destroy man by water. The powerful angel's face was as bright as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire. Though this description resembles the description of Christ in chp. 1:15, we cannot say that the strong angel is Christ; because Christ is never called an angel in the Bible.

*Verse 2*

The strong angel carried "in his hand a little scroll having been opened." The roll mentioned in chp. 5 was on (*epi*) the right hand of the strong angel because it was too large to be concealed in (*en*) the hand. In contrast, here we note the little scroll (*biblaridion* - diminutive form). Swete is probably correct in his assertion that this diminutive shows that the angel's revelation is only a fragment of the total revelation. "And he placed his right foot on the sea and the left on the land."

*Verse 3*

The giant angel "cried with a loud voice" and "the seven thunders spoke their voices." The Angel's message concerned the entire universe. (See Psalm 29:20.) In John 12:29 the voice out of heaven is identified by the multitude as thunder. There can be no dogmatic identification of the "seven thunders," but it is often the symbol for the voice of heaven which is not understood by human hearers.

*Verse 4*

When the voices of the seven thunders had uttered their messages, John heard "a voice out of heaven saying—You seal (*sphragison* - 1st. aor. imperative - seal it by a single act - immediately) the things which the seven thunders spoke and not write (*grapsēs* - 1st aor. subjunctive - literally means with the negation *mē* - you may not write). Part of John's revelation was not made available to us. He was forbidden to write it down.

*Verse 5*

The giant angel raises his hand to heaven (see Genesis 14:22; Daniel 12:7), and swears by God that there shall be delay no longer.

*Verse 6*

The angel sware by (*ōmosen en* - "sware in" is a Hebrew idiom.) the one living unto the ages of the ages, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the things in the earth, and the things in the sea, that delay (*chronos* - literally means *time* but also delay) shall be no longer." John is not stating that time shall be no longer, but that there shall be no further delay in the sounding of the seventh trumpet - (it is sounded 11:15). (See 6:10 - the cry "how long"?) Check Alexander Campbell's translation - *The Golden Oracles* at Rev. 1:11, 10:6, 12:2; 12:13; see also C. K. Thomas, *Alexander Campbell and His New Version*, The Bethany Press, 1950, pp. 30, 31, 39, and 40.

*Verse 7*

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, whenever he is about to trumpet even was finished (*etelesthē* - 1st aor. passive) the mystery of God as he preached to his slaves the prophets." The mystery becomes partly revealed now. The

Bible always employs verbs of revelation with the term *mustērion*. (See the note on this term immediately following this chapter - note also Amos 3:7; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4).

*Verse 8*

John was commanded to "take (*labe* - 2nd aor. imperative - take, immediately) the scroll" from the giant angel introduced in verse one.

*Verse 9*

The angel commanded that John "take and devour it, and it will embitter your stomach, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." This symbolism comes directly from Ezekiel 3:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16f. God's word is both bitter and sweet. The sweetness of the word is because of God's mercy, the bitterness is because of His judgment. God's word always reveals the plumb line of judgment, and oil horn of mercy."

*Verse 10*

John obeyed the angel's command, and as was the case with God's O.T. prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, so in John's experience the word was both bitter and sweet.

*Verse 11*

The Seer of God, on Patmos, was told that he "must (*dei* - expresses absolute necessity. He had no choice but to prophesy) prophesy (*propheteusai* - means both to *speak forth* and to utter *precision predicative prophecy*) again (*palin* - signifies the fact of repetition - do it again - as before) before many peoples (*laois* - this is one of four words used in the N.T. and translated - people. It signifies a people of political unity) and nations (*ethnesin* - signifies people in general) and tongues (*glossais* - languages - people who speak different languages) and kings."

Review Questions - Chapter 10

1. Did the previous two woes cause sinful man to repent - vs. 1?
2. Read Daniel 12:7 and discuss the passage in light of John's use of the symbolism - vs. 1?
3. How is chapter 10 like chapter 7?

4. What does the rainbow symbolize in the O.T.? Does the symbolism fit here too?
5. What does the diminutive form - 'little scroll,' signify in vs. 2?
6. To what does the phrase "delay no longer" refer - vs. 6?
7. Read appendix on *mystery* and discuss its use in vs. 7.
8. In what ways is God's word both bitter and sweet - vs. 9?

Note: *Mystery (Mustērion)*

For the contemporary emphasis on *mystery* in Christian thought see Michael B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy*, SCM Press LTD, 56 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1.

The brilliant Roman Catholic Philosopher, Gabriel Marcel utilizes the distinction between problem, which is solvable, and mystery, which is not solvable by human reason. See Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, Fordham University Press, New York, and Troisfontaines', *De L'Existence à L'Être*, Tome I et II, Secretariat des Publications, 59, Rue Brufelles, Namur, 1953. The issue of mystery in relation to human reason receives full attention in this brilliant interpretative work on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy.

Note also the place of *mystery* in the Eastern and Western Catholic Theology.

What does the New Testament say about *mustērion*?

The word *mystery* (Latin *mysterium*) is found only one time in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10). Other than this single usage in the Gospel records the word appears only in Paul and in The Revelation. It is used in two senses - (1) the total Christian revelation; (2) and of specific Christian doctrines. It is used in sense number one in I Cor. 2:1; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26, 2:2, 4:3; Eph. 1:9, 6:19; I Tim. 3:9, 16; Rev. 10:7. It is used in sense number two in II Thess. 2:7; I Cor. 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Rom. 11:25; Eph. 5:32; Matt. 13:11; Rev. 1:20, 17:5, 7. See the brief note in B. T. Westcott, *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 180.

John speaks of the entire Christian revelation (Rev. 10:7) when he declares "and was finished the mystery (*mustērion*) of God, as he preached to his slaves the prophets." John uses the term in the sense of a particular Christian doctrine in (1:20) as

he says "The mystery (*musterion*) of the seven stars." Then the significance of the mystery is revealed in the last section of verse 20. The great "mystery Babylon" (17:5); and verse seven identifies the mystery - 'I will tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast.' Biblical mysteries are always clarified by special revelation of their significance.

A series of sermons on the great biblical mysteries could clarify this particular biblical teaching.

### Sermon Suggestions

The Mystery of The Kingdom (Matthew 13:10ff)

The Mystery which hath been Kept in Silence (Romans 16:25)

The Revealed Mystery of His Will (Ephesians 1:9)

The Mystery of The Gospel (Ephesians 6:19)

The Mystery of Godliness (I Timothy 3:16)

### A Sermon Sketch

#### *The Mystery of Iniquity*

II Thess. 2:7 - "For the mystery of Lawlessness doth already work: only there is one restraining just now until out of the midst (*ek mesou*) it comes." (A literal translation.)

#### Introduction:

The problem of evil is the greatest single stumbling block which keeps many from accepting the Christian view of God in Christ and salvation through His blood.

- I. Paul asserts implicitly that evil would be worse were it not for the "restraining one."
- II. All human efforts to cope with this mystery are shattered by the undeniable expression of evil in our world. Is our condition then hopeless?
- III. Our hope of ultimate victory over the "mystery of lawlessness is grounded in the bearer of the "mystery of Godliness."

#### Conclusion:

What can the cause of Christ do to stem the tide of this evil mystery? Lawlessness shall be finally destroyed, when our Lord and savior comes again, and the court of heaven marshalls all men before the throne to give account to the Living God. (Note the great judgment scene in *The Revelation*.)

## SECTION 33

Text 11:1-14

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar; and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

## Initial Questions 11:1-14

1. Compare the imagery of vss. 1 and 2 with Zachariah chap. 2:1ff. Discuss.
2. Who are the two witnesses mentioned in vs. 3?
3. Is there any difference in the time during which the holy city shall be trod under foot (42 months), and the prophesying period of the two witnesses (1260 days)?
4. What is the significance of the sack cloth in vs. 3?
5. What was the spiritual condition of Jerusalem as related in vs. 8?
6. What violation of Jewish burial custom do we find in vs. 9?
7. Does this second woe reveal that the havoc which is coming upon the earth is more intense than the first woe?

Further Preparations: Measuring the Temple;  
the Testimony of Two Witnesses  
Chapter 11:1-14

## Verse 1

Abruptly the scene changes. John is commanded to measure the heavenly temple. The real Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and John is writing a quarter of a century after the destruction. This makes the perspective of *The Revelation* more preceptive as its scenes move back and forth between heaven and earth. John's imagery is taken from Ezekiel 40:3. The measurement of time used in this section of scripture is borrowed from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. During this period of time God's two witnesses will be prophesying (11:3). The descriptive imagery of the two witnesses comes from Zechariah 4:1-3, 11-14, and 11:5-6. When their period of prophesying is finished they shall fall prey to The Beast. This Beast is described in the second part of *The Revelation* (chp. 12ff). Why was John commanded to measure the Temple? In view of Zechariah 2:1ff it is possible that the measuring was to set it apart from all that is unholy. He was to measure the sanctuary, that is where the holy of holies, etc., was located.

## Verse 2

The outside court, or the court of the Gentiles was not to be measured. John further sees that "they will trample the holy

city 42 months. (See appendix at the end of the commentary on *Jerusalem: In History and Symbol!*) For the first time in *The Revelation* a specific time is mentioned. The source of this time symbolism is Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. This same period of time appears in three forms in John's apocalypse - 42 months in this verse, 1260 days in verse 3 and chapter 12:6, and a times, times and half a time in 12:14. Those who are pre-occupied with dating the events of *The Revelation* and the coming again of Christ, apparently know more about God's time table than John did.

#### Verse 3

God's two faithful witnesses were empowered so that "they will prophesy 1260 days having been clothed (*in* - not in text) sack clothes." The period of their prophesying is the same as the 42 months when "the holy city" will be trampled in verse 2. The symbolism of sackclothes signifies repentance (see Jonah 3:5, Isaiah 22:12, Jeremiah 4:8) who are the two witnesses mentioned in this verse? It is impossible to identify them with certainty.

#### Verse 4

Some have identified them as Enoch and Elijah; others have identified them as Zerubbabel and Joshua, because of the two olive trees mentioned in Zechariah 4:2-14. The most common interpretation is that they are Elijah and Moses. The present author believes that the most sensible position to take is to admit that we do not know! The teaching of the verse is clear enough regardless of who the witnesses are. In the midst of the persecution there still remains those who faithfully proclaim the Word of God. (For further examination of the two witnesses see Milligan's, *The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 59-69).

#### Verse 5

God's protection is extended to His faithful witnesses to the extent that "if anyone wishes to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies; and if anyone should wish to harm them, he must (*dei* - absolute necessity) be killed in the same manner." This verse is written in a first class conditional sentence which assumes the condition (of someone actually doing them harm) to be true to the actual state of affairs. John thus declares that being faithful to God's word (as

he was banned to Patmos) during the most intense stages of persecution will bring death to God's witnesses.

The fire in the witnesses mouth could be the symbol of the Word of God as in Jeremiah 5:14—"I am making my words to become in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and the fire shall devour them."

*Verse 6*

It is this verse that some use to identify the two witnesses of verse 3 as Elijah and Moses. John states that "these have power (the Greek word means both power and authority) to shut heaven in order that (*hina* clause or purpose clause) it may not rain during the days of their prophecy, and they have power (same Greek word as above) over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every (kind of) plague as often as they may wish." Elijah had the power to "shut up heaven" so that it did not rain (see I Kings 17:1); and Moses had the "power over the waters to turn them into blood" (see Exodus 7:20). Though we cannot identify the two witnesses with absolute certainty, the identification above is the most feasible of all known to this author. At least we can say that Elijah and Moses were prototypes for the two witnesses.

*Verse 7*

When the period of their witnesses was finished "the beast coming up out of the abyss will make war with them and will over come (*nikēsei* - future indicative - will as a matter of fact be the victor and the witnesses - the defeated) and will kill them." God's faithful witnesses will not only be defeated, but will be murdered for the crime of being committed to the Living God.

*Verse 8*

John's readers would immediately understand the imagery of this verse. Burials were the same day of the death in New Testament times (see A. C. Bouquet, *Everyday Life in New Testament Times*, Scribners, New York, 1953, pp. 149). In contrast to Jewish burial custom (and Christian) their corpse *lie* (no verb in the Greek text) on the open street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where indeed their Lord was crucified." The imagery of Sodom reveals iniquity, and Egypt spiritual and possibly physical slavery. Vincent (volume II Word Studies in the New Testament, op cit., see also

Swete, op cit., p. 138) claims that the phrase "the great city" never refers to Jerusalem. But this seems to be improbable in light of the last identifying phrase "where also our Lord was crucified."

#### Verse 9

The whole world sees "their corpse three and a half days, and they do not allow their corpses to be placed in a tomb." In the first image the singular form of corpse is used, but in the second image the plural is used because each body would require separate burial. The term translated "do not allow" (*aphiousin* - means they were not permitted to bury the corpses.) The beast wanted the whole world to see that he had overcome God's witnesses.

#### Verse 10

How did the death of God's two witnesses effect mankind? Mankind paid no more heed to the word of God than during the time of Noah and many of the prophets. "The ones dwelling on the earth rejoice (*chairousin* - present tense - they are at present - continually rejoicing) over them, and are glad (*euphrainontai* - present tense - continually making merry), and they will send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented (*ebasenisan* - 1st aor. indicative - disturbed their consciences) them that dwelt on the earth." The unChristian majority that dwelt on the earth rejoiced when the source (the two witnesses) of their tortured consciences was taken away. The testimony of the witnesses was unabated until they were killed. Relief came to the sinful hearts of the wicked only when they did not have to listen to the word of God "which is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12).

#### Verse 11

"The exultation of the pagan world will be shortened." - (Swete, op cit., p. 139). The imagery of the resurrected witnesses probably came from Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 38:1-14). The ungodly rejoicers got the surprise of their evil lives when "a spirit of life (*zōēs* - this is not merely biological life - as this would require *bios*) from (*ek* - out of - God was the source of life - as He always is) God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on the ones beholding (or looking on) them." Note the radical contrast

from their making merry, and sending festival gifts to great fear. They thought that God and His faithful preachers were gone forever, but God's purpose will not be thwarted by the most depraved form of evil dwelling in the hearts of men. Paul told young Timothy that the time would come—"Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12, see also I Tim. 4:1ff).

*Verse 12*

After the resurrection of the witnesses (as Christ's resurrection - following His testimony on Calvary) they were called into the presence of God by way of an ascension (note Christ's crowning victory through His ascension to the right hand of the father). Christ was also taken into glory on a cloud (Acts 1:9). The witnesses now had a divine vantage point from which to see "their enemies."

*Verse 13*

Even nature bore witness to the translated witnesses, through an earthquake. The ultimate result of its destruction was that—"The rest became terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." Note the radical change from joy to terror. In fact they were so terrified that they recognized the God of heaven. This is the first time, throughout the entire ordeal of the seals and up to the sixth trumpet, that sinful mankind acknowledged the Lord and gave Him glory! This was probably not conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ but rather action brought on by their extreme degree of fear.

*Verse 14*

The preaching events brought the close of "the second woe" —"behold the third woe is coming quickly." (Reread 8:13 - for the mentioning of the three woes.) The second woe was disclosed after the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The events revealed in chapter 10:1 - 11:13 are the intervening occurrences before the sounding of the seventh trumpet in 11:15.

## SECTION 34

Text 11:15-19

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,

The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God 17 saying,

We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

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

Initial Questions 11:15-19

1. Who announced that the "kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord" - vs. 15?
2. At what other previous point does John mention the 24 elders?
3. How did the nations react to God's intervention - vs. 18?  
Why?
4. Was the Temple of God mentioned in vs. 19 located in Jerusalem?

The Seventh Trumpet-blast, or The Third Woe  
Chapter 11:15-19

Verse 15

In contrast to the silence in heaven which followed the opening of the seventh seal, great voices are speaking as the seventh trumpet is sounded. What were the voices saying? "The kingdom of the world became (*egeneto* - 2nd aor. ind. - became in a single act - now!) the kingdom (this noun not in

text but implied by grammatical structure) of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign unto the ages of the ages." Here we note the title Lord applied to God the Father. This term is applied without reservation to Jesus Christ. This is a direct assertion of His deity. (See appendix at end of column on *The Titles for Christ in The Revelation*.

#### *Verse 16*

We are once more in the throne room of heaven. The twenty-four Elders which were about the throne "worshipped God." The victory had won and God is being praised.

#### *Verse 17*

The twenty-four Elders are praising God—"because you have taken (*eilephos* - perfect tense - ind. - action involved in the taking of the power is complete - effect still exists) great power to yourself, and did reign (*ebasileusas* - 1st aor. ind. - the reign was immediate - now!).

#### *Verse 18*

How does the world respond to God's reign? "The nations were wrathful (*ōrgisthēsan* - 1st aor. passive - indicative) and your wrath came (*elthen* - 2nd aor. ind. came in a single act!) and the time of the dead to be judged (*krithēnoi* - 1st aor. inf. passive) and to give the reward to your slaves the prophets, and to the saints, and to the ones fearing your name, to the small and great, and to destroy the ones destroying the earth." This verse makes it very apparent that God is going to judge the dead too. Everyone will stand before the judgment throne and give an account of every word and deed. "Be not deceived; God is mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7, 1901 R.V.) Social status, level of education, I.Q., wealth, etc., will all be to no avail in that hour of judgment.

#### *Verse 19*

"The sanctuary (*naos* - does not mean Temple in the sense of the entire physical structure) of God was opened in heaven, and was seen in his sanctuary the ark of his covenant, and lightnings and voices, thunders, an earthquake and a great hail occurred." (See 8:5 - for same symbolism after the opening of the seventh seal.)

The Kingdom of God has come after the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15ff). The materials contained in the seven

trumpets section appear to cover the same ground as the seven seals - only evil and God's judgment are more intense.

Note: The imagery of the Jewish place of worship is often used in *The Revelation*. For a description of the Herodian Temple, which stood during the life and ministry of our Lord, and was destroyed by the Roman in 70 A.D. - see Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, V. 5. 1-7, Loeb Classics, Harvard University Press; and *The Mishnah*, translated by Herbert Danby, Oxford University Press, Fifth Civision: Kodashim (Things Holy) section on *Middoth*, pp. 589-598.

### Review Questions - Chapter 11

1. Read Zechariah 2:1ff and compare with vs. 1.
2. What were God's two faithful witnesses doing - vs. 3?
3. What does the first class conditional of vs. 5 mean?
4. Discuss how Moses and Elijah could be called prototypes of the two witnesses - vs. 6.
5. Does vs. 7 imply that it often appears as though evil will prevail over God's righteousness? Discuss the problem of evil and the ultimate victory of Christ - as revealed in *The Revelation*.
6. Were the two witnesses significantly successful (vs. 8-9-10?) in their preaching of God's Word?
7. How did the non-Christian world respond to the death of God's witnesses - vs. 11?
8. Does vs. 13 specifically state that many non-Christians were converted in view of the phrase - "gave glory to the God of heaven"?
9. What is the meaning of the phrase "the kingdom (note that this is singular, not plural as in King James Version) of world became the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ" - vs. 15?
10. How does the sinful world respond to God's reign - vs. 18?

### SECTION 35

#### Text 12:1-6

And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign of heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of

heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

#### Initial Questions 12:1-6

1. What was the great sign (*semeion* - one of the N.T. words for miracle) - vs. 1?
2. What does the symbolism of vs. 2 imply?
3. Does the sign of vs. 3 imply supernatural power for the great red dragon?
4. Who could possibly fulfill the imagery of vs. 5?
5. Discuss the fact that the two witnesses of chp. 11 prophesied 42 months (or 1260 days) and the fact that the woman was hid away for 1260 days - vs. 6?

#### The Woman with Child, and the Great Blood Red Dragon Beginning of Part Two - Chapters 12-22

##### Verse 1

The first eleven chapters make up the first half of the book of Revelation. Beginning with this chapter (12) we are entering the second half of the book (chp. 12-22). The trials and triumphs of the Church of Christ are the central theme of this section of The Revelation. Dr. McDowell states the basic issue briefly, simply, and succinctly in these words—

"God's sovereignty over the world in Jesus Christ has been proclaimed. By the series of visions under the breaking of the seals of the scroll, John has shown how that sovereignty stands as an established fact over against the problems of history which seem to deny it. But now it remains to portray the manner in which this rule of God has been projected into history and how its projection precipitates the inevitable conflict with the Caesars. The story of Revelation from this point on is the story of the conflict between the sovereignty of God in Jesus Christ and the pretended sovereignty of Satan expressed through the rulers of Rome." (Edward A. McDowell, *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1951, p. 129).

It is generally true that in the first eleven chapters the vantage point was the earth. The events of chapter 12 (and following) are seen from the viewpoint of heaven.

In verse one, the first woman to appear in *The Revelation* is a vital part of the vision. In the Old Testament the Theocratic Kingdom is pictured as a woman in travail (see Isaiah 26:17, 66:7; Micah 4:10 - read R. H. Charles on this verse). The metaphor of childbirth is common in the New Testament - John 16:21; Galatians 4:19.

The "great sign" (first in a series of signs) was "a woman having been clothed (*with* - not in text) the sun with "a crown of twelve stars." The imagery as a whole is clear enough, but the details are impossible to identify with certainty. This much is certain that Christ is the "masculine child" who will conquer Satan - (see Genesis 3:15). (See note on *Virgin Birth* immediately following chapter 12.)

#### Verse 2

This verse contains a paraphrase of Micah 4:10, where the daughter of Zion, the earthly Jerusalem that foreshadows the heavenly Jerusalem, is in travail before the Lord.

#### Verse 3

The second in this series of signs is observed "in heaven." The second sign was "a great red dragon" who was the adversary of God. The dragon is identified as Satan in vs. 9 (see Daniel 7:7; 8:10).

#### Verse 4

Satan tries to destroy the child (the Christ). Satan's attempts to destroy our Lord from Herod's slaying of the infants, the Temptation, to the Cross, etc. are most certainly involved in this symbolism. John declares that Satan "stood before the woman being about to bear, in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) he might devour her child whenever she bears (or delivers)."

#### Verse 5

"She bore a masculine son (following Alexander Campbell's Translation) - (*hion arsen* literally says a *male son*, but this is redundant. Campbell reasons that the emphasis was on the masculinity or strength of the son.) The great Shepherd of the

sheep was seized (*hērpasthē* - 1st aor. passive - was seized by someone (God) in a single act) to God and to His throne." This imagery depicts the Ascension of Christ.

#### Verse 6

"The woman fled" to "a place having been prepared from (*apo* - God was the source of the preparation) God, in order that there they might nourish her 1260 days." This is the same amount of time God gave His two witnesses to prophecy (see 11:3).

### SECTION 36

#### Text 12:7-12

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven saying,

Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony. and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

#### Initial Questions 12:7-12

1. Read Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1, and Jude 9, then read vs. 7.
2. What was the outcome of the War - vs. 8?
3. Discuss and compare your image of Satan with the biblical information about his person - vs. 9.
4. Read Job 1:6-12 and vs. 10 - discuss and compare.
5. What enabled the saints to overcome Satan - vs. 11?
6. Will the powers of darkness continue to tempt man - vs. 12?

*Verse 7*

The grammar of this verse is difficult. There was a war "in heaven" (see Zechariah 3:1ff) between Michael and his angels, and The Dragon and his angels. The Dragon is Satan; but who is Michael? The Jehovah's Witnesses distort completely the person of Michael - when they identify him as Jesus Christ (claiming as they do that Christ is a created being). We first meet Michael the Archangel in Daniel 10:13 (see Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Eerdman, 1949, pp. 226-227), and then in Jude 9.

Negative critics attempt to ground John's symbolism, etc. in the Apocrypha, i.e., *The Book of Enoch*, *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *the Apocalypse of Moses*. This is absolutely unnecessary as the issues are already clearly mentioned in the Old Testament aspect of God's Word. (For good discussion of Michael - see *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, and *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* for article *Michael*.) In Daniel's great prophecy it is Michael the archangel who sustains the cause of Israel and spiritual Israel (or The Church) in *The Revelation*. This is especially his work at the time of the great tribulation and just before the resurrection of the dead. (See Daniel 12:1; I Thess. 4:16 - Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, 1952 reprint - for learned but simple statement of this phrase of Paul's doctrine of the "Last Things." The critical value of Vos' work is vitiated, because he does not give usable bibliographical information. This practice is acceptable for popular works, but certainly not for seriously advanced studies.)

*Verse 8*

Satan and his angels "warred" "but prevailed not, neither (*oude* - not even was their place found any more (*eti* - still) in heaven." The power of darkness will not be victorious over the power of light. This is the Christian's hope! (See Luke 10:18; John 12:31 - for Christ's assertion of His final victory over Satan.)

*Verse 9*

"The great dragon was cast (*eblēthē* - 1st aor. pass. - someone (God) - threw Satan out in a single act. It was not a struggle which required a process of determining who was sovereign - God or Satan). John describes Satan with further

proper names. In Semitic thought - names always stand for a characteristic of the person. "The being called one (*kaloumenos* - present-passive participle - continually being called by others) Devil, and Satan, the deceiving one (*ho planōn* - present-active - participle - the one continually deceiving - it is not merely an erratic deception, but a perpetual, never ceasing program) the whole earth (*holēn oikoumenēn* - whole populated earth (world in sense of people) this is one of ten or so times this word appears in the New Testament. We derive the word ecumenical from it, though it is not used in its biblical sense (necessarily) in contemporary ecumenical theology) was cast (same form as above) to the earth" in a single act.

#### *Verse 10*

Because Satan has been once for all cast down, John now reveals anew the message of our hope. "The salvation, and the power, and the kingdom (reign) of our God (each of these nouns have a definite article), and the power (or authority - same Greek term) of his Christ (*anointed one* - Christ is Greek equivalent (?) of Hebrew term translated Messiah), because (*hoti*) the accuser of our brethren (this name for Satan is not used elsewhere in the New Testament) was cast down (1st aor. cast in a single act - once for all - same form as discussed in vs. 9) the one accusing them before our God night and day."

#### *Verse 11*

"And they (our brethren or Christians - only-this vs. is eloquent testimony against contemporary universalism) overcame (*enikesesan* - 1st aor. - act. ind. they overcame in a single act - once nad for all - as a matter of fact) him (the accuser of the brethren), because of (the cause of the victory of the Saints) the blood of the Lamb." Here the vicarious atonement of Christ is once more asserted! (See appendix on *The Blood*.) "And because of the Word of their witness (implying the necessity of being loyal to Christ in order to obtain victory)." We see here the place of Christ in our redemption coupled with our faithfulness to the end. Both are essential for our salvation! "And they loved not (*ouk* stands after *kai* and before *egapesan* for emphasis on the not - 'absolutely not') their life until death." Jesus declared that whoever loves his life more than Him will surely lose life. Here we see an example of those who loved The Lord and His Word more than anything, even security, that this world could offer. Many Christians in non-western (some European countries too) have learned this same lesson.

*Verse 12*

The transitional preposition "Therefore" means on account of the victory through Christ "be glad (*euphrainesthe* - present imperative - middle voice - heaven is commanded to express joy continually)."

John then continues with a warning to the earth and sea—"because the devil came down to you having (constantly having) great anger, (*thumon* - rage, boiling animosity) knowing that he has a short time." Satan's time is limited by God; and Satan therefore takes full advantage of his permitted period to bring death, destruction, and temptation to the saints.

## SECTION 37

## Text 12:13-17(18)

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished, for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

## Initial Questions 12:13-18

1. What change has taken place between vs. 1 and vs. 13 with regards to the location of Satan's influence?
2. How does nature help "the woman in vs. 13? Does this show God's ultimate control over all things?
3. The dragon prepared to make war with whom in verse 17?

*Verse 13*

The dragon momentarily rallied from his defeat, and immediately began pursuing "the woman who bore the masculine child." Though it is too difficult to consider here in our brief commentary, the woman probably symbolizes both the mother of

our Virgin born Lord and Spiritual Israel - The Church. If we were producing a technical commentary this is the interpretation the present author would attempt to defend, or at least make feasible. Note that the action is again "on the earth."

*Verse 14*

Satan relentlessly attacks the "masculine child" in order to destroy him, but God's providential protection sustains in the hours of greatest threat. The identification of the time element here (as "a time and times and half a time") with the 1260 days of vs. 6 is most helpful. In both verses, the scope of time covered the period of the woman's nourishment.

*Verse 15*

Satan seeks to destroy the woman by way of a great amount of water (*hōs* or *as* - like a river - John is not declaring that it was a river). It is clear from this verse that Satan has great powers.

*Verse 16*

Nature is here utilized by God to protect the woman. Satan and his angels have great unnatural powers, because "the dragon cast out of his mouth" a river (see vs. 15 - *hōs* like or as a river). This clearly implies that the working of mighty deeds do not always find their source of power in God - often the source is Satan. Today we have many who preach things which are contrary to the scriptures and at the same time claim that God is blessing their ministry by enabling them to perform mighty deeds. The claim is easy enough to make, but it is impossible to prove that the deeds are of God!

*Verse 17*

Satan could not destroy The woman, as the woman stands for both the mother of Christ and Spiritual Israel or The Church. Christ said that "the gates of hades will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), so he (Satan) redirected his forces to attack the Church. John calls *The Church* "the ones keeping (present participle - continually keeping) the commandments of God, and the ones having (present participle - continually having) the witness of Jesus." This description could only fit The Church of Jesus Christ giving faithful testimony. The two marks of a New Testament Christian are always (1) keeping the commandments; and (2) bearing testimony to Christ as Lord.

## Verse 18

The 1901 translation places this last verse with chapter 13 and makes it verse one of that chapter instead of verse 18 of chapter 12. Why? We cannot here enter textual criticism, nor the problem of verse and chapter divisions (neither of which were in the original or oldest extant Greek texts), but the text reads "and he stood (*estathē* - 1st aor. passive voice - 3rd person sing. - instead of *estathēn* - 1st aor. passive 1st person singular) on the sand of the sea." The antecedent of *he* connects grammatically with vs. 17, but if the text reads *I*, then it would connect best chapter 13:1. There are texts which have both readings (not the same text), but the best attested reading is "he stood."

Note: For advanced students the following works will be imperative. H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit (Creation and Chaos in Beginning Time and End Time)* - this work is a comparative critique of *Genesis* chp 1 and *Revelation* chp. 12. This work takes a negative attitude toward God's Word via its form-analysis; and Pierre Prigent, *Histoire de l'exégèse*, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1959 - (this is a history of the exegesis of *Revelation*, chp. 12 - excellent.)

## Review Questions - Chapter 12

1. Read *Genesis* 3:15 and then discuss the significance of the victory of the masculine child over Satan.
2. Discuss Satan's attempts to destroy Christ as recorded in the Gospel record.
3. Who prepared the hiding place of the woman - vs 6?
4. Who do the Jehovah's Witnesses say that Michael is - vs 7?
5. How can we harmonize Christ's victory over evil and the empirical fact that evil persists to this day - vs. 8?
6. What enabled the saints to attain final victory - vs. 11?
7. Is the vicarious atonement of Christ alone enough for our salvation - vs. 11?
8. How does Satan's knowledge of his limited time affect his efforts to destroy the work of God - vs. 12?
9. Does Satan have supernatural power - vs. 15?
10. Discuss Satan's power in light of the contemporary claims to be able to perform miracles.
11. What are two marks of a Christian - vs. 17?
12. Discuss why the present author places vs. 18 with chp. 12 instead of placing it as vs. 1 - chp. 13. The 1901 gives the reading "he stood," yet still places the verse in chp. 13. What is the antecedent of *he* in this case?

AN OUTLINE TO THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE  
OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

INTRODUCTION: The early twentieth century modernist-fundamentalist controversy; controversy renewed since publication of R.S.V. (1954) and the change of virgin (of K.J. Version, 1901) in Isa. 7:14 to young woman. See also the new Jewish translation.

- I. VOCABULARY: ETYMOLOGICAL (OR ROOT) SIGNIFICANCE AND BIBLICAL USE:
  - A. *Oth* - sign—(not the regular word for miracle).
    1. Num. 14:22; Deut. 11:3; Isa. 7:14.
  - B. *Mopheth* - wonder, sign, miracle—(regular word for miracle).
  - C. "*almah*"
    1. Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:13; 6:8; Isa. 7:14.
  - D. *bethulah* - (metaphorically used of Israel as married to God)
    1. Joel 1:8; Jer. 18:13; 31:4, 21.
- c.f. Very important: Rebekah is called *bethulah* in Gen. 24:16 and *almah* in vs. 43.
- II. OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES  
Isaiah 7:14f: Study of Background:
  1. Situation under which Isaiah made the assertion.
  2. The significance of the statement for 18th century B.C. Israel and for the Christian today.
- III. SEPTUAGINT VERSION (Gr. version of the Hebrew Old Testament)  
Parthenos (virgin): translates *bethulah*, *na'rah*, *almah*. L.X.X. use of parthenos to refer to young girl no longer virgin - Gen. 34:13.
- IV. NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES  
A. Matt. 1:23 - *parthenos*.  
B. The virgin birth and the Biblical Doctrine of Christ (nature of).
- V. THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND MARYOLATRY  
A. Matt. 1:25 - "Knew her not till".  
B. Luke 1:26-38—highly favored (passive participle - the having been favored one).

- C. Latin translation - *Ave gratia plena* (Hail, full of grace) (implies that Mary can and does dispense grace to sinners).
- D. K.J. Luke 1:28--Blessed art thou among women; Textually this phrase does not belong in Scriptures.
- E. Jesus' brothers (*adelphoi*) Matt. 13:55-56; Luke 11:27-28.
- F. Jesus refused special reverence to be accorded her (Matt. 12:46-50).
- G. Marian Congress at Ottawa in 1947 provided Mary with the status of co-redemptrix (queen of heaven - as co-redeemer).
  - 1. Pope Pius XII issued the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus* - Dogma of Immaculate Conception.
  - 2. *Munificentissimus Deus* - dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary.
- H. Mary's supposed Immaculate Conception and the Non-biblical doctrine of original sin.

#### VI. THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE (APOSTOLIC FATHERS)

- A. 2nd Century attack and answers (attack on V.B. is not new).
- B. Justin Martyr - DIALOGUE OF TRYPHO

#### VII. SCIENCE AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- A. Modern scientific logic and the virgin birth.
- B. Miracle and the Biblical world view.

Note: Revelation, chapter 12, 1ff. Reference to Virgin Birth - "the masculine child" - problem of Virgin Birth in light of Revised Standard Version and new edition of Jewish Bible.

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## SECTION 38

Text 13:1-10

1 and he stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy, 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 throne, and great authority, 3 And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. 8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. 9 If any man hath an ear, let him hear. 10 If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Initial Questions 13:1-10

1. Both the *earth* and *sea* are accursed according to 12:12.  
Where does the beast come from in vs. 1?
2. What does the term blasphemy mean - vs. 1?
3. What did the dragon give the beast - vs. 2?
4. Are miracles performed only by God - vs. 3?
5. How did the "whole earth" respond to the beast - vs. 3?
6. Why did the earth worship the beast - vs. 4?
7. How long was the beast allowed to continue his evil deeds - vs. 5?
8. Was the beast victorious over the saints - vs. 7?

9. How extensive was the beast worship - vs. 8?
10. What were the saints to exhibit in contrast to those enslaved by the beast - vs. 10?

The Wild Beast from the Sea  
Chapter 13:1-10

Chapter thirteen reveals two *enemy beasts*, one from the sea (vs. 1-10) and one from the land (vs. 11-18). Satan impowered the beast of the sea to work havoc on the earth. The description of both the beast of the sea and the beast of the land is a summary of the information found in Daniel 7:1-8.

*Verse 1*

John's next vision contained the "coming up" of the beast of the sea. This beast is described as having "ten horns." This imagery comes directly from Daniel 7:7. On the ten horns were ten diadems or symbols of the political power. The Greek word here is again (*diadēmata*) which signifies a kingly crown. On his *auton* - (can be neut. or masc. Since Satan is masc. we translate it as masc.) head were names (plural - *onomata*) of blasphemy (*blasphemias* - from two Greek words meaning to speak to hurt). The names of blasphemy are discussed by Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 161. He uses the original research of J. T. Wood who found Imperial letters among some epigraphic materials from Ephesus. Some of the blasphemous self-imposed names used by the Caesars during the first and second centuries A.D. were "Caesar God," "Great Sovereign Caesar," etc. Caesar demanded worship of his subjects as though he were a god. The New Testament Christians would neither apply the divine titles to Caesar nor worship him. This set the stage for radical and more intense persecution.

*Verse 2*

John uses the simile of a leopard to describe the beast. The leopards feet "were as the feet of a bear" (for bear see Daniel 7:5). Clearly this imagery implies strength for a chief characteristic of a bears paw is its deadly strength and accuracy, at close range when encountering a foe or is threatened with danger. The mouth of the beast was "as the mouth of a lion" (for Lion see Daniel 7:4. Here again we can feel the power of John's imagery. The most powerful weapon the lion has

is the vise-like grip and potential strength of his jaws. The mechanical advantage of the physical structure of the lion's jaw is enormous (depending of course, on the size of the lion). John's readers would have understood his imagery immediately. But the beast was only a subordinate of the dragon, the source of the beast's "Power," throne (or symbol of reigning), and great authority (this Greek word means both power and authority and is to be distinguished from the word translated power - *dunamin* - which primarily signifies physical strength).

#### Verse 3

What was the nature and power of this beast? John saw that one of the heads of the beast "has been slain unto death." In the same vision John saw that the "death stroke was healed" (*etherapeuthē* - was healed with a single, instantaneous act - 1st aor. ind. active tense). Here the powerful antagonists of "the Lamb" was also raised to life again. The Lamb standing as though it had been slain from the foundation of the world is now placed in sharp focus with a dead but now revived embodiment of evil - the beast. Here we note that this evil person not only has superhuman powers, but that it is adequate to raise from the dead. What is the response of unpenitent mankind to this marvel of malignant power? John declares that "the whole earth" wondered (*ethaumasthē* - 1st aor. ind. active - the whole earth followed the beast immediately - as soon as they saw the miracle) after the beast." When the "slain Lamb" lived again forevermore the entire earth did not immediately follow Him. In marked contrast we see here that men follow darkness rather than light, evil rather than righteousness, the condemner rather than the savior.

#### Verse 4

Instead of worshipping almighty God, the people "worshipped the dragon because (*hoti* is causal - the cause of their worship) he gave authority to the beast." The next level of idolatry comes when the whole earth worshipped the beast. They were acknowledging that there was more than one god. They worshipped Satan (the dragon) as the supreme deity of the evil trinity, and also the lesser power, the beast. The rebellious earth felt so secure in the clutches of the vile one that they kept on saying (*legontes* - pres. participle) "who is like unto the beast? And who is able to war with him?" This imagery places the shout of angelic

hosts over the victory of the Lamb in tension with the perpetual shouting of the whole earth that none is able to make war against the beast (see this ascription to God in Isaiah 40:18, 25; 46:5; Ps. 108:5; Micah 7:18 and Jeremiah 49:19).

*Verse 5*

The beast was not powerful by nature. The source of his authority, crown, and power was given (*edothē* - 1st aor. pass.) by the high strategy of hell. What was given to the beast? The capacity to speak "great things and blasphemies." The beast was given (same passive form as above) authority to act (work) 42 months. We have noted this same time element throughout *The Revelation* - either 42 months, 1260 days, or 3 1/2 years.

*Verse 6*

The enormity of the beast's blasphemies are brought out in this verse as John declares that the beast blasphemed God, His name (which stands for the character of the person. This is without question a Hebrewism), and His dwelling place (*skēnēn* - lit. tent or tabernacle, or dwelling place). The beast also blasphemed "*(tous* - the ones or them) tabernacling (or dwelling) in heaven." The plural form *tous* could mean God and His angel (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, angelic host), and all of the redeemed saints which have appeared in earlier scenes of John's drama of redemption.

*Verse 7*

The beast was given (same passive form as found in vs. 5) power "to make war with the saints, and to overcome (*nikēsai* - 1st aor. infinitive, overcome in a single act) them." The beast was the sovereign ruler; therefore, escape was impossible (Daniel 7:21-23). From a purely human perspective the cause of Christ was defeated by satandom. The saints were actually and completely "overcome." The extent of his conquest is pointed out - "every tribe, and people, and nation." It looked like God was defeated at the cross too! But God in His infinite love took the evil of men, and transformed into redemptive mercy. Ours is also a day when it appears that darkness prevails and not light. But darkness is no match for light, nor falsehood for truth, nor injustice and unrighteousness for the justice and righteousness of God in Christ. We shall prevail, because He

has prevailed for us. We shall be victorious for the victory has been attained already through the finished work of God.

*Verse 8*

How extensive is this idolatry to be? John declares that everyone will worship the beast "whose name has not been written in the scroll of life of the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world." The death of Christ was without question involved in God's plan of redemption. (See Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:14ff and Ephesians chps. 1-3.)

*Verse 9*

John now gives a grave warning to all hearers. Every hearer had better heed that warning given in verse 8. Apostacy shall be so great that the majority of the religious people of the entire world shall follow the evil one while thinking themselves acceptable to God.

*Verse 10*

John is led by the Spirit to write this verse in a conditional form. "If anyone is for captivity, into captivity he goes; if anyone will kill by a sword, he must (*dei* - expresses absolute necessity) be killed by the sword." The foundation for the certainty of the saints is eloquently declared in this verse. John says, (*hode*) - "Here is the patience (or endurance) and the faith of the saints." What does *hode* refer to? The "here" refers to the ultimate, actual judgment of God upon all who persecute His people. If anyone is for captivity, God will give him captivity. If anyone is for murderous killing, then God will give him a taste of his own medicine.

## SECTION 39

### Text 13:11-18

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.  
12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. 13 And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come

down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; 17 and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six.

#### Initial Questions 13:11-18

1. Where does the beast of vs. 11 come from? Compare with vs. 1.
2. What power does this second beast show in vs. 13?
3. What caused the deception of "them that dwell on the earth" according to vs. 14?
4. What did the beast request according to vs. 14?
5. Does vs. 15 show that the beast has great supernatural power? Note just what the verse says before you attempt to interpret the words.
6. What was to happen to those who refused to "worship the image of the beast" - vs. 15?
7. What was the purpose of the "mark" given in vs. 16?
8. How was the world effected economically by the mark of the beast - vs. 17?
9. The beast is identified as a what in vs. 18?

The Wild Beast from The Earth  
Chapter 13:11-18

Verse 11

John's vision now encompasses "another beast." The source of this beast is not the sea, but the earth. This beast receives the paradoxical description of a lamb with the voice as of a dragon (the Greek word is *hōs* - like or as). This beast looks like a lamb and talks like a dragon!

Verse 12

This second beast gets his authority and power from the beast of vss. 1-10. The first beast received his authority, power, and throne from the dragon. Now, this second beast uses power mediated through the first beast. Here we have the trinity of evil! This beast is a henchman of the first sinister figure of darkness.

Verse 13

The extent of the power of the second beast is made crystal clear by John. "And he does (*poiei* - neut. or masc.) great signs (*sēmeia* - is one of three general New Testament words for miracles) in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) he even makes fire to come down out of heaven onto the earth before (*enōpion* - in front of) men." That the evil beast has superhuman powers is emphatically declared here. Still today men claim the power to perform miracles. Their message is not in harmony with the word of God, so we can be certain that God is not the source of their power.

Verse 14

What is the result of these great signs? "And he deceives (*plana* - pres. ind. act. can also be pres. subj. act., but context calls for active voice) the ones dwelling on the earth because (*dia* - causal force - the cause of the deception was the signs of miracles) of the signs which it was given (pass. voice) to him to do before the beast; telling to the ones dwelling on the earth to make an image (*eikona* - means a likeness) to the beast."

Verse 15

The might of this beast was so great that he breathed life into the image mentioned in vs. 14. The phrase "the image of

the beast" is used ten times in *The Revelation*; 4 times in chap. 13, and 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4. The power was given (passive voice) to the beast "in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) as many as might not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Since no Christian could committ such an idolatrous act, it signed the potential death warrant of every one claiming Christ as Lord and Savior.

#### Verse 16

The beast "keeps on making" (*poiei* - pres. act. ind.) the whole world receive a mask of identification. John's words are very clear when he says - "they should give to them a mark (*charagma* - is the official seal) on their right hand or on their forehead,"....

Note: Paul used the word *stigmata* in Galatians 6:17 when speaking of the branding of Christ. (See H. N. Ridderbos, *Epistle to the Galatians* in the *New International Commentary of the New Testament*, Wm. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953, see especially page 228.)

For the fundamental philological study of *stigmata*, see Deissmann, sec. ed., *Biblical Studies*, T. & T. Clark, 1901, pp. 349-360.

#### Verse 17

What was the significance of the mark of the beast? Socially and economically it was absolutely essential for a persons' well being and livelihood. John declares that "no one could (*dunetai* - the word for capacity or ability - no one was able to) buy or sell except the one having the mark or (there is no *ē* or *here* but is inserted for sense) the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Unless one was socially acceptable one could neither buy food, household needs, etc., nor sell his products of the field or labor. The union of the emperor cult had every source of income and outgo under its full control! A faithful Christian could not possibly exist under those conditions for very long.

#### Verse 18

John directs attention to the challenge which follows immediately upon the heels of "Here" is wisdom." The one having reason (*noun* - also means understanding or comprehension) let him count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Much has been written on this cryptogram, but all that can be stated for

certain is just what the text declares - that it is a man. There is a textual problem here regarding the specific number which we cannot here consider. (See appendix immediately following chapter 13 for brief discussion of the Anti-Christ.)

Note: For those interested in the various efforts to identify this number with some specific person see, Swete, *op cit.*, pp. 175; Charles, *op cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 364; Joseph Bonsirven, S. J., *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, Beauchesne et ses fils a paris, 1951, pp. 232.)

Discussion Questions  
Chp. 13:1-10

1. Study Daniel chp. 7:1-8 and return to vs. 1 and discuss.
2. What does the term blasphemy mean - vs. 1? What were some of the names of blasphemy mentioned in vs. 1?
3. What possible purpose could John have had to use the imagery of the bear and lion in vs. 2?
4. Does vs. 3 imply that the realm of evil can also perform miracles as can God?
5. How extensive was the apostacy according to vs. 3?
6. Did the peoples of the earth feel secure while worshipping the beast - vs. 4? Were they sincere?
7. Does it make any difference to God what we think or do or who or how we worship as long as we are sincere and honest with ourselves and others?
8. Who was the source of the beast's authority, crown, and power - vs. 5?
9. Was God's purpose destroyed when the saints were overcome - vs. 7?
10. Was the death of Christ in the plan of God for redemption - vs. 8?
11. Upon what does the patience and faith of the saints depend - vs. 10?

Discussion Questions  
Chp. 13:11-18

12. What is the source of the power of the second beast - vs. 12?
13. Discuss contemporary claims to perform miracles - both Roman Catholic and Denominational in view of vs. 13?
14. What is the basic results of the signs of the second beast - vs. 14?

15. What was to be done to all who refused to worship the image - vs. 15?
16. Discuss the social and economic implications of the "mark of the beast" - vs. 17.
17. Though the person of vs. 18 cannot be infallibly identified, what do we know with certainty about this person - just from a study of this passage - without adding any speculation regarding the cryptogram?

*Special Study: The Anti-Christ*

Most men today deny that evil is sustained and carried on by personal forces which are seeking to dominate the spiritual world. But the Bible emphatically declares that the powers of darkness are personal in nature. We cannot here enter the debate with those who reject this particular biblical doctrine as primitive superstition. Those of us who believe that the scriptures are the Word of God cannot possibly deny a doctrine which our Lord and Savior taught with such penetrating clarity without repudiating His deity and therefore, His saving work on the cross.

We are not going to enter debate here as to whether Paul's "man of Sin," (II Thess. 2:3) or John's "dragon," and "anti-Christ" are to be equated. John uses the term anti-Christ in I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and II John 7. He uses the imagery of the dragon and the two beasts in *The Revelation*. These fulfill the same spiritual function as the anti-Christ in the Epistles of John. Dr. G. Milligan's brief study (mentioned below in the note) is a distinct outline of the doctrine of anti-Christ. He traces the doctrine through the O.T. in general and specifically the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, *et al.*, through the extra biblical Jewish literature, our Lord's teaching on the subject in the great eschatological discourses (Mk. 13:1ff; Matt. 24:1ff) and finally Paul and John's doctrine of the anti-Christian forces at work in the universe.

John's description without question covered the Roman Emperor cult, but his description is applicable wherever and whenever evil forces gain the upper hand in the world. Study and compare the following passages from John and Paul (Revelation 12:9, 13:1f, II Thess. 2:9f; Rev. 13:3ff, 14:11). Discuss these passages (also II Thess. 2:4, 9-12.) in view of the great evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian

evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian forces seem to dominate our world. How do we make Christ's victory over evil, and our Christian hope relevant to our age of advanced technology?

For those who care to scrutinize the many very difficult problems of evil from a Christian perspective see, Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil*, P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1963 (Catholic); the only comprehensive historical study of the problem (though not from a Christian view point) is Friedrich Billicsich, *Das Problem des Übels in der Philosophie des abendländes* - (The Problem of Evil in Western Philosophy). The first 2 volumes cover up through Hegel; the third volume (not yet available) will bring the discussion up to the contemporary situation. For a discussion by men who believe the Bible to be the Word of God see Dr. M. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Van Kampen Press, Ind., Wheaton, Illinois, 1952; Dr. G. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1952 - especially chp. 5. The Man of Sin, pp. 94; L. Boettner, *The Millennium*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1958, chp. 5, *The Anti-Christ* pp. 206; Dr. G. Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to The Thessalonians*, Eerdmans reprinted 1952; Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, T. & T. Clark has some excellent remarks on this general subject in this theological commentary of the first Epistle of John; though Millar Burrows is by no means a person who holds a high view of The Bible, but he does have a good discussion of The Anti-Christ in his *Outline of Biblical Theology*, Westminster Press, Phil. 1956, pp. 195.

These works will also provide other sources and problems involved in our general theme, so this brief list is given hoping that some profound, dedicated Christian will be able to give further analysis to the problem of evil, and specifically the personal nature of the evil ones mentioned in the Word of life.

## SECTION 40

### Text 14:1-5

1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

#### Initial Questions 14:1-5

1. Where was the Lamb standing according to vs. 1? Where is Mt. Zion?
2. Where have we read of the one hundred forty four thousand before in The Revelation?
3. What was the "new song" of vs. 3, and who alone could learn the song?
4. Discuss the real value of a vital, spiritual song service during worship hour in light of the fact that it is through song that redeemed shout the praises of God.
5. Does vs. 4 teach that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than the marriage state (as according to Roman Catholic teaching) ?
6. What spiritual or moral significance can the designation "virgin" have in vs. 4?
7. Does vs. 4 - "These were purchased from (*apo* away from, or out of) among men" stand in opposition to resurgent universalism (i.e., that everyone is going to be saved)? Does this phrase show that some men are not redeemed and why they are not?
8. What is the moral character of "those purchased" according to vs. 5?

#### The Vision of The 144,000 on Mount Zion Chapter 14:1-5 (Cf. 7:1-8)

##### Verse 1

John has now discussed the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the land or the false prophet. This "diabolical trinity" (John mentions it again in 16:3) is placed in the most radical tension with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The final sign in this series of scenes from the divine drama of redemption is the re-entry of the 144,000 (note that this would have been a large number to the 1st century church) discussed in chapter 7:4f. They are with the Lamb, with His seal (His name) on their foreheads. They are standing victoriously on Mt. Zion, the city of the great king. The king and His redeemed stand in an absolute contradiction to the beast and his fellow perveyors of darkness.

*Verse 2*

John now gives us a poetic description of the voice which he heard. The voice John heard was to give a preview of hope! How could the first century Christians continue to hope for ultimate and final victory - when the dragon and his cohorts had "overcome the saints"? The voice was sweet and harmonious like "harpers harping."

*Verse 3*

This majestic cast of the purchased ones were neither in despair nor despondent over the apparent victory of satandom. Quite the contrary, "they sing a new song." Only when one's heart is filled with the joys of salvation can one know the thrill of true spiritual singing. They were singing this song of praise in the very throne room of the universe. What is essential to one's life, before one can sing like this? John states that "no man could (*edunatō* - no man is able or can learn it) learn the song except the 144,000, the ones having been purchased from (*apo* - away from) the earth." Who are those "having been purchased ones" (*egorasmенои* - passive - past - participle)? John identifies them as "those who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins or celibates." There is certainly no condemnation of marriage in this verse (read Matt. 19:12, I Cor. 7:1-8, Heb. 13:4). The image of the virgin (*parthenoi*) is a symbol of purity. The Bible uses adultery (see book of Hosea) as a symbol of a lack of purity. Chastity is a mark of every true follower of Christ!

This great throng was the "first fruit to God and to the Lamb." The firstfruit (*aparchē*) is a consecrated offering in both O.T. usage, and here. This is precisely what Paul asserts in The Epistle to The Romans, chp. 12:1. *The Hebrew Epistle* makes a like claim in chp. 13:4-5. Their spiritual purity was made manifest by the fact that "in their mouth was not found a lie (*pseudos* - anything false); they are unblemished." (See John 8:44 - "the father of lies.") Lying became one of the chief temptations of Christians during periods of persecution. See Josephus, the Fathers, especially Cyprian and the problem of the lapsed).

Many strive in vain to identify this throne (especially The Jehovah's Witnesses). In chp. 7:1-8 it is made plain that if taken literally, these are all physical Jews from tribes of Israel. Nothing is stated there that this group is solely composed of

men. But in chp. 14 the group is specifically identified as males who are undefiled with women. There is nothing but difficulties in the path of anyone who claims that he can identify with certainty this group - other than the fact that they are the redeemed. Roman Catholic theologians cannot make out their case for celibacy from this passage either, contrary to their claims. Study the biblical teaching about marriage and divorce, and note the biblical use of the symbol of adultery for impurity.

#### SECTION 41

##### Text 14:6-7

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

##### Initial Questions 14:6-7

1. What was the message of the flying angel - vs. 6?
2. What significance does this vs. have for the missionary enterprise?
3. What does the word fear mean in vs. 7?
4. What characteristics of God are discussed in vs. 7?

#### Three Angelic Proclamations, and a Voice from Heaven Chapter 14:6-13

##### Verse 6

The preview of hope is now made available to mankind. John saw "another angel flying in mid-heaven (see 8:13) having an eternal Gospel to preach over (*epi* - over, the extent of) the ones sitting on the earth." Every one could now have an opportunity to hear the glorious gospel of Christ. There will be no national, color, social, or intellectual lines drawn as this angel proclaims the good tidings of forgiveness through Christ.

## Verse 7

Now the call is issued on behalf of the sovereign ruler of the universe for man to "fear (*phobethete* - 1st. aor. middle voice - imp. plural - the middle voice means that they are to make themselves fear God) God and give him glory; because the hour of his judgment came" (*elthen* - 2nd aor. ind. God's judgment "came" in a sudden, single act!) The great voice requires three things of all who would escape God's judgment - (1) Fear God; (2) Give him glory; (3) Worship the creator of the universe.

## SECTION 42

## Text 14:8

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

## Initial Questions 14:8

1. What was the message of this second angel - vs. 8?
2. Compare his message with that of the flying angel in vs. 6.

## Verse 8

Immediately following the first angel, a second angel "followed saying fallen - (*epesen* - 2nd aor. ind. literally fell because of the immediate and singular act of collapse.) fallen is Babylon the great." The great rebellious, powerful, anti-Roman Christian empire is finished as sovereign over the minds and bodies of men. Right in the midst of her apparent victory over Christ's Church, John is led to announce that from the vantage point of the throne room of heaven - Babylon's fall was final, sudden and complete in God's plan of the victory of righteousness over unrighteousness. Mighty Rome might dominate the earth for a little while, but God's judgment will come; and she will not be able to stand against the wrath of the Lamb. Oh! What a message of hope to those 1st century Christians who were notwithstanding daily persecution for the glory of their Lord. We must never forget that there are people in our own day who pay dearly for their public acknowledgement of Jesus Christ.

## SECTION 43

## Text 14:9-12

9 And another angel, a third followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

## Initial Questions 14:9-12

1. What was the message of the third angel - vs. 9?
2. Does vs. 10 show that there are some who will not be redeemed, and that the Bible does teach that there is a hell?
3. Does the punishment mentioned in vs. 10 imply merely a purgatorial cleansing or probation?
4. How long are those individuals outside of Christ punished according to vs. 11?
5. Does vs. 11 assert that those being punished are conscious of their punishment?
6. What does John mean in vs. 12 - "Here is the patience of the saints."

## Verse 9

The third messenger of the Lord comes on the stage of the universe to warn the one who "worships the beast and the image of it." The angel of God warns the idolators - just as the second beast threatened all who would not worship the image of the beast as related in chp. 13:15.

Those who had the identifying marks as followers of the dragon and his henchmen would receive the condemnation of the creator of heaven and earth.

## Verse 10

The person who worships the beast "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God having been mixed undiluted (*akratou* - no water will be mixed with the wine of God's wrath. It will be full

strength!); and will be tormented by fire and sulphur before holy angels, and before the Lamb." John is declaring that as a matter of fact, the wrath of God will actually bring torment upon all who do not know Jesus Christ as savior.

#### Verse 11

The tormented idolators are described in this verse. Their torment is "unto ages of ages"; and they have not rest day and night". . . . John claims that their punishment is permanent; and that the tormented ones are conscious of their suffering. (See *Special Study* after this chp. on - *Yes, There Is a Hell!*)

#### Verse 12

John is asserting the same basic challenge here as in 13:10 (see that verse).

### SECTION 44

#### Text 14:13

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

#### Initial Questions 14:13

1. Why are the dead in Christ called blessed in vs. 13?
2. Does this vs. show a personality trait of the Holy Spirit? If so, what?
3. Are Christian works important (or necessary) for our salvation? (Study Romans, Galatians and James on Faith and works.)

#### Verse 13

John's serious contemplation is broken by the command write (*grapson* - 1st. aor. imp. active). He was commanded by the heavenly voice to write - "Blessed are the dead the ones dying in the Lord from now (*ap arti* is a difficult phrase - but it can hardly mean that the ones who die in the Lord from now on which would imply that those who died before were not blessed. This cannot be the meaning.) The Spirit says - "in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) they shall rest from (*ek* - out of or away from) their weariness (or sorrow)." The Greek word

*koptō* means to strike or beat the beast in grief. When it is used in the sense of labor it always entails drudgery, and weariness of the soul (or sorrow). The Spirit promised rest from weariness "for their works (*erga* - physical labor) follows with them." God promises to bless those who die in Christ with victory; give meaning to their suffering, and assures them that their work for Christ's kingdom is not in vain.

## SECTION 45

Text 14:14-20

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

17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the alter, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Initial Questions 14:14-20

1. What is the imagery of vs. 14?
2. Will any escape the heavenly harvest according to vs. 15?
3. Who is the one "that sat on the cloud" - vs. 16?
4. What national song finds some of its imagery in vs. 17-20?
5. How far is a "thousand six hundred furlongs" - vs. 20?

Vision of the Harvest and Vintage of the Earth  
Chapter 14:14-20

Verse 14

The remaining section of this chapter is concerned primarily with the judgment of God. John saw "a white cloud" and

one like a son of man was sitting majestically with a crown of sovereign authority on his head, and a sharp sickle for reaping in his hand. The symbols are vitally related. The kingly crown authorizes him to cast the sickle of judgment upon the whole earth.

Though the phrase "son of man" is without question a messianic title, we must note the Greek word *homoian* which means like, which makes the phrase a simile - "one sitting like a (no article here) son of man." The Jehovah's Witnesses completely distort this phrase into the claim that Jesus is nothing but a created angel. This claim is repudiated by the entire scope of the biblical doctrine of Christ.

#### Verse 15

That the "one sitting" on a white cloud was an angel is implied by the term (*allos*) another angel. This new angelic character was continually crying out (*krazōn* - present participle) "to the one sitting on the cloud, send (*pempson* - 1st aor. act. imp. mood - thrust or cast - immediately in a single act. There is to be no extended process of judgment; it will be swift, severe, certain). Why did the angel cry with such diligence in order to bring judgment upon the earth? The answer is forth coming - "because the hour came to reap; because (*hoti* - is causal same as above) the harvest of the earth was dried (*exeranthē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. mood; the word means over ripe - thus dried up, and the aor. passive means that some one (God) prepared the earth in a single, momentary act for judgment).

#### Verse 16

The one "like a son of man" responded to the dry" and thrust (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. active voice - cast with a single throw) his sickle over the extent (*epi* - on, or extent of the earth); and the earth was reaped (*etheristhē* - 1st aor. passive voice - ind. case). The harvest of the world is now gathered. The harvest of the souls of men shall either be gathered through evangelism to Christ, or through judgment to condemnation. The harvest of men is eloquently depicted by Christ in John 4:35. . . "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." Now, we have the two possible harvests, the harvest of judgment, or the harvest of evangelism'. Which shall it be?

## Verse 17

Still another angel went forth out of the sanctuary in heaven." The physical temple at Jerusalem had long been destroyed (in the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D.). This angel also had a sharp sickle for reaping. This is the same place (the sanctuary) from which the prayers of the saints went forth (study chps. 6 & 8.) The imagery of judgment continues also in this verse. "Another angel, . . . the one having authority over the fire" cried out "to the one having the sharp sickle." He was commanded to gather the clusters of over ripe grapes.

## Verse 19

The clusters of over ripe grapes were gathered and "cast (*ebalen* - 2nd aor. ind. - active voice - same form and meaning as in vs. 16) into the winepress of God's great anger." The imagery of the wine press is a very dramatic way of showing that none shall escape the wrath of God. Some men deny that God's wrath (*orge*) will condemn those who are out of Christ. We are now witnessing a resurgence of universalism in the so-called Christian world, but this section of scripture, along with many others, repudiate the claims of universalism. (See the *Special Study on The Gospel, Guilt, and Resurgent Universalism.*)

## Verse 20

The judgment which was inflicted upon the earth was so terrible that blood (*haima* - blood - note the change in imagery from the fruit of the grapes to blood) went out of the winepress as far as the bridles of the horses, from 1500 hundred furlong." A furlong (*stadiōn*) is a little over 606 feet, therefore, the blood was running over four feet deep over the total geographical extent of Palestine. In fact, 1600 hundred furlong (approximately 200 miles) would have run over the boundries of the Palestine of the N.T. period.

The two preceding images of judgment have been extracted from Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6. The imagery of Palestine is here used for the whole earth, just as earthly Jerusalem is taken as the whole earth in 11:8.

Much of the imagery of one of our national songs - *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* is taken from the Joel, Isaiah, and Revelation 14:14-20.

This chapter was inserted between two great series of God's judgment to insure the suffering Christians of ultimate

victory over sin, hell, and the grave, even if physical death was inflicted upon them as the results of persecution. Note how chapter 7 was also an insertion between the events of opening of the 6th and 7th seals.

### Discussion Questions Chapter 14

1. Compare the teaching of chp. 13 with chp. 14 - regarding the persons involved, the marks, the significance of the marks.
2. Compare and discuss chps. 7 and 14 with respect to the 144,000 saints.
3. Discuss some spiritual requirements of worshipful singing in view of vs. 3.
4. Discuss the Roman Catholic claim that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than a married one in light of vs. 4.
5. What three things were required of mankind according to vs. 7?
6. What was the message of the third angel - vs. 9?
7. What implications are there in John's use of the imagery of undiluted wine for God's wrath in vs. 10?
8. Are the tormented ones conscious of their punishment according to vs. 11?
9. What assurance does God give the persecuted Christians in vs. 13?
10. Discuss God's judgment according to vs. 15
11. Compare the harvest imagery of vs. 16 with Jesus' use of the imagery in John 4:35.
12. What does vs. 19 have to tell us regarding universalism (i.e., that everyone will ultimately be saved?)
13. Read Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6 and discuss the judgment imagery of this section of scripture.

### *Special Study* Yes, There Is a Hell!

Many people in the contemporary religious world deny the existence of hell. The denial stems from many supposed reasons. Some contend that the doctrine of hell is barbaric superstition; others hold that the doctrine is in diametric opposition

to the love of God. Still others hold that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of hell. Naturalistic Jews, religious liberals, most contemporary theologians and many cultic groups, i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses all share the common attribute of denying the ultimate reality of hell or a future irrevocable punishment of all who are out of Christ.

From a logical perspective it is impossible to affirm and deny the existence of hell at the same time. Either hell exists or it does not! It is either a biblical doctrine or it is not! Those who are enamoured with the discipline of comparative religion take refuge in the so-called assured results of this field of research. It would not be difficult to show that many claim that the Jewish background of the doctrine of eternal punishment was found in the Persian concepts of Zoroasterianism. Since the biblical doctrine and the teaching found in this non-Christian, eastern religion are radically dissimilar we must demand that the unique elements be accounted for by other than the comparative method.

During the New Testament period, both the Rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai held the teaching of the existence of hell or eternal punishment. Our Lord clearly taught this doctrine in His preaching ministry. The doctrine is also present in the early Patristic literature. It is not surprising in view of the opinion of the Fathers concerning the doctrine of hell—that we would find the same thing asserted in the great creeds, and that is exactly what we find. This is all well and good, but we find many things, both in the Fathers and the Creeds which are not only not found in the Bible, but which contradict teaching of the Word of God. If this be true, then we cannot be satisfied merely to know that the doctrine of hell is solidly entrenched in historical theology, but we must examine the source of the fountain of life—the scriptures themselves. The scriptures stand in complete opposition to the universalism of the Alexandrian theologians—Clement and Origen. Their claims sound strangely contemporary. They asserted that God's judgmental punishment was merely remedial, and not for final and irrevocable condemnation. The Medieval Roman Catholic Church maintained that the doctrine of hell was biblically grounded. The great Reformation denominations also adopted the scriptural teaching about hell. From the 17th century down to the present situation there have been those who have maintained various doctrines of Universalism (everybody is going to be saved). Restorationism

(ultimately this is universalism too). Everyone is going to be restored to God because of Christ's atonement, regardless of their personal attitude toward Him. Annihilationism (maintained today by the contemporary arians, The Jehovah's Witnesses. When one dies that is the end of everything! Only the redeemed of God will be resurrected to life. There will be no unbeliever, dammed, or otherwise, because the bodies of the unfaithful will merely return to the chemistry of the earth—that is their punishment according to this view.

If Jesus is not God incarnate, then He cannot be our saviour. If Jesus is God, then He could not possibly be wrong about what He taught! Jesus taught the doctrine of hell, therefore He could not have been mistaken about the nature and existence of hell, and at the same time been God in human flesh. Though it by no means exhausts the biblical teaching about hell, we shall limit these brief pages to the teaching of our Lord. The following verses by no means exhausts what Christ declared about judgment; but these will be sufficient for any reader to determine for himself whether or not Christ believed and taught the doctrine of hell.

#### (1) Matthew 7:20-23

20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in the day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons and by thy name do many mighty works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Though this does not specifically assert anything about the nature and existence of hell, it does reveal the severity of God's judgment.

#### (2) Matthew 10:28

28 And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Gehenna)

This passage makes clear that man is a composite of soul and body; and that there is a hell over which God is sovereign.

#### (3) Matthew 11:23

And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades (Greek word is *hades* - this word

is never translated) for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

Jesus warns this evil and unrepentant city that Judgment will come, then it will be too late.

(4) Matthew 13:41-42

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. (See also verses 47-50).

Why would Jesus use this horrible imagery, if there is no hell?

(5) Matthew 25:45-46

Then shall he answer them, saying, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least ye did it not unto me. And these shall do away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

Few people would deny that Christ promised everlasting life to those who follow Him. In general, they do not deny that He offers eternal life to believers. (Note that in this verse the "eternal (*aiōnion*) life" which Christ promises). What if it is true that the punishment promised to those who reject Christ is just the same span of time as is the "eternal life" of the righteous? (I am not here implying that eternity is nothing more than endless time. See an excellent, brief discussion of the contemporary theological debate concerning the nature of time and the relationship of Hebrew and Greek thought forms in Dr. James Barr's *Biblical Words for Time*, Alec. R. Allenson, Inc., Naperville, Illinois, 1962. He is of Princeton Theological Seminary).

(6) Mark 9:43-38

43 And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. 45 And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. 47 And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; 48 where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Even though this is figurative language, it by no means follows that it is not true. Much poetry (even the Hebrew Poetry, *The Psalms*) is garbed in figurative language, but nevertheless expresses truth--just as a true indicative declaration expresses truth.

#### (7) Luke 16:22-26

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in hades (this is the transcription of the Greek word—it is not a translation) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. . . . And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

This teaching of Christ is clear. It will not do to claim that this is a parable and therefore figurative, because it would be no problem to show that as a matter of fact—figurative language does convey truth, both in and out of the scripture. A semantical analysis of the nature and function of our ordinary language will prove this. The form of this teaching is figurative, but its content is clearly believed to be factual by our Lord.

#### (8) John 5:28-29

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

Here, Christ asserts that both the righteous and the unrighteous shall be resurrected—the one for eternal life, and the other for eternal condemnation. This information merely co-operates John's assertion in *The Revelation*.

Does this evidence from the teachings of Jesus sound as though he believed that hell (future punishment of unforgiven sin) is to remedial, restorative, and thus temporal? Yes, there is a biblical doctrine of Hell!

Note: Dr. Edward A. McDowell's *The Meaning and Message of The Book of Revelation*, Broadman's Press, Nashville, contains some excellent materials on chp. 14, p. 147. He analyzes the chp. into Seven Assurances and Warnings.

1. Redeemed of Earth are in close communion with God and the Savior, chp. 14:1-5
2. The Gospel is Universal, chp. 14:6-7
3. Evil cannot prevail, 15:8
4. The Wicked will be punished, 14:9-12
5. The Reward of the redeemed is sure, 14:13
6. Christ is the sole Lord of the harvest, 14:14-16
7. The Wrath of God will come upon all who refuse Christ's saving work, 14:17-20

## SECTION 46

### Text 15:1

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

### Initial Questions 15:1

1. What is unique about the seven plagues in vs. 1?
2. Does this imply that God's wrath is objective or subjective?

### Preparation for the Last Seven Plagues Chapter 15:1-8

#### Verse 1

Chapter 15 and 16 form a unit structured around the seven plagues. This chapter begins the last of the sevenfold pictures of judgment under the symbol of seven bowls of anger. John has gone through two other cycles of judgment chapters 5-8:1 (7 inserted between 6th seal and 7th seal which is opened at 8:1); the next series is presented through the imagery of seven trumpets and this is contained in chps. 8:2 thru 11. In this particular chapter John begins the outpouring of the seven plagues.

Another vision was now vouched-safe to John. He says, "I saw...seven angels having seven last plagues; because in them was finished (*etelesthē* - 1st aor. passive voice - the act of completion was singular, complete and final. The finality was a function of the purpose of God) the anger (the word is *thumos* not *orge* or wrath) of God."

## SECTION 47

## Text 15:2-4

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

## Initial Questions 15:2-4

1. Discuss the content of the song of the Lamb, vss. 3-4.
2. Who are those who are victorious over the beast - vs. 2?

## Verse 2

Now the scene turns to the theme of triumph, vindication of the righteous, and the new song of victory. John "saw the ones overcoming (*ek - of*) the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name" (see chp. 13:11-18). Immediately after mentioning the seven plagues, there is a song of triumph in heaven. The chorus is composed of victorious Christians, who have encountered and ultimately defeated their persecutors. They sing the song of Moses as well as the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses was a victory song as the results of crossing the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19; also Deuteronomy 32-33). The source of the imagery of the sea of glass now becomes apparent. Moses led Israel victoriously through the Red Sea, the redeemed has crossed the Red Sea of persecution into the city of God. God's victory enables Christians to sing even in impossible situations.

## Verse 3

What is the content of this song? (See chp. 14:3 - "A New Song.") God is praised for "His great and wonderful works, Lord God almighty; righteous and true are (are - not in text) your ways, the king of the nations." The word Lord (*kurie* - see *Special Study on Titles of Christ in The Revelation*) reveals their

attitude toward the sovereign of the universe by submitting to His will even when things seemed hopeless in the great persecutions. The term God (*theos*) strikes the cord of biblical monotheism. This is most amazing in view of Caesar's claim to this title. Singing God's names revealed their absolute repudiation of anyone else's claim to this name, but the Christian God. The title, - the Almighty (*ho pantokrator*) means absolutely powerful. They sang this name even when it looked as though God was not powerful without limit, because His saints were being persecuted and the dragon had "overcome" the Church. If He is actually king (*ho basileus*) of the nations (*ethnōn* - generally applies to the Gentile peoples. If one was not an Israelite, he was a citizen of the nations), then Rome and her emperor is no king of the nations, as Caesar claimed.

#### Verse 4

The universal reign of the Christian God is again asserted by one of the great biblical questions - "who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?" The Bible does not mean by fear of the Lord what primitive religions mean by it. God's people were not afraid of Him! They did not placate Him with sacrifices seeking to turn His favor toward them. Fear means reverence or awe (the original sense of awful was reverence, now it has a negative connotation) in the scriptures when it applies to God. The book of Proverbs 1:7 contains a commentary on this word. The inspired author says that - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The Hebrew word which is translated beginning has the root meaning of head, chief, or first thing. I personally would translate this verse as follows - "The fear of the Lord is the chief source of wisdom." This brings out that knowledge of God should be the first (or head from root of Hebrew word) in the hierarchy of man's knowledge, rather than secondary, or last.

The song continues by declaring that God is Holy (see Isaiah 6:1ff), and that "all the nations will come and will worship before you; because your ordinances (or righteous acts - judicial decision for or against - see Romans 5:16) were made manifest." God's judgments will be public, and they will be just decisions, but whether they are for or against an individual, will depend on his relationship to the Lamb of God.

## SECTION 48

## Text 15:5-8

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple the seven angles that had the seven plagues, arrayed with percious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

## Initial Questions 15:5-8

1. The imagery of verse 5 comes from the Temple. When was the Temple destroyed, and by whom?
2. Get a Bible Dictionary and look up the terms - glory, power, and discuss in vs. 8.

## Verse 5

John utilizes once more imagery from Exodus. The heavenly temple is described here as "the tent of witness," as in Exodus 40:34, the tabernacle in the desert is so described. This "tent of witness" "was opened."

## Verse 6

"The seven angels came forth" (out of the tent of witness) "out of the tabernacle (*vaou* - shrine) having the seven plagues." The angels were clothed as priests. They wore garments symbolizing their purity. (Note that the imagery of the "girded breast" is found also in 1:13. It is priestly dress.)

## Verse 7

"One of the living creatures gave to the seven angels seven bowls full of the anger (see vs. 1) of the living God".... This took place around the throne of God. God was looking on!

## Verse 8

John's imagery comes from Isaiah 6:1f. (There are other places where this imagery is used too.) "The Temple was filled with smoke" from the glory and power of God," and no man could (*edunato* - was able) enter into the temple, until

should be finished (or completed) the seven plagues of the seven angels."

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 15

1. Discuss the two other cycles of judgment (chps. 5 thru 8:1; 8:2 thru 11).
2. What was unique about the seven bowls of anger as a series of God's judgments?
3. Read and discuss Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19 - the song of Moses mentioned in vs. 3.
4. Discuss the names used for God in vss. 3 and 4 in view of the situation of the Christians - due to persecution.
5. What does the Bible mean by the term fear when it is applied to God - vs. 4?
6. In what sense was the Old Testament Tabernacle "a tent of witness" (Exodus 40:34) - vs. 5?
7. According to vs. 7 when could men enter again into the temple of God?

SECTION 49

**Text 16:1**

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

**Initial Questions 16:1**

1. What was the source of the great voice - vs. 1?
2. What were the angels commanded to do - vs. 1?

Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls  
Chapter 16:1-21

*Verse 1*

A careful restudy of the two previous series of judgment will show that they are less connected than the series of the seven bowls of anger. They follow each other in rapid succession, except for the pause of anticipation while waiting for the last bowl (vs. 17).

The model of all the bowls of anger is the Egyptian plagues described in Exodus 9:10-11. Much of the imagery in the series of seven trumpets was also taken from the plagues of Egypt.

John hears the divine command to pour out the bowls "into the earth." The bowls (*phialas* - these were shallow bowls) were like those used for pouring libations. They were not vials.

## SECTION 50

Text 16:2

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

Initial Question 16:2

1. What were the results of the first bowl of anger - vs. 2?

Verse 2

The content of the first bowl brought a terrible plight to man's physical comfort. It repeats the picture of the Egyptian plagues discussed in Exodus 9:10-11 - "And came (*egeneto* - 2nd aor. ind. - the judgment came immediately) a bad, (*kakon* - bad - has a moral connotation) evil (*poneron* - stresses the activity of evil or evil at work - see Paul's "Mystery of Lawlessness" - II Thess. 2:7) sore (*helkos* - a boil, or scab of leprosy) on the men having the mark of the beast" - The sixth Egyptian plague (Exodus 9:8-12) had this same effect on men.

## SECTION 51

Text 16:3

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

Initial Questions 16:3

1. What resulted from the second bowl - vs. 3?

2. What happens chemically to "the blood of a dead man" - vs. 3?

*Verse 3*

The second and third bowls (vss. 3-4) share the imagery of the plagues described in Exodus 7:20-21. The content of the second bowl is like the content of the third trumpet (8:10-11). The first bowl was poured out onto the earth; the second bowl is poured out "into the sea; and it became like (*hōs* - as or like) the blood of a dead man, and every soul of life died in the sea."

## SECTION 52

## Text 16:4-7

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

## Initial Questions 16:4-7

1. What necessity of man was effected by the 3rd bowl - vs. 4?
2. What did "the angel of the waters" say about God - vs. 5?
3. With what did God reward the slayers of the saints and prophets - vs. 6?
4. Who is under the altar according to 6:9? Discuss the statement in vs. 7 in light of it.

*Verse 4*

The third bowl was poured out into man's water supply, "into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood." Man had no water to drink. The anguish caused by a lack of water is one of the most tormenting of human suffering. There was liquid to drink, but it was nothing but sickening blood. The imagery would have been appropriate in the biblical world. Blood played a vital part in the ritual of the mystery religions, and John's readers from Asia minor would have fully understood this symbolism, which is nauseating to most of us.

*Verse 5*

Immediately following the first three bowls in vss. 5-7 there is heard the voice of "the angel of the waters" who gives approval of God's judgment. The angel declares that God is holy and everlasting, "because you judged (*ekrinas* - 1st aor. ind. active - God's act of judgment was singular and final) these things." God will not permit evil to persist indefinitely. This is a fundamental part of the Christian's hope in Christ. Righteousness shall prevail, not evil!

*Verse 6*

The angel continues the charges brought against condemned mankind.. Those who receive God's judgment deserve it, because they are responsible for the death of the saints and prophets. This imagery probably includes all those who are guilty of this crime against God's people, and His servants. God gave the guilty ones - blood to drink and they deserve it! (Worthy of it means they deserve it.)

This verse receives a marvelous commentary in Christ's lament over Jerusalem (Luke 13:34). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" The words of verse six probably apply to Jews and gentiles alike, and should not be limited to this period of Roman persecution.

*Verse 7*

Here we note a repetition of vs. 4 of the song of the Lamb.

## SECTION 53

## Text 16:8-9

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

## Initial Questions 16:8-9

1. How important is the sun to human life - vs. 8?
2. Fire is used in the scriptures both as a symbol of judgment and purification. In what sense is it used here - vs. 9?
3. How hard-hearted were those who failed to repent - vs. 9?

*Verse 8*

This fourth bowl has no parallel in the Egyptian plagues. The symbolism probably comes from Isaiah 49:8-10. The description given here in vs. 8-9 contrasts the destiny of the wicked with the destiny of the just (see also 7:16).

*Verse 9*

The great heat scorched mankind. Note the instruments of torture - first water was taken from men, now fire is the instrument of their punishment. What was the result of this punishment? Instead of turning to God for healing, "they blasphemed the name of God who hath power over these plagues." Men grew more hostile rather than penitent. They still refused to give God His due glory and honor.

## SECTION 54

## Text 16:10-11

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

## Initial Questions 16:10-11

1. Discuss the imagery of darkness in vs. 10.
2. What does human pride do to a man before God - vs. 11?
3. What are the works mentioned in vs. 11?

*Verse 10*

With the fifth bowl John returns to the imagery from Exodus 10:21-22, and the results are like those in vss. 10-11. The light supply was shut off. In order to test the devastating psychological effects of darkness, construct an area where you can sit in total darkness for an hour, then something of this imagery will become real.

*Verse 11*

Again the results of their punishment brought further and more vehement blasphemy than before - because of their pain and sores. Note that the punishment inflicted would produce the most painful spiritual or psychological effects on the lives of men.

## SECTION 55

Text 16:12-16

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 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.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

Initial Questions 16:12-16

1. What boundary line did the river Euphrates represent - vs. 12?
2. What is the geographical source of the water of the Euphrates? Unless the source is dried up too, would it be literally possible for the mighty river to be absolutely dry?
3. Discuss God's warning in vs. 15.
4. Where is Har-Magedon - vs. 16?

Verse 12

The sixth bowl is in the form of a prediction of the invasion of the diabolical barbarians from the east. This bowl was poured out into the great Euphrates river; and its water was dried (up), in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) the way of the kings from the rising of the sun (the East) might be prepared." The invaders could cross the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire, and visit mighty Babylon (Rome) with the havoc of war. The great natural barrier, the Euphrates, is now gone! There is nothing to hold back Rome's hated eastern enemies.

Verse 13

God's judgments bring forth a counter attack from the strategy room of hell. "Three unclean spirits" are set forth by the evil trinity - the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. In the East, the image of the frog stands for everything low and defiled. In most Eastern Religions, even today, the frog is a symbol for that which is absolutely dirty.

*Verse 14*

These unclean spirits are the "spirits of demons, working (*poiounta* - present, active, participle, they continually worked signs) miracles (*semeia* - signs - 1 of the 3 basic N.T. words for miracle) which go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, to assemble them together unto the war of the great day of almighty God." The forces of Satan have heard heavens challenge to their control over the universe, and the lives and destinies of men.

*Verse 15*

Paul makes the same claim in I Thessalonians 5:2 that Christ will come in judgment unexpectedly," like a thief in the night."

John reverts to the first person, as God begins to speak directly—"Behold, I come as a thief." Only the one that keeps on watching and keeps on keeping his garments spotless will be ready when Christ appears again!

*Verse 16*

The decisive battle between righteousness and unrighteousness is about to open. The symbolic place of God's judgment is the valley of Megiddo (see Joel 3:1ff, for the prediction of this great day of judgment). The great battle ground of Palestine. The text gives the Hebrew - "Har-Magedon." This means the mountains of Meggido. Some English translations contain an anglosized form of this word - Armageddon. The Hebrew consonant for our *h* was transcribed into Greek (via Septuagint), and Greek has no consonant for our *h*, but uses the rough breathing mark (*h*) for this sound. If the rough breathing mark is not transcribed, then the word would start with our *a*. (Armagedon) This is why we might find these different forms of this word in our English translations. (There are also differences in the spelling of the words, but this is due to faulty transcriptions of sounds).

It was in the valley of Esdraelon that Ahaziah the king of Judah was slain by Jehu (II Kings 9:27). Pharoah Neco of Egypt killed young king Josiah (II Kings 23:29) on this battle field. The memory of this valley had been indelibly written on the minds of everyone who knows the history of the Jewish people. Israel had gained a victory over the Canaanites here, and its memory was recorded in the song of Deborah (Judges 5:1f). (See the discussions

in the standard critical commentaries such as Charles and Swete, but for the best single discussion read I. T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*; New York, MacMillan Co., 1919, p. 685.

## SECTION 56

Text 16:17-21

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

Initial Questions 16:17-21

1. To what does "It is done" refer to in vs. 17?
2. Note that vs. 18 mentions the earth, then the scene switches to the great city in vs. 19. The city stands for the whole earth. To what city does the name Babylon refer?
3. How extensive was the geological upheaval mentioned in vs. 20?
4. How did men respond to God's judgment - vs. 21?

Verse 17-21

The seventh bowl was reserved for the precious air which men breath. Then "a great voice came out of the temple from the throne." God is speaking directly and says. "It has occurred." John had declared in 15:1 that the time when the seven plagues will finish or complete "the anger of God." The seventh bowl describes the completion of the wrath of God in phrases which we have seen already (see 8:7) and in terms of Exodus 9:23-24.

Babylon's fall was declared in 14:18; but here we have a description of the major events of the fall. The basic difference between the judgments of the bowls and those of the trumpets is that the bowls are far more severe. The Trumpets affect only

one-third of the elements involved, the bowls of anger affect the entire earth. The three series of judgments do not seem to this author to be three chronologically distinct judgment in different periods of history but each seem to be a general description of God's judgment. Each series presents the judgments with greater intensity and severity.

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 16:1-21

1. Study carefully the model of the Egyptian plagues in Exodus 9:10-11 and compare the imagery in vs. 1.
2. What kind of sore does John speak of in vs. 2? Study in Bible Dictionary concerning the diseases mentioned in the Bible, and find a clinical description of disease here.
3. How was the sea affected according to vs. 3?
4. Discuss the relationship of God's Holiness and the fact of His judgment in vs. 5.
5. Do you know any who were stoned in the Early Church? Why were they stoned?
6. Study Isaiah 49:8-10 in its context and then discuss vs. 8.
7. What are the extreme temperatures in which the human body can survive - vs. 9?
8. Could plants, animals, and men survive without the light of the sun - vs. 10?
9. Why was the Euphrates River used as important symbolism in vs. 12?
10. Are the forces of evil personal or merely principles at work in the universe, according to vs. 13?
11. What is the relationship between the final overthrow of active evil and the coming again of Jesus Christ according to I Thess. 5:2 and vs. 15.
12. Get a good recent map of the O.T. period involved and locate the valley of Esdraelon; then study the following Bible records of battles: II Kings 9:27ff, II Kings 23:29; Judges 5:1ff. Then does this help you understand John's use of this imagery?
13. Now that you have completed studying this third section of God's judgment, go back and examine the general techniques of the first two series of judgments, the seven seals - chp. 6: - 8:1; and seven trumpets chp. 8:2 - 11:15. Note their differences and similarities and the development of their intensity and severity.

## SECTION 57

Text 17:1-5

And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Initial Questions 17:1-5

1. Discuss the O.T. and N.T. use of the symbol of adultery with respect to faithfulness or lack of faithfulness to God.
2. How extensive was the influence of "the great harlot" - vs. 2?
3. In the N.T. period, what did the color scarlet signify - vs. 3?
4. Discuss the economic significance of the dress of the woman in vs. 4.
5. What does the word mystery mean - vs. 5?

The Vision of Babylon Seated on the Beast  
Chapter 17:1-5

Thus far we have noted that five enemies and the followers of the fifth enemy have been presented. The dragon, the beast from the sea, the beast from the earth, the false prophet, the great harlot, Babylon, and those who wear the mark of the beast. John relays the fate of those who wear this mark in chaps. 15-16. God grants to John an inspired vision in chps. 17-19 in which the ultimate defeat of Babylon, the beast of the sea, and the false prophet are revealed. R. H. Charles erroneously charges that the book under study introduces the subject of the fate of Babylon and then fails to discuss it. First, we must not forget that the original Greek Text had no chapter nor verse divisions. In view of this fact Charles' criticism is

irrelevant. The content of chp. 17 relates the nature and history of the harlot, Babylon; chp. 18 manifests the ultimate and final defeat of the enemies of "The Light of the World;" Chp. 19 relates the holy rejoicing in heaven because of Satandom's irrecoverable fall! The victorious Christ and those that are "more than conquerors" are presented.

The harlot is seated on waters, an O.T. symbol for evil. We shall learn later that this is not John's meaning. Almost these very words are used in Jeremiah 51:13. The description of the harlot given in vs. 2 is without question taken from Isaiah's (23:15-17) description of Tyre. The harlot was arrayed in scarlet, the color of royalty. This woman has the same general characteristics of the beast which is described in Jeremiah 51:7; as the one who attempts the destruction of God's elect. We must also emphasize that the Church and the all-Anti-Christian powers occupy the same territory, the earth. God's purpose involves the safety of the remnant (The Church), and the destruction of the five enemies and their evil cohorts. Part of chapter 17 is an explanation of John's visions (vs. 8-18).

#### Verse 1

The judgment of Babylon (16:19) was already revealed in chapter 14:8. The actual description of the judgment is provided in chapters 17-18. Another prophet of God, Nahum (3:4) uses the imagery of the harlot when speaking of Nineveh.

One of the seven angels commands John to come and see the judgment of Babylon - "the great harlot sitting on many waters." This description was originally given by Jeremiah (51:13) when speaking of physical Babylon. But John cannot be speaking of real Babylon on the Euphrates restored once more; because Isaiah (13:19-22) prophesied that it would never exist again as a powerful empire. Babylon on the Euphrates controlled many canals which were used for irrigation (like the Nile for Egypt). Rome did not have access to such a source of wealth.

#### Verse 2

The harlot is described as the source of sensual gratification (not merely sexual) of the kings of the earth." The kings practiced fornication (*eporneusan* - 1st aor. indicative, the aorist tense is used to show the established fact of illicite practices) with this harlot. This imagery comes directly from the

prophetic pronouncements concerning the disloyal, disobedient people of Israel. The apostacy of the church from her Lord is here asserted (see Jeremiah 2:20, 3:1, 6:8; Isaiah 1:21; Hosea 2:5, 3:3, 4:14; Ezekiel 16:15, 16, 28, 31, 35, 41, 23:5, 19, 44). The spiritual *apostacy* of the people of God is asserted as a matter of fact in both the O.T. and N.T. It is impossible to harmonize this biblical doctrine with the claim of some denominations that a saved individual can never become an apostate from Christ (The Greek word from which we derive apostate comes from two words - one meaning of or away from, and the other meaning to stand, thus to stand off from an earlier commitment to Christ).

John further describes the moral decadence through the imagery of drunkenness. The moral degradation has extended through out the entire earth. "The ones dwelling on the earth became drunk from the wine of her fornication."----

John is led to the wilderness "in the spirit." The woman of chapter 12 had already fled to the wilderness. John saw "a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, being filled with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The harlot sits clothed like a queen. The kings of the earth are her lovers. Swete has an excellent discussion on the maternal imagery used here of Rome. This relationship with the provinces and their rulers was widely known as late as the fourth century. (See Swete, *The Apocalypse of John, op cit.*, p. 217 for this type of information. Swete and Beckwith are the best readily available sources.) The martyrdom of Christians was the result of an official Roman policy.

#### Verse 4

The wealth of the harlot is most clearly asserted in the description of her dress. She was no cheap hussy; she was a member of the first century "jet set"—(a name given to the decadent, wealthy European and American men and women of our own day). She "was having been clothed in purple and scarlet (*chrusio kai kokkinon* - only the wealthiest of the wealthy could dress in purple and scarlet garments), and having been gilded (decked or covered) with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand being filled with abominations and unclean things of her fornication,".... Culturally, the great harlot represented the highest level of Roman society. She possessed the things that men and nations fight to the death to

obtain. Roman culture fell because the seed of her collapse was being sown, even in the first century. She fell, never to rise again in the fifth century A.D.

*Verse 5*

John draws his imagery from the 1st century practice. Roman harlots wore their names written on their brows. This was a publically visible sign of their illicite profession. The badge of infamy contained the name—"Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Her evil, lustful life was public knowledge, but her power, prestige and social status made it impossible for even the morally sensitive person to stand for righteousness. In fact, Christians were slain as martyrs of the Faith because of their publically expressed indignation. (See I Peter 5:13, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Jerome for the use of the symbol Babylon for the Roman Empire.)

## SECTION 58

### Text 17:6-18

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come. 9 Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: 10 and they are seven kings, the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. 13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast.

14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. 17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. 18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

#### Initial Questions 17:6-18

1. John saw the drunken harlot and "wondered with a great wonder." What did the angel ask him in vs. 7?
2. Who does John say shall wonder at the woman in vs. 8?
3. What city of the N.T. World is surrounded by 7 mountains - vs. 9?
4. How can the beast of vs. 11 be an eighth king, and yet be out of the seven mentioned in vs. 10? Check a good commentary or Bible Dictionary on Nero (*redivivus*).
5. Does the "for one hour" in vs. 12 imply that the ten kings will reign only for a short time under the authority of the beast?
6. Are the forces of evil unified - vs. 13?
7. Who initiates the war in vs. 14?
8. Discuss the descriptive terms for Christians in vs. 14 - "called and chosen and faithful."
9. What does the symbol of the waters mean according to vs. 15?
10. Does vs. 17 show that God uses evil and those who are enthralled in evil to do His will - untimately?
11. What does "until the words of God should be accomplished" - vs. 17 mean?
12. The woman is identified as what, in vs. 18?

#### Verse 6

The great harlot was drunk, not with wine, but with the blood of the saints (*hagiōn* - those that are holy, set apart. Compare with biblical doctrine of the saint with the erroneous Roman

Catholic doctrine of Sainthood. They stand in irreconcilable contradiction), and from the blood of the witnesses. (*Marturōn* - one who is martyred, because of his bearing public witness of Jesus Christ). "And seeing her I wondered with a great wonder," What did John see that caused him to be amazed at the content of his vision?

*Verse 7*

The angel asked John—"Why did you wonder?" Now the angel is going to explain and identify his imagery. John did not understand and the angel provides him with an inspired, revealed interpretation of the symbolism. How often in *The Revelation* does God see fit to give John an interpretation of his imagery? The imagery of the "seven heads and ten horns" are now to be interpreted (note that the imagery is taken from Daniel).

*Verse 8*

The interpretation now follows. "The beast which you saw was, and is not (or does not now exist); and is about to come up out of the abyss, and goes into destruction (*apōleian* - does not mean annihilation, but rather being cut off from the presence of God. (See the note after this verse). The entire earth, with the exception of the redeemed will also wonder or marvel at the beast. There are many attempted explanations of the beast who "was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss,"—but a very plausible one is the *Nero redivivus* myth, which was very prevalent late in the first century. We shall give an explanation of this theory in our discussion of vss. 9-12.

Note: *Queber* (Hebrew) always means Grave, but *Sheol* does not always mean grave (e.g., *II Sam. 22:6*—"The sorrows of Sheol"). Surely this reveals consciousness. The J.W.'s doctrine book, *Make Sure of All Things*, p. 154, defines Hell as the "grave." In the grave, the claim is made that man becomes extinct or annihilated. Space forbids any extensive examination of this claim, but we will consider two terms (*olethros*) and (*apollumi*). Lexicons provide no comfort to those who seek to find an annihilationist doctrine in the scriptures of the N.T. (for *olethros* see H. J. Thayer, *Lexicon*, p. 64; Liddell and Scott, new edition, p. 1212-1214; and Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature*, p. 566). All of these lexicons are in agreement that the term means ruin, death, destruction, but they give no evidence that the term means annihilation. The standard text which receives most consideration is *II Thess. 1:6-9* (the import is even clear in the N.W.T.)

"...eternal destruction from the fact of the Lord." Here we clearly see that the wicked are separated from God's presence (face of

God always means His presence in the Scriptures). Paul uses a form of this same word in *I Cor. 5:5*—"unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved." (R.V. 1901) The last statement is a purpose clause. The flesh was separated not annihilated, in order that the Spirit would be saved in the judgment.

The other important word we mentioned is (*apollumi*). The noun form means destruction and the verb form to destroy, etc. This is the word found in *Luke 15* concerning the lost sheep (vs. 3, a form of this word is translated *lost, not annihilated*) vs. 9 contains a form of this term and plainly says the coin was lost, not annihilated (after all it would be difficult to find something that had been annihilated) vs. 62 says that the son was lost and found again; it must be very apparent that an annihilated son could not be found.

The Scripture makes inseparable the redemption obtainable only in Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the escape from Hell or the ever lasting separation from the presence of God.

For an excellent study of the term Sheol see the *Bulletin of The Evangelical Theological Society*. Dec. 1961 - for the article by R. Laird Harris, *The Meaning of The Word Sheol* as shown by *Parallels in Poetic Texts*, p. 129.

#### Verse 9

John states that—"Here is (does not appear in the text) the mind (*ho nous* - the faculty of understanding and judgment) having (present participle - means that the mind constantly possesses) wisdom." Now we learn what the symbols mean. "The seven heads are seven mountains (the city of Rome was built around the geographical terrain of seven mountains) where the woman sits (*kathē tai* - present indicative implying that she constantly occupies the territory) on them,"—(The last phrase in the Greek text of verse 9 is translated with verse 10 in our English Bibles).

There are other cities in the world who occupy seven hills (e.g. Constantinople, Jerusalem, etc.), but they are all inappropriate for John's imagery.

#### Verse 10

"And there are seven kings; five fell (*epesan* - 1st aor. ind. expresses the fact that five kings fell - in a final, complete act. Expresses the complete over throw of these puppet kings. It is used in The Septuagint for violent overthrow of kings and nations - Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 1:15). One is (*estin* - presently is king), the other not yet come (*ēlthen* - 2nd aor. ind. - shows the fact that "the other" king has not yet appeared on the scene of Roman history); and whenever he comes he must (*dei* - expresses necessity) remain a little while (*oligon* - means a short period of time).

*Verse 11*

"The beast who was and is not," even he is the eighth, and is of (*ek* - out of) the seven, and goes into destruction." (See note after vs. 8 on the word here translated destruction). John's riddle needs clarification. There are seven kings. There is to be an eighth one, but he is out of the seven. How can he make plausible sense out of this riddle? The seven kings could have been the seven Roman Emperors - (1) Tiberius (ruled from 14 - 37 A.D.); (2) Caligula ruled from 37-41 A.D.; (3) Claudius, 41-54 A.D.; (4) Nero, 54-68 A.D.; (5) Vespasian, 69-79 A.D.; (6) Titus, 79-81 A.D.; (7) Domitian, 81-96 A.D. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were in power for a short period of time after Nero, but they were not seriously taken as emperors. "The five are fallen." It is possible that Nero was omitted from the list because of the myth of his coming to life again. Domitian (81-96 A.D.) is to be identified as "the one is" (vs. 10). On the basis of the *Nero redivivus* myth, Nero could meet the requirements of John's imagery in vs. 11 - "even he is the eighth, and is out of the seven".... The eighth one was originally one of the seven.

*Verse 12*

"The ten horns" are now identified as "ten kings." These kings have not yet come to power. God's omnipotent knowledge enables John to have this information revealed to him. These kings and their reign are short lived. They "receive authority (same Greek word for power) as kings one hour (*hōran* is more specifically a very limited period of time than is *oligon* - a short period or a little while in vs. 10) with the beast." God has control of the universe, even when it appears to man that evil powers dominate the cosmos.

*Verse 13*

Do the powers of darkness have a unified loyalty to evil and error? (See Acts 20:3; I Cor. 1:10 - for same expression applied to Christians.) John gives us a categorical answer. "These have one mind, and they give (*didoasin* - present tense - active, indicative - they continually give) their power (*dunamin* - power which they exercise as rulers) and authority (*exousian* - the authority which their kingly office carries to the beast)." Here we see that earthly governments can and are used for the forces of evil. Individuals in a given society can be moral and

yet, the society, as a whole, can be rotten to the core. From a Christian viewpoint how is the individual related to his environment? In what sense do individuals exist in our mass society? If men are brought to Christ as individuals who are responsible to our Lord, how can we reach that individual as he participates in our anti-individual social structure? No Man is an Island! In one real sense of the term, there are no such things as individuals in our technological oriented, depersonalized cultures—Read chapter 13:2. Here we are told that the dragon gave both his authority and power to the beast, so that they all have just one purpose; and all of their authority, etc., is dedicated to the ways of evil. (Read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* - now available in paperback; for background details of Rome's rise and fall.)

#### Verse 14

The forces of evil gather to make war with the Lamb. Satan tempted Christ because he did not know the ultimate nature nor the power to overcome evil which our Lord possessed. Again, Satan puts the Lamb to the test, and calls Him to do battle. John's imagery does not remind us of any species of Pacifism which is so dominate today under the auspices of the love of God. "The Lamb will overcome them; because He is Lord of lords and King of kings (see Deuteronomy 10:17; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 1:5)—and the ones with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Here John is giving us three characteristics of a child of God. The first two reveal God's approach to man; the third manifests man's response to God's call through the Word, and being chosen in Christ. (See II Peter 1:10; Romans 8:28ff; Revelation 2:10,13.) The passage found in II Peter 1:10 is crystal clear that the Christian man has something to do in order to make his "calling and election sure." The entire passage from the pen of Peter implies that if we do not do the things listed there - then our "calling and election" is *not* sure! We must not fail to see the significance of the third characteristic of the victorious Christian - faithful!

#### Verse 15

The Angel interprets the imagery of the waters in this verse. The waters "are peoples and crowds, and nations, and tongues." (See Isaiah 8:7; Psalm 18:4, 16 - for the symbol of water.)

The greatest danger any conquering nation has is the people whom they have enslaved. The Roman empire was the melting pot of the heterogeneous population of the world.

*Verse 16*

The ones who revelled in the immoral mire of the infamous Roman life are going to revolt. Even Rome's closest associates were about to throw off allegiance to the empire. The worst possible enemies anyone can have are those who are formerly intimate friends. This is to be Rome's fate. "The ten horns (vs. 12 - are kings which have no kingdom - yet) and the beast, these will hate the harlot, and will make her naked and having been desolated (*ērēmomenēn* - perfect - passive - participle - meaning that she is completely desolated, and that her condition was brought upon her by outside force. This is the significance of the passive voice), and will eat her flesh (the text has a plural fleshes), and will consume (*katakausousin* - this form gives the picture of completely burning to the ground. This is the force of *kata* - the initial part of the word) - with fire." The empire will be pillaged and sacked, and burned until the glory of her wealth and power is no longer to be seen. It is gone forever!

*Verse 17*

Even in the midst of this severe persecution God had not abdicated His throne. God permitted men to be enthralled with evil. Paul makes this same claim in Romans chapter 1:24-32, when he declares that "God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts".... Paul uses the phrase - "God gave them up" three times in nine verses. The second chapter of Romans begins "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O Man,".... Even though God gave them up unto their evil passions, they were responsible to Him, and would give an account of every word, deed, and thought on the great day of judgment. God permitted evil to persist, "until the words of God should be accomplished." The Hebrew concept of word means both spoken and the produced effect. God's word shall not return unto Him before it accomplishes His divine purpose. What is the relationship of human effort to the divine plan of the ages?

*Verse 18*

Now the last image is identified by the angel. The woman, the great harlot "is the great city having a reign (or a kingdom)

over the kings of the earth." No other city could meet the requirements of this imagery - other than Rome, the capital of the immoral Roman empire! Rome controlled all the small, satellite kingdoms in the civilized world. God's wrath will always be poured out - even upon so-called Christian nations. Is not this the plight of our contemporary, western, Christian civilization? We need revival immediately, if we are to survive.

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 17:1-18

1. In what passage in *The Revelation* has the judgment of Babylon already been announced - vs. 1?
2. Name one O.T. prophet who uses the imagery of a harlot - vs. 1.
3. Study Jeremiah 51:13 and discuss John's description of Babylon - vs. 1.
4. Study the Book of Hosea for background in considering the imagery of fornication as signifying spiritual apostasy - see Hosea 2:5; 3:3, 4:14, etc. - vs. 2.
5. According to the teaching of vs. 2 can a saved person ever be lost?
6. Does the wilderness play a great place in biblical literature? What significance might it have - vs. 3?
7. Is there any *necessary* connection between sin, culture and wealth - vs. 4?
8. What is the source of John's imagery in vs. 5?
9. Is the biblical doctrine and the Roman Catholic teaching about sainthood compatible - vs. 6?
10. Did John understand the vision of the great harlot - vs. 6-7?
11. What is the myth of *Nero redivivus* - vs. 8?
12. Does the word destruction mean annihilation according to the note after vs. 8?
13. What is a plausible explanation of John's riddle in vs. 11?
14. How could John know about the ten kings who had not yet come to power in vs. 12?
15. What does John say in vs. 12 which implies that the reign of evil is to last only a very short time?
16. The Body of Christ is not united. What power does Satan have which enables the forces of darkness to be of one mind, which the forces of light do not possess - vs. 13?
17. Discuss the statement found in the comment on vs. 13 - that no man is an island.

18. What are the three characteristics of God's children according to vs. 14?
19. What are the former friends of Rome going to do to her according to vs. 16?
20. According to vs. 17—how long is God going to wait until He avenges the faithful Christians?

### SECTION 59

Text 18:1-20

After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for the one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most

precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and men shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; 16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her.

#### Initial Questions 18:1-20

1. The angel of vs. 1 left the throne room of God. What does this vs. say about this angel?
2. Is it possible that cities and nations are used, as a whole, for good or bad - vs. 2? Discuss the problem of the good individual and the totally corrupt society of which he is a part. If evil dominates, what happens to the good which individuals do? This thesis is of vital concern to contemporary as well as first century Christians. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, is a brilliant analysis of this problem.
3. In vs. 3 we see the problem of the big nation and the little nations. Does this imagery apply in our own day?
4. What was the economic effects of alliances with the great harlot - vs. 3?
5. How is it possible to have "fellowship with sin" - vs. 4?
6. How does God humiliate the proud city - vs. 7?
7. God's judgment is so sure and severe that it will take how long for her plagues to come - vs. 8?

8. In the great power struggles between nations are all morally responsible for their actions, regardless of their attempts to justify any given action as politically expedient - vs. 9?
9. In vs. 10 we note sacred sarcasm against any and all who trust in their own strength (misplaced trust) - vs. 10. Discuss.
10. Discuss the relationship between morals, merchants, and money - vs. 11.
11. What would happen in our world, if the things were no longer of value - vs. 12? Would nations give their wealth to escape a nuclear holocaust? Would the money mongers exchange their wealth for their safety?
12. How can we make merchandise of the "souls of men" - vs. 13?
13. How did the merchants respond to the destruction of the great city - vs. 15?
14. How long did it take God to make desolate the great city - vs. 16?
15. How were the great merchant ships affected by the destruction of the great city - vs. 19?
16. Has God vindicated His people by His judgments - vs. 20?

The Doom of Babylon  
Chapter 18:1-24

John gives us the announcement of the collapse of Babylon in this chapter.

*Verse 1*

John saw "another angel coming down out of heaven." The heavenly messenger proclaims the ruin of Babylon (vs. 1-8). John uses a series of quotations in this section of *The Revelation* from Jeremiah 25:15, 27, 50:8; 50:39; 51:8; Isaiah 21:9, 47:7-8; 48:20; Psalm 137:8. The fall of Babylon has effected the economy of the world. The merchants, the kings of the earth, and the seafaring people are mourning over their economic catastrophe. The imagery of the laments come directly from Ezekiel, chapters 26-27.

The angel came directly from the throne room of God because "the earth was lightened with his glory." The entire populated earth was to hear the announcement of doom.

*Verse 2*

The angel cried - "Fallen fallen (*epesen*) is Babylon the great, and became a dwelling place of demons, and a prison of

every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and having been hated bird,".... The mighty city has become so corrupt that evil spirits make it their home. The luxury of Rome provided the seed of immorality!

*Verse 3*

The kings and nations of the earth shared the guilt of decadent Rome. ---"And the merchants of the earth became rich (the English word, waxed, of the 1901 translation comes from the German word *wachsen* - to grow or increase) from power of her luxury" (*strēnous* is a late Greek word for arrogance which stems from luxury).

*Verse 4*

The angel hurls down the challenge for the Christians to - "Come forth, my people, out of her, that (*hina* - purpose clause) you do not share (the Greek word is to have fellowship with) in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues." God's judgment is coming. May the people of God be in but not of the world when His trumpet sounds to assemble mankind in the valley of judgment. Jeremiah 51:6, 45; Isaiah 48:20, and II Cor. 6: 14-18 issues the same command to come out! This is one of the greatest paradoxes of the Christian life - how to witness to a lost world, and yet not become tainted with her sins. One thing is certain, the Church cannot be a ghetto institution and carry out the great final commission of our Lord.

*Verse 5*

Their iniquities have reached heaven. God's universe is still a moral universe, and "whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."

*Verse 6*

The double recompense was a vital part of the Levitical law (see Exodus 22:4,7). The Spirit of vengeance has already been manifested in *The Revelation* 6:10—"How long O Master, the holy and true, doest thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? "The divine justice demands that the evil city (the entire Empire) be rewarded for her iniquity. The voice that John heard said, "Give back (*apodate* - 2nd aor. imp. mood signifies a command to return double as she gave to you) to her as indeed she gave back, and double (imp. mood - command again) double unto her double according to her works; in

the cup in which she mixed - mix (again imper. mood) to her double." There will be a pay day some day! Evil shall not always prosper nor prevail. "Vengence is mine, saith the Lord." The verse implies that the persecuted Christians are to retaliate. Each major verb is in the imperative or command mood. In the historical situation, the Christians were in no condition to retaliate; therefore, in the plan of God Christians alone shall prevail, and mercy, justice, and righteousness shall run down the hills of the new Jerusalem as mighty waters. One of the central problems of a Christian World-view is the phenomenon of evil. How can God be both *just* and *justifier* of the alien sinner? How can God be both Holy and all-powerful and permit evil to persist? How can the Christian God permit His people to be persecuted and slain? Does this verse speak of the O.T. *lex talionis*? (See also *The Sermon on The Mount* - Matt. 5:38-48). Does this verse imply that the great harlot is to receive twice as much punishment as she deserves? The phrase *kata ta erga autēs* ("according to her works") clearly shows that the harlot receives just the amount that she deserves!

#### Verse 7

Swete's words are very appropriate—"Let her share of misery be proportionate to her arrogant self glorification." (Swete, *op cit.*, p. 230). The great harlot is humiliated by her loss of wealth and status. (Our age is not the only age which has been burdened by - *The Status Seekers*). Their wealth and social status is now replaced by "torment and sorrow. Because (*hoti* or causal or force - shows the ultimate cause of her torment and sorrow) in her heart she continually says, because (*hoti* - again the cause) I sit a queen, and I am not a widow, and shall by no means (*ou me* - the double negative is an idiom for absolutely not) see sorrow." This is manifestly a belligerent, arrogant attitude. The self-image of the great harlot made her ready for the visitation of God's judgment. There is no fall like the fall which comes when one thinks he is on top! This is true of individuals or nations, or empires, or civilizations (see Arnold Toynbee's *History* for his analysis of the fall of the great world civilizations). All the great civilizations, including Rome, fell at the height of their power. Why? Their moral decadence destroyed the ethical foundations of her society. Societies have been built on *reason* (Plato's rationalistically oriented *Republic*); *law* (Roman civilization contributed concepts of Law which are still inseparably bound to the 20th century, western civilization);

*religion* (Jewish civilization and Roman Catholic Europe, up to the modern era of Newton, Galileo, Descartes, Leibniz, *et al.*) Religion had been used for over one thousand years as a foundation of society; yet, it contributed to the collapse of Medieval Europe. The 1955 *Harvard Report on Education* claimed that Western civilization would never again utilize Christianity as the foundation for our social structure. This may be true, but no one could seriously claim that Biblical Christianity has ever been used as the foundation for human civilization. Here we have the insoluble paradox between humanly engineered society and the Kingdom of God! What place does human effort really play in the working out of God's purpose in the universe? (See W. A. Beardslee, *Human Achievement and Divine Vocation in Message of Paul: Studies in Biblical Theology*, Alec R. Allen-son, Inc., 635 East Odgen Ave., Naperville, Illinois.)

#### Verse 8

Jesus warned those of us who fail to lay up treasures in heaven where "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." This is exactly the situation we find in this verse. The great harlot was not building for eternity, but rather, for the pleasures available only for a season. Moses understood this problem very well. A person cannot serve both God and Man. God's spirit enabled Moses to serve the living God, even at the expense of earthly possessions—"When he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26). The fall of Babylon was inevitable, because of the power and purpose of the living God. John heard the voice out of heaven say—"Therefore (*dia touto* - transitional preposition) in one day her plagues will come, death, and sorrow, and famine, and she will be burned down (utterly consumed) with fire; because (*hoti* - causal force - the cause of death, famine, and destruction by fire) the Lord God is strong (and not in text) - the one who judged her." (*krinos* - 1st aor. participle, the fact is asserted that the judgment is over.) How long can the strongest stand in the presence of the living God, when they are enthralled with evil? God's messenger stated that the mighty Roman Empire would last one day (*en mia hèmera*). The proud, arrogant harlot thought that she would be able to stand against her strongest enemy, but she forgot to con-

sider the greatest of all of her enemies - the Holy, Righteous God! She thought that no one could call her to give an account, but the all-mighty "is the one who judged her." She was unprepared for that summons!

*Verse 9*

This verse begins a section which extends to vs. 20. Those who repeatedly committed fornication with the great harlot lament - kings, merchants, and navigators. This is followed by the scene of rejoicing in heaven. "The kings of the earth will weep and wail over her"—when all the petty kings of the earth see that the giant harlot is fallen, they will express their loss with intensive crying, and wailing or agonized mourning. The source of their income and immoral pleasure lies in debris heaps. This will be their immediate response—"whenever they see the smoke of her burning,"—if this is the response of the men of international influence, how will the lesser persons respond? The rulers of the earth have yielded to her temptations; and have enjoyed the prestige of her wealth. What do these men deserve - when they stand in judgment?

*Verse 10*

The destruction is so extensive that the ruins of her can be seen by those—"standing from afar because of the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, Woe, the great city Babylon, the strong city! Because in one hour came (*ēlthen* - 2nd aor. ind. - it came in a single, final act) your judgment. Note the paradox between the descriptive phrases - "the strong city," and the great (*megalē* - great both with respect to power and size or extent of control of the nations of the earth) and the fact that it only took God one hour to judge her. This imagery shows the greatness of God. What men think is great and powerful will be absolutely powerless, when God comes in judgment. It took centuries to build the mighty Roman Empire and God leveled her cities, wealth, prestige "in one hour." Can America learn anything from this pronouncement by the voice out of heaven?

*Verse 11*

Beginning in this verse through verse 14, Rome is pictured as the great commercial city controlling the economy of the world. (Check 13:17—"And that no man should be able to buy or to sell save he that hath the mark,"---) This implies an absolute control of commerce or international trade. Does the Gospel of

Christ have anything to say to the economic systems of our day? Does redemption in Christ contribute anything to the political and economic situation of our own day? The preceding two verses mentioned the response of the rulers of the world to the fall of Babylon. Now in this verse the heavenly messenger describes "the merchants of the earth." John uses imagery taken from Ezekiel chapters 26-27, where he describes the fall of Tyre. The merchants "weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargo anymore." The merchants were not particularly grieved because of the fall of Babylon, the great harlot, but because their income was cut off.

#### Verses 12-13

What were the cargos of the merchants? They were the status symbols of the first century. Our contemporary status symbols, at least for middle class society, are new homes and automobiles. The cargoes which came from all over the world were things which only a very wealthy culture could afford. Note 17:4, and notice again the apparel of the great harlot. The things by which she sought power and security were all perishable. Paul warns us not to be "conformed to this world" (Romans 12:1f). The glamorous fashions of this world will not avail us anything on the day of judgment. All men will be leveled before the throne of God; wealth, social status, education, prestige will not aid their possessors in that hour of God's righteous indignation. I heard Billy Graham telling of his personal audience with the queen of the Netherlands. After a short while, Billy began talking to this head of a royal house about Jesus Christ. Suddenly, she got stiff and reared back and said—Mr. Graham, do you mean that I must repent too? He replied, yes, your majesty, you must repent too! This will be the plight of us all—none shall escape, for there is no hiding place from the wrath of the Lamb. Read the items listed in the cargo, but pay special attention to the last two items in the list—"and bodies (*sōmaton* - slaves - but men were so cheap, that they were listed as nothing but bodies - merchants of men were called Body-merchants), and the souls of men." How cheap are bodies and souls of men in view of Calvary? The moral degradation of the great city becomes most apparent when we see that that which is in the image of God can be purchased in the market place. (See also Col. 2:8f; II Peter 2:3 on the theme of "Using People"). When human life becomes a commodity everything else is lost! For further study on these two verses find out where these

cargo items came from and note how universal was Rome's control and significance. Rome was the biggest thing that man had built on the earth - but it is now fallen! How small this giant had become "in one hour."

#### Verse 14

What is the relationship of man's spiritual needs and things? The 20th century finds mankind locked in a bitter struggle between a materialistically oriented, atheistic communism and the so-called Christian West. The hideous truth is that we are just as materialistically oriented as the communist world ever dared to be. "And the fruit which your soul lusts (*epithumias* - basic immoral desire means to want more than anything else in the world. It is used in a good, positive sense by Paul in I Tim. 3:1, when speaking of Elders desiring their office more than anything else in the world) after-departed (or went away) from you, and all the sumptuous things and the bright things (glittering things) perished from you, and shall find no more at all (*kai ouketi ou me* - means will absolutely never be found again).

#### Verse 15

The merchants wail, because their priceless cargos - suddenly become worthless! The things that thrilled them had been destroyed "in one hour." Their lust for luxury has now turned into "weeping and sorrowing."

#### Verses 16-19

These verses recount the words and haunting memories which dashed through their minds as they watched from afar. They just cannot bring themselves to accept the fate of the filth of Rome "because in one hour (*hora* - hour is the shortest period of time used in the Bible) such great wealth was made desolate (*erēmothē* - 1st aor. passive voice indicative - in a single act - God made the wealth and its supposed security - desolate!) The angel next presents four groups of people - (1) Shipmasters, (2) The ship's passengers, (3) Sailors, and (4) Traders - as a group who "stood from afar." Through their stunned gaze they were muttering - "what (city - not in text) is like unto this great city!" The vastness of her influence is seen in the assertion that "By which all the ones having ships in the sea were rich from her worth (costliness); The great harlot was the only city in the world who could afford to consume the luxurious cargos mentioned in verses 12, 13, 16.

*Verse 20*

God has sealed the downfall of Babylon and heaven is commanded to rejoice "Because God has judged your judgment on her." The eternal city is eternal no more!

## SECTION 60

## Text 18:21-24

21 And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bride-groom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

## Initial Questions 18:21-24

1. What did the great millstone cast into the sea symbolize - vs. 21?
2. Is the joy and happiness gone from the city according to vs. 22?
3. Why will there be no more craftsmen - vs. 22?
4. Why will there be no more grinding of the grain - vs. 22?
5. What social, family and individual issues might be raised by the fact that there shall be no light from the lamps - vs. 23? What about the source of oil necessary for the lamps?
6. Is it possible that there were no more young left after the destruction in view of second clause of vs. 23?
7. Can a nation or a society be responsible for crimes which were engineered and executed by their leaders - vs. 24?

*Verse 21*

John next saw that "one strong angel lifted a stone like a great millstone, and threw (*it* - not in text) into the sea, saying, thus with a violent impulse Babylon the great city shall be

thrown down, and by no means shall be found any longer." The imagery speaks of the final destruction of the eternal city.

*Verse 22*

The places of entertainment are destroyed. This entertainment might have occurred in the great religious Temples which were the sanctuaries of the immoral mystery religions. The musical instruments which were used in the services of the pagan religions are no longer heard in the great city. There are no crafts-men whatsoever. If there is no market for a given product, then men will not learn the craft. International economy has collapsed, therefore it would be utter folly to continue to make products which will not be purchased. There is no grain produced and no one to buy (or who could buy it); therefore, "the sound of a mill shall be no means be heard in you any longer."

*Verse 23*

The great city is in ruin! Her places of entertainment, Temples, homes, and public buildings have gone up in smoke. Men no longer go out in the night to hide in the flickering shadows of half-lighted buildings in order to committ their immoral acts. No one can be found who is still arrogant because of the luxury of the great harlot. Darkness has captured the city which spawned malignant darkness. The "light of a lamp by no means shall shine in you any longer."----The young men and women have left, or were killed in the great judgment, because "the voice of the bridegroom and bride shall by no means be heard in you any longer; because your merchants were (*ēsan* - imperfect tense—their merchants used to be the great ones of the earth, but this is no longer true) the great ones of the earth, because by your sorcery all the nations were deceived." Most men are easily deceived, particularly when they labor under the delusion that wealth, luxury, and physical force are adequate to provide for security. Some men have no committment about anything; they just want to be on the winning side. Contemporary man has observed the rise and fall of some very powerful men. Whenever power is not tempered by Christian morality, it will inevitably destroy its possessor.

*Verse 24*

In the great city, which was bred and nurtured by evil, the great heavenly voice charges her with another barbarian activity

-butchery. (See Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 242 - now in paperback - excellent, standard work!) It was a common thing for the socially elite of Rome to butcher Christians in order to celebrate a Roman holiday.

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 18:1-24

1. What was the angel's message in vs. 4?
2. Discuss the Holiness and Righteousness of God in view of the persistent problems of evil - vs. 6.
3. Does vs. 6 imply that God demands more punishment than is deserved?
4. What was the attitude of the great harlot in vs. 7?
5. Discuss the relationship of God's purpose and human achievement - vs. 7.
6. How long does it take God to bring destruction upon the great harlot - vs. 8?
7. What groups of people are mentioned in vs. 9?
8. What were the cargoes of the ships? Discuss the items as "status symbols" - vss. 12-13.
9. What does vs. 13 tell us about the value of a man in first century Roman culture?
10. What does the goals of a person tell us about that person - vs. 14?
11. What has happened to turn the priceless cargoes into worthless trash - vs. 15?
12. What are some of the implications of the relationship of luxury and spirituality - vs. 19?
13. What has happened to the lights, the craftsmen, brides and grooms, the mills, the places of entertainment in the great city - vss. 22ff?
14. What barbarian activity is implied in vs. 24?

SECTION 61

Text 19:1-8

After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that

corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying Amen; Hallelujah. 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

#### Initial Questions 19:1-8

1. What does Hallelujah mean in vs. 1?
2. Discuss how the truth, justice, and righteousness are related in God's judgment of the great harlot - vs. 2.
3. Discuss the spiritual implications of the imagery of "the harlot" in vs. 2.
4. What does the Bible mean when it speaks of fearing God - vs. 5?
5. What is the significance of the assertion in vs. 6 - that "the almighty reigneth"? (Reigneth is the translation of a form which means - keeps on reigning or continually reigns.)
6. Is God really reigning in the above sense in view of the rapid development of the forces of evil in our own day?
7. Who is the wife of the Lamb in vs. 7?
8. Discuss the difference in the dress of the great harlot (17:4) and the wife of the Lamb - vs. 8.

#### Triumph in Heaven; Two Hallelujah Psalms; An Angelic Message Chapter 19:1-10

A great shout of joy is heard in heaven because of the overthrow of the great Harlot. These shouts of jubilation also introduce the great scenes of final victory. The heavenly songs are modeled after their O.T. counterparts.

We have passed through the great woes and have seen the ravishing effects of evil upon both the spiritual and physical

creation. Now, we enter the great section of Hope! This hope is grounded in God's victory through Christ. Our Christian hope stands in radical contrast with the contemporary nihilistic attitudes. In the prevision of hope we see the tension between cynicism and the Christian faith, defeatism and hope.

*Verse 1*

What was the message of the heavenly chorus? "Hallelujah (from two Hebrew words meaning - praise Yahweh - see the note after chapter 19 on *Handel's Messiah*). Read Psalm 70; Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6. The great *Hallel* is the technical title for Psalms 104-109. They were sung primarily at the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles.) The salvation (the Emperor cult claimed that Caesar was the only savior of men), and the glory, and power of our God." The chorus was claiming that salvation, glory, and power belong to almighty God, and not to the great harlot. Why do these characteristics belong to God—only?

*Verse 2*

"Because true and righteous are his judgments;"----This theme is the same as we find in Romans 1:18 - 3:20. God will judge according to man's own works. The only hiding place will be the everlasting arms of the Lamb of God. Another reason for praising God is—"because he judged (once for all -) the harlot who defiled (*eptheiren* - the imperfect tense expresses the habit of defiling) the earth with her fornication, and he avenged (*exedikēsen* - 1st aor. indicative, God avenged the Christians, once for all) the blood of his slaves out of her hand." This entire section of scripture cries out against all forms of universalism which are so prevalent today. The nature of the Holy, Living God can not appease sin!

*Verse 3*

Again the heavenly chorus - shouts - "Praise Yahweh" (Hallelujah)! God's judgment had brought to an end the malignant disease which the great harlot had spread by her fornications.

*Verse 4*

The twenty-four elders, who first appeared in 4:4, then again 5:8, praise God "and worshipped saying Amen (so be it?); Hallelujah."

*Verse 5*

Another voice joined the great chorus in praising God. "The small and the great" are alike commanded to praise (*aineite* - present, imperative - commanded to continually praise God). There is no one excused for any reason! God is no respecter of persons; He requires the same response from everyone. Being an educated, or wealthy and cultured person in no way places one in a more advantageous position with God. In human society and before men, these factors certainly give their possessor advantage, but will not sway God one wit!

*Verse 6*

The next to sing the Hallelujah chorus was a "vast crowd." They sang - "because our Lord God reigned" (the tense shows the state of His reigning). During the most intense periods of persecution it would not be abnormal for the faithful to ask - whether or not God reigned as sovereign in all of His Creation. When the human situation is dominated by sin and evil, it is very difficult for us to understand how God was in fact the victor over sin, death, and hell at the cross. The Church has often been charged with an escapist attitude of "other worldness." It presents every Christian with a profound problem, when we attempt to relate our pilgrimage in "this world" to the ultimate victory in the city of God. (See Augustine's *The City of God*; and Etienne Gilson, *Les Metamorphoses de la Cite' de Dieu*, Paris, 1952.

*Verse 7*

John now uses the imagery of the marriage of the Lamb. Praise continues - "because came the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife of Him prepared herself,".... The O.T. speaks of God as the Bridegroom of Israel in Isaiah 54:6; Hosea 2:16; Ezekial 16:7. Christ appears as the Bridegroom in Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:19f; Luke 5:34f, and John 3:29. John the Baptizer said of Christ - "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of this bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full" (John 3:29 - 1901 translation). In the N.T. Christ is the Bridegroom of His Kingdom (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25f; Rev. 3:20; 19:7, 9; 21:2, 9; 22:17). See A. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, Eerdmans reprint, chp. 9, pp. 139, *Mothers, Daughters, and Wives in Israel*

gives a brief authoritative account of the Jewish marriage customs in the first century. This information will provide better understanding of the imagery of Bridegroom and Bride in this verse. Jewish wedding customs contained the following elements; (1) *the betrothal* was of much graver significance than engagements in our culture; (2) *the interval* is the specified period of time between the betrothal and the wedding feast. Sometime during this time the bridegroom pays a dowry to the girl's father; (3) *the procession* at the conclusion of the interval. Both parties dress in their finest and prepare themselves for the wedding feast. This *feast* was the fourth major element in Jewish marriage custom.

Wm Hendriksen has an excellent summation in his *More Than Conquerors*, *op cit.*, pp. 216-217) of the marriage imagery.

God announced the great wedding feast in the O.T. The betrothal took place when God sent Jesus Christ to be heaven's missionary to sinful man. The dowry was paid by the atoning work of our Lord! Are we slighting God's invitation?

John uses the metaphor of a woman three times in *The Revelation* - the mother in chp. 12; the harlot in chps. 17 to 19; and the Bride of Christ from this verse to the end of the Book of Revelation.

#### *Verse 8*

The wife or the bride of Christ is His Church. She has been given bright, clean, fine linen in order that (*hina* - purpose clause - for the purpose that she be clothed) she might be clothed; for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." The imagery of a guiltless, guileless bride makes crystal clear that God's wife is pure and undefiled.

#### SECTION 62

##### Text 19:9-10

9 And he saith unto me, Write. Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God. 10 And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

## Initial Questions 19:9-10

1. Why are those bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb blessed - vs. 1?
2. What does the refusal by the heavenly messenger to accept John's worship imply - vs. 10? Does John ever describe a situation in *The Revelation* when Jesus is worshipped and He accepts that worship?
3. Does the messenger claim any special status in the kingdom - vs. 10?

## Verse 9

John is commanded - "Write thou; blessed (*are*- not in text) the ones having been called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." The source of this truth is God Himself. The implication of this verse is that if one is not invited to the marriage supper, or if invited and he refuses to attend, then he will not be blessed. Our Lord uttered a parable (Matt. 22:1-14) in which He used this imagery. Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto" . . . then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways and as many as ye shall find, bid them to the marriage feast." God will not overlook the slighted invitation on the great day of His wrath. The Bride of Christ can never be destroyed but she has often been purified. Christ said - "I will build my Church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

## Verse 10

John was emotionally overcome by the tremendous revelation which he had received from the heavenly messenger. He says, "And I fell down before his feet to worship him." The object worshipped here was an angel. The Jehovah Witnesses persist in their heretical assertions that our Lord is a creature of God. What was the response of this messenger? Immediately he told John; "See thou do it not; I am your fellow-slave and of your brothers having the witness of Jesus; worship God." There is never a command given by any messenger of God in either the O.T. or N.T. to worship anyone other than the living God. In fact, it was categorized as idolatry if anyone worshipped anything, or anyone other than the God of the Prophets and Apostles. Yet our Lord repeatedly accepted worship from men! Angel worship flourished in Asia Minor at this time. The Colossian and Hebrew Epistles specifically condemn this prac-

tice. The last sentence in vs. 10 is a very difficult one. "For the witness of Jesus (There is no way to determine whether or not this is an objective or subjective genitive. This means there is no way to absolutely determine whether John is speaking of the witness given by Christ Himself or whether the witness is *about* Christ.) is the spirit of prophecy." I Peter 1:11 provides us with a very good (possible) commentary. "Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ, and the glories that should follow them."

### SECTION 63

#### Text 19:11-16

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fireceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

#### Initial Questions 19:11-16

1. What do the names of the rider of the white horse (Faithful and True) signify about His character - vs. 11?
2. Discuss the imagery of righteous judgment and war in vs. 11.
3. What is a diadem - vs. 12?
4. Where, besides vs. 13, is the name word of God or just Word (in reference to Christ) found?
5. Who makes up the army following the rider upon the white horse - vs. 14?
6. Where else do we find the descriptive phrases "clothed in fine linen, white and pure" - vs. 14? To whom do these descriptions refer?

7. Where else do we read of a "sharp sword" in the N.T. - vs. 15? What is the function of this "sharp sword"?
8. Who is this victor leading the victorious according to vs. 16?

*Verse 11*

Beginning in this verse and continuing to the final shout - "Come Lord Jesus," John is led by the spirit to speak to the triumph of Christ. We have passed through the sections of gloom and despair; now we turn to hope and victory. We have now passed through the valley of darkness. The triumphant warrior leads the great host of the redeemed. The imagery comes from Isaiah 63:1-3 and Psalm 2, etc. The action is taking place in heaven and not on the earth. The rider of the white horse is going to "judge and make war." (Vs. 11-16 reveal the Conqueroring Christ.)

*Verse 12*

Some of the imagery in this verse is also used in 1:14. He wears many crowns implying his vast rule.

*Verse 13*

The rider of the white horse is identified by His name - "the Word of God" (see *Special Study on The Titles for Christ in The Revelation* - of the Word of God). John has already declared in his Gospel record that 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. . .(the Greek text has the last clause instead of "the Word was God."). . .And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we behold his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.' (John 1:1, 14) In the Gospel record, Christ is the absolute Word, and here the title is qualified - Word of God!

*Verse 14*

The followers of The Word of God are now mentioned. They are pure and holy, because He is the source and cause of their righteousness. The army of Christ followed (*ekolouthei* - imperfect tense - signifying progressive following or following Him where soever He goes) Him." Their purpose and power were obtained from Him.

*Verse 15*

John uses descriptive imagery which is also found in Hebrews 4:12-13. Out of the mouth of the Word of God "proceeds (con-

tinually proceeds) a sharp sword in order that (*hina* - purpose) he may smite the nations with it; and he will shepherd (or oversee them. This is one of the N.T. terms for Elder;) them with an iron staff;".... This is a paradoxical symbol - an iron staff! The last clause of this verse is one of the sources for some of the imagery in *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

#### Verse 16

Christ has one name which is known only to Himself; He is known as the Word of God by His followers; and He has this third name which is recorded on His "garment and on his thigh—King of kings and Lord of lords." (See *Special Study on Titles for Christ* under this name.) This name is descriptive of His sovereign control in the universe. He is King (Ruler) over all the rulers of the earth; and His lordship extends in order to encompass the demands of every human lordship. We have here the cosmic King and Lord! (See Acts 10:36—"He is Lord of all." All is neuter, meaning all things or a Cosmic Lordship.)

Note: The Revelation of Christ 19:11-16

1. Christ's description, 19:11-13, 15, 16
2. Christ's followers, 19:14
3. Christ's Acts, 19:11, 15, 16.

#### SECTION 64

##### Text 19:17-21

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

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the

horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

#### Initial Questions 19:17-21

1. Discuss the imagery of the angel standing in the sun - vs. 17. Note the glory of the angel which would be necessary in order to identify the angel standing in the midst of the suns radiant brilliance.
2. Why does the angel call all of the scavenger birds to the great supper - vs. 17.
3. Discuss the various categories and statutes of the men mentioned in vs. 18.
4. Discuss the relevance of the imagery of war in vs. 19 in view of contemporary man's fear of the war to end man. (Optimistic men have spoken of past war as wars to end war, now pessimistic man is speaking of the war to end man).
5. What did God do to the beast and the false prophet - vs. 20?
6. Why did John use such sickening imagery to describe the horrors of God's judgment upon the unrighteous - vs. 21?

#### Overthrow and End of the Beast and the False Prophet Chapter 19:17-21

##### Verse 17

"One angel standing in the sun"----cried "to all the birds flying in mid-heaven, come, assemble to the great supper of God,"----Birds were omens of evil and destruction in the biblical world. These flying scavengers were looking for food. They were to find it in heaps of slain men.

##### Verse 18

All classes of men have fallen in the destruction of the great city. None escaped! The strongest men were not strong enough; the wealthiest were not rich enough to purchase their own safety. Kings and councilmen were powerless before the great god Thanatos. The scavenger birds knew nothing of their wealth or power, or prestige; all human flesh tasted the same to them. How humiliating to arrogant man! (See Ezekiel 39:17-20.)

##### Verse 19

John's vision included the beast, kings, and their armies. They had marshalled these armies to wage a final war with the

rider of the white horse. This will not be a local battle, but cosmic conflict. We encounter John's message of confident triumph.

*Verse 20*

All of the enemies of Christ receive God's just, righteous, and eternal punishment. The beast and the false prophet "were cast alive (*zontes* - literally living - into burning lake of fire with sulphur.)"

*Verse 21*

The sharp sword which proceeds from the mouth of the rider of the white horse slays "the rest." The hideous imagery reveals the extent of God's judgment. Note that God employs only the spiritual weapon of His word in this conflict. He has declared that all men will be judged according to His Word. The judgment which we receive will be "according to our works."

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 19:1-21

1. What Psalms make up The Great Hallel - vs. 1?
2. What are the reasons for praising God mentioned in vs. 2?
3. Is anyone exempted from the command to praise God in vs. 5?
4. Where in the O.T. is God spoken of as the Bridegroom? Where in the Gospel records is Christ called the Bridegroom? Where in the N.T. is the imagery of the Bridegroom applied to Christ - vs. 7?
5. Where are three metaphors of a woman used in The Revelation - vs. 7? Discuss them.
6. With what has the bride of Christ been clothed in according to vs. 8?
7. Where in the Gospel records does Jesus speak a parable based on the imagery of the marriage supper - vs. 9?
8. Why was John rebuked in vs. 10?
9. What is the O.T. source of the imagery used in vs. 11?
10. What is the name of the rider in vs. 13?
11. What did the imagery of the birds signify in vs. 17?
12. Are all of Christ's enemies finally overcome according to vs. 20-21?

*Special Study*

## Handel's Messiah

(This is just a part of an article that appeared in the June 22, 1963 Christian Standard by J. D. Strauss)

The language of human praise, so much enriched by the musical works of George Frederick Handel - especially in such passages as "The Hallelujah Chorus" from *The Messiah* - may find an occasional word of thanks for the evidently providential circumstances that gave the great writer's music to the world.

*Redemption in Prophecy and Praise*

George F. Handel's was the first artistic effort to portray the gospel in great music.

Often people think that *The Messiah* is composed of scenes from the Gospel records, but this is only partly true. Its central theme is the fulfillment of redemption through the Redeemer-Messiah. Contemporary authors have much to say about the use of drama in religious education - in *The Messiah* we have the great presursor to these efforts.

*The Messiah* has many intricate parts, but it can be nearly divided into three broad sections: (1) The prophecy and realization of God's will and purpose through the coming of the Messiah; (2) The accomplishment of redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and hence the rejection and utter defeat of mankind when it opposes the living God; (3) Hymn of thanksgiving for the final overthrow of death.

*The Messiah* was performed first in London, England, but it had to overcome many adversaries before the public finally heard the dramatic truths of the Christian gospel set to music. *The Messiah* was forbidden production under that name. The critics claimed that it would be sacrilegious!

The entire first part of Handel's work is a majestic echo of the great prophetic pronouncements concerning the Messiah of God. The vivid, picturesque portrayal of mankind anxiously waiting in hope of God's redemption is a musical and linguistic marvel. As though led by the Spirit, Handel chose the highest phrases uttered by the prophets to declare that the prophetic hope was realized in the coming of the Messiah.

Isaiah, Joel, Malachi, Daniel, *et al.*, had given grave warning and powerful promises, that if all mankind were to assemble

against Jehovah their efforts would be futile. Men shall be utterly defeated when they strive against God or seek to salve their conscience by pious neutrality.

Now, in an age when human genius is seen in feats such as hurling massive steel structures through space on a split-second schedule, men need again the reminders that redemption still depends on God's Messiah.

The third section of *The Messiah* is the hymn of thanksgiving for the final overthrow of death. This Christian belief stands in radical contrast with the contemporary ideology which strives to face death without the God of the Christian hope.

Throughout the whole of Handel's work two themes predominate - suffering and the work of redemption. The latter theme is merged into the triumphal hymn of the last two choruses.

The brilliant "Hallelujah Chorus" (the Hebrew word *hallelujah* means "praise Jehovah") is grounded in the finished work of Christ—the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The experience of listening to a competent rendering of *The Messiah* is abundant proof that the gospel can be expressed in more than the usual, verbal form. The tradition by which audiences rise to their feet at hearing this chorus is singularly appropriate.

*The Messiah* was written in about three weeks. If it were the only work Handel ever produced he would merit the endearing words of his fellow musicians. Beethoven declared, "Handel is the greatest composer who ever lived." Franz Liszt said that the "genius of Handel is as great as the world itself."

In light of the fact that more advancement has been made in the physical sciences during the past forth years of civilization than in the preceding four hundred years, it is to be noted that little or no great Christian music has been produced in our day. We pray God that the great Christian themes of redemption may kindle once more the creative fires, one that our Lord may be magnified by one of many great channels of expressing the work of God in Christ - music!

George F. Handel died April 14, 1759, appreciated by England as no composer had been before or after. Our concern is that men shall know *The Messiah*, not as a work of art composed, but rather as the Redeemer of the souls of men. Then shall the whole body of Christianity sing the new song—"Hallelujah--praise Jehovah!"—for He has touched fallen man with eternal healing in Christ.

*Special Study*Some Contemporary Attitudes Toward the Biblical  
Doctrine of the Word of God

I recently heard a lecture by J. V. Langmead Casserley in which he raised the four fundamental problems in the contemporary analytic attack on the possibility of a rational religious discourse (since Kant, Hume, the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein, Austin, Ayer, and all the creative spirits in contemporary Logic of Science). The four questions were—(1) What is Revelation?; (2) Is God knowable?; (3) What is the relation of the knowledge of God to knowledge in the sciences and other academic disciplines?; (4) Does religious language express truth? This line of thought has had many progenitors and many set backs but it is now the predominate Anglo-Saxon Philosophical position. In order to better appreciate the issues involved, let us provide a brief historical perspective.

Nathan Söderblom took the initial steps in his *Gifford Lectures, The Living God* which blazed the trail for those who thought that propositional-revelation had become an untenable thesis. He laid the ground work for the contemporary attitude that extra-biblical revelation exists and continues to this hour. Söderblom did this by developing Justin Martyr's *logos spermatikos* idea. William Temple, in his *Nature, Man, and God*, develops the lethal distinction between Revelation and the proposition which speaks of revelation. Martin Buber's emphatic epistemology is utilized by practically every protestant theologian who has written on the subject of revelation. John Baillie, Emil Brunner, *et al.*, recognize their debt to the Jewish Existentialist - Buber. Dr. Austin Farrer declares in his *The Glass of Vision* - "We now recognize that the propositions on the Scriptural page expresses the response of human witnesses to divine events, not a miraculous divine dictation." (p. 36f).

The profound and prodigious efforts of Barth, Tillich, Berdyaev, *et al.*, are efforts to work out a theory of revelation, once propositional revelation is repudiated in the name of scientific logic and the supposed demonstrations by way of a scientific study, that the Bible is a fallible record of human response to the original revelation which came in the person of Christ, and is therefore personal encounter of subject to subject, and not propositional information about God. But the revelation is God himself, not information about Him mediated through the words

and sentences of a book—the Bible (which provides true affirmation about the will and purpose of God in Christ). God is therefore not available to discursive reason! This contemporary attitude would not be too difficult to handle, if it were not for the persistent assertions by contemporary theologians, that this is the biblical view of revelation.<sup>1</sup>

We hear and read much of the thesis that God reveals Himself in *acts* and *events* and not by *words* and *propositions*.

We must pass by any discussion of the Hebrew and Greek vocabulary for truth, knowledge, faith (e.g., or as in the case of the Hebrew *ēmuna* which means truth, faith, and trust). Martin Buber's *Two Types of Faith* tries to show that the Old Testament understanding of Faith was trust and that the New Testament presents a Christianized Greek-view. The most serious flaw in Buber's thesis is that it is not correct, either for the Hebrew or New Testament views. The biblical view does entail trust, but trust based on evidence which is the ground of the faith and not merely an irrational trust. Under this circumstance, there would be no justification for trusting in God any more than in man or some non-Christian religious object, etc.

Any adequate analysis of the biblical doctrine of revelation would necessitate that we understand the nature of Language (Linguistics and Semantics) and its relationship to *thought* and *reality*, if there is to be any extensive impact made on our generation on behalf of Christ. The very best Evangelical Literature (Henry, Carnell, Ramm, *et.al.*) is seriously deficient in light of the problems raised by rejection of the total Christian perspective, which alone makes sense of *The Restoration Movement* and *The Plea* to restore biblical Christianity. Many misunderstand the relationship of words and propositions to the content of revelation. Even well meaning N.T. Christians and others of Evangelical persuasions believe that this line of reasoning makes the Bible and not Jesus, etc., the revelation of God. We cannot state too often that all we know of Christ and the will and purpose of God for time and eternity depends on the nature of the record which bears witness to Him. The New Testament does declare that Jesus is the final revelation, but

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1. Martin Buber's "Emphatic Epistemology" has revolutionized contemporary Protestant Theology, which is not built upon propositional revelation but rather upon an uncognitive ineffable person to person encounter. The thesis maintains that we know "persons" differently than we know "things." Buber's classic statement if found in his *I-Thou* and *Two Types of Faith* (Jewish and Greek).

we would not have access to this information unless spirit filled men also inscribed the Word of God. The biblical doctrine of the "Word of God" is *not* exhausted in the Incarnation of the Living Word! The biblical doctrine of the Word entails the Word Incarnate, the Word Inscribed, and the Word Proclaimed, and only if we possess a propositional revelation can we correlate this trichotomy.<sup>2</sup>

There are several Hebrew terms which are translated word in our English Bibles, but the primary term is "*Dabar*" means matter or affair in the sense of the thing about which one speaks. It is not true that Hebrew thought subordinates words to events. The reverse is more nearly true, particularly in the case of the Word of the Lord, for his Word determines all events, and no Word of God is void of power. Cf. Genesis 18:14; Jer. 32:17-27, in Hebrew and Septuagint with Luke 1:37. The use of *rhemata* in Luke and Acts furnishes interesting examples of the colorlessness of translating "things" where "sayings" is required by the contextual reference to the spoken word. See Luke 1:65; 2:17-19, 50, 51; Acts 5:32, 13:42."<sup>3</sup>

### *The Word*

Jesus is the *Logos* of God in the New Testament Scriptures. The same effort to manipulate the records into saying that "Jesus" is the revelatory word and the New Testament scriptures are merely fallible-human reports about the original revelation. We must not lose sight of the fact that all we really know of Jesus Christ is contained in the biblical records. Many are still searching for the historical Christ. But he has never been lost by those of us who accept the Bible as the Word of God. If we possess only a fallible human response to original revelation which did not come in propositional form, then we have no authoritative message from God. If we have no authoritative message, then the Restoration Plea is absurd, and we are of all men most miserable.

The modern theologian speaks quite extensively of communicating the gospel, but he must first have something to convey. The church of the first century had "the Word." "The

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2. Barth makes these distinctions, but cannot correlate them, because he will not permit the Bible to have the status of propositional revelation - see his *Dogmatics and for beginners*, G. C. Berkouwer's, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, Eerdmans, 1956. Now in paperback.

3. Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*; Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1961, p. 26

"Word was made flesh" (John 1:1-18) is the one force which can stabilize the souls of men. A vast amount has been written about the term *word* in philosophical literature. A thorough examination would find us comparing its use of Heraclitus, the Stoics, and Philo Judaeus, with the application we find made only by John. We are not concerned with its repeated use, but with the implications of its meaning as it is used by these various authors.

The term has significantly different connotations in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. This should make it plain that there is no single term adequate for an English translation. The Greek word *logos* contains two elements—"speech" and "reason." The vocal utterance plus the thought content of the utterance is synthesized into the term *logos*. As the term is used in the New Testament, it does not imply one or the other, but both. The Word made flesh is unique in context.

The Latin Christians debated over the use of three words in translating this one Greek term. They were *verbum*, *sermo*, or *ratio*; but when the Latins selected *verbum*, they deprived *logos* of half of its implications.

Philo did use the term in both senses. And he maintained this conception as he linked it with "The Word of the Lord" of the Old Testament, but the stoic implication was also present. The distinctive features of John's use imply eternal, personal, divine, and transcendent existence. John's phraseology is not found in the other gospel records. (Hebrew 4:13 where "in his sight" (*autou* - his) identified the Word of vs. 12 as personal.)

It is this "Word" that we must communicate by proclamation and dedicated lives. It must go forth in the power of the Spirit with no uncertain sound.

But thanks be to God we need not succumb to the contemporary mind nor its satanic attacks upon the Scriptures. There are no easy answers to the most serious threats to biblical Christianity in the history of the Church, but we pray that many will take up the challenge and labor in the highly technical and specialized areas of contemporary science, philosophy, and theology so that our message can be placed on the offensive instead of the defensive. The coming generation to whom many of us will preach "Christ and Him Crucified" must be challenged at the academic level where the contemporary mind and its animosity to Biblical Christianity is being forged. I pray God that we rally to the challenge - now beginning with you!

Some of the above points were delineated in the author's 1962 Missouri Christian Lectureship on the *Origin and De-*

*velopment of the Contemporary Mind and Its Significance for Biblical Christianity.*

See the present author's very superficial treatment of the problem of Revelation in the Popular presentation—*What is Revelation*, parts 1 and 2, *The Christian Standard*, April 22 and 29, 1961; and the keen insights which are evident in the article by H. Daniel Friborg, *The Bible and Propositional Truth, Christianity Today*, July 5, 1963. His remarks are even more appropriate in view of the various theories of the *Proposition* and how they differ from the types of *sentences* which are under scrutiny in contemporary Logic. The following works will also be of great benefit to the serious student of this problem.

G. H. Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation*; Presbyterian Reformed Publishing Company, Nutley, New Jersey,

G. H. Clark, *Karl Barth's Theological Method*; Presbyterian Reformed Publishing Company, Nutley, New Jersey, 1963.

H. D. MacDonald - *Ideas of Revelation: A Historical Study, A.D. 1700 - to A.D. 1860*, MacMillan Pub. Co., New York.

Note: *Problem of Education and Evangelism!*

We are not winning the world! The attitude outlined above is not merely an academic affair; it is an attitude which is rapidly permeating the mind of mass-man.

The kind of preparation we provide in our Bible Colleges should be determined by the mind of the age in which it lives. All Bible and nothing else - precludes winning the world!

Is it possible that we are preparing a ministry for a past generation? How shall we defend our Faith in view of the comprehensive, satanic attack on biblical revelation? The areas which call for immediate attention by all concerned N.T. Christians are: 1. *A Philosophy of Language* which sustains the theistic view of language which is necessary for a defense of propositional revelation. The dominate thrust in the rapidly developing field of Linguistic is naturalistic. If this view of the nature and origin of Language is correct a special revelation from God to man is impossible (we need a thorough understanding of *Semantics* - problem of meaning); 2. *A Christian View of History* (A Christian Theology of History) which understands and answers all species of naturalistic, humanistic views of history, the articulation of a Christian-theistic view of a historical fact, historical causation, problem of verifying or falsifying any given assertion about historical reality; 3. *Philosophy of science* (concepts of cause, explanation, fact, etc.) Courses in these three areas should replace the traditional apologetic materials still being taught in our Bible Colleges. The traditional courses are powerless before the contemporary mind, and do not prepare the student to defend the faith against the barrage of attacks, verbal and inscribed, coming from the pens of the contemporary critics of biblical Christianity, and its claim to a special revelation.

## SECTION 65

## Text 20:1-3

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

## Initial Questions 20:1-3

1. If Christ's work on the cross actually defeated Satan and his powers of darkness, why do we read in vs. 1 that Satan is being bound for "a thousand years" (a limited period of time)?
2. Is Satan to be found with finality according to vs. 3?

The Thousand Years of Satan's Captivity  
and the Martyr's Reign  
Chapter 20:1-6

In this chapter men have supposedly found the biblical justification for millennial theories (see the *Special Study* after this chapter). We have just finished the section in Revelation 19:19-21 in which John's vision carried us to the end of sin dominated human history and the day of the wrath of God. It cannot be shown by merely examining the text (or any other way) that the material in the Seer of Patmos' visions are chronological. In fact, if we were entering a technical discussion, we would assert that most of the material in *The Revelation* is repetition which develops in intensity of judgment, i.e., the three series of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls of wrath. Chapter 20 is a more detailed description of the final judgment than was given in the last verses of chapter 19. We must not be led astray by the chapter and verse divisions. Basically their purpose is to show a change in the content of what is being discussed; but John wrote *The Revelation* under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and he used no such divisions. We must therefore be most careful in our evaluation of the materials. Millennial theorists assume that the materials in *The Revelation* are also chronological and this assumption enables them to claim that the imagery of chapter 20 does not reveal the same final judgment as does Rev. 19:19-21. (If available, always consult

Lenski's work on *The Revelation*, see bibliography.) Since Rev. 20:3 is the only place in the N.T. where the word millennium (the Greek word is *chilia ete* - a thousand years; *Millennium* comes from Latin and also means a thousand years) occurs, we must be very careful in our analysis of this section of scripture.

The relationship between chapters 19 and 20 are similar to those of chapters 11 and 12. In chapter 11 the end had come (see especially 11:15-19), but in chapter 12 we return to the human situation. The man-child is born and immediately Satan seeks to kill Him. Satan continues to overcome the man-child, until Satan and all forces are completely destroyed by the victorious Lord (Rev. 19:11-16). The host of the saved follow their regnant redeemer. (See Marcellus J. Kik, *Revelation Twenty*, an exposition, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N.J. This work is a very good basic study by a conservative Calvinist.

Note: Do not be disturbed by our frequent citation of Catholic and Calvinistic works. No one else is producing any serious studies of the Bible and biblical problems (except of course those who deny that The Bible is The Word of God).

The coming again of our Lord, and the signs which will precede His return are two of the most discussed and written about topics among people who accept the Bible as the Word of God. Even the Ecumenical world is producing an almost endless supply of literature on Christian Hope. In this body of literature the great coming events such as the coming again of Christ, the resurrection, of the just and the unjust, the day of judgment, and hell and heaven are reinterpreted (or really interpreted away) according to contemporary Existential hermeneutics. (See the brief, popular presentation of some of the problems in Prof. Lewis Foster's *Basis for Historical Jesus*, The Christian Standard, July 13, 20, 27, 1963.)

What is the thousand year period of which we read in 20:3? Is Christ's coming again connected with this period?

#### Verse 1

John saw "an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain on (*epi* - hanging down from his hand. The chain was not contained "in" his hand) his hand." In our study we will emphasize only two factors in this section of scripture (vss. 1-3); (1) The binding of Satan and its relationship to the Millennium; and (2) the reign of the Christians with Christ in the Millennium.

## Verse 2

The angel laid hold of (*ekratēsen* - 1st aor. ind. active - expresses the actual, complete act of binding) the dragon, the old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound (*edēsen* - 1st aor. ind. active, expresses the fact that Satan is bound) him for a thousand years." (See II Peter 3:8 - But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."--). What can this binding of Satan mean? Are there any other passages of scripture which speak of the binding of Satan? If the work of Christ on the cross completely and once-for-all overcame Satan, why is his power and influence still very evident in our own lives, the Church, and most assuredly the world?

Peter tells us in his second epistle that--"If God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, (Greek is tartarus), and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;"----(II Peter 2:4). Is it possible that Satan is bound in a limited sense, but never-the-less, still bound? Satan was permitted to test Job. Yet, in specific sense he was bound (i.e., limited as to what he was allowed to do). Paul tells us all (I Cor. 10:13) "there hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." Paul here claims that Satan is really limited or bound. (Note that the imagery of chains binding Satan is a metaphor, therefore figurative). Our Lord gives us an illustration of the binding of Satan. One day Christ was casting out demons, and His opponents accused Him of doing it by the power of the prince of devils, Beelzebub. (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15.) Christ's reply was in the form of a parable. Matthew 12:29----"Or how can one enter into a strong man's house, and seize his vessels, if not first he binds the strong man? and then he will plunder his house." We must keep two facts in mind; (1) Christ's work has already defeated Satan; and (2) Satan's influence seems to increase rather than diminish. Paul makes this point very clearly in II Thess. 2:1-3----"Touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any way: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"----

The above brief discussion enables us to claim that Satan is actually bound, but his limitations respect only certain activity. What reason does the text give for the binding of Satan?

### Verse 3

The answer to the above question is given in this verse. Satan is shut up in the abyss in order that (*hina* clause - the purpose clause again) he should not deceive (*planēse* - 1st aor. act. subjunctive - the aor. subj. with the negative *me*, as here, is to be understood as an imperative) any longer the nations, until (*achri* - clearly asserts that the time will come again when Satan shall deceive the nations) the thousand years are finished; after these things he must (*dei* - absolutely necessary) be loosed (*luthēnai* - 1st aor. infinitive, passive voice - signifies that Satan will be loosed by someone else (God), and not because he is powerful enough to break his binding chains) a little while. Satan was bound in order that he could not deceive the nations any longer, but in vs. 8 we note that he "shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth,"---. The dragon and his angels were cast down into the earth (Rev. 12:7ff), and he knew then his time was short. What is implied in Satan's deceiving of the nations? The Bible (it is opposed to universalism in every form) never asserts that the whole earth will be saved. What is the possible relationship of the missionary enterprise and the "deceiving of the nations"? The original language of both Old and New Testaments have specific words for the people of God and the nations of the world. Examine the Roman Epistle for a possible commentary on these matters. Paul's argument in Romans 1:18 - 2:16 is that the Gentiles are lost. He states that God "gave them up" three times (1:24, 26, 28). This passage in *The Revelation* does not claim that the people of God are deceived; but rather, "the nations which are in the four corners of the earth." Only the Church shall be impowered to avoid the deception! Satan deceives the nations so thoroughly, that they refuse "the Gospel" which is the "power of God unto salvation." John is speaking only of the nations as a whole; he is not declaring that there might not be individuals who escape deception. Our's is an age when individualism is all but dead. Mass-man has replaced the individual. Depersonalized, dehumanized man is being prepared (via Madison Avenue techniques of manipulation) to be deceived at the international level. The masters of cybernetics (the Greek word for a steersman - on a ship) can sway unnumbered multitudes. Are we being prepared in our day for the fulfillment of 20:8? Paul said in II

Thess. 2:11 that God will send a "strong delusion, that (*hina* or purpose clause) they should believe a lie." Christ commissioned His Church to preach the saving Gospel to all nations. Christ went on to say that when this was done - then the end would come.

Remember that John introduced five enemies of Christ's church in chapter 12. *The Revelation* clearly tells us of their ultimate doom, but the information about their defeat is contained in more than one vision. The visions before this chapter have revealed the destruction of four of the five enemies introduced in chapter 12; only one remains - Satan. Christ's victory over every enemy is the binding thread of the entire book. When Satan is cast into the lake of fire and sulphur in Rev. 20:10 - that is the end of all of Christ's enemies.

## SECTION 66

### Text 20:4-6

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

### Initial Questions 20:4-6

1. John saw two groups of persons in vs. 4 - who were they?
2. How long was Satan to be bound according to vs. 2? How long were the martyrs to reign with Christ according to vs. 4?
3. What group composed those that reigned with Christ in vs. 4? Who, then are "the rest of the dead" of vs. 5?
4. John says that "they shall be priests of God and of Christ." Where, in the N.T., are all Christians called Priests? (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

### Verse 4

On the central throne of the universe God alone sits. In this verse we note that there are other thrones. God has delegated

some of His judgmental authority. To whom did God give the power to judge?---" I saw (there is no verb here in the text) the souls of the ones having been beheaded because of (or on account of) the witness of Jesus, and because of Word of God, and who did not worship the beast, nor the image of it, and did not receive the mark on the forehead or on their hands; and they lived again (literally they lived) and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Who are these souls who lived again and reign with Christ a thousand years? The text is very plain - they are "the ones having been beheaded (*pepelekismenōn* - perfect, passive, participle, the word comes from *pelekus*, the word for an axe) because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the Word of God,"----. Clearly, this is a special group of martyrs. Many died for the reasons mentioned above but decapitation was the fate of souls that John saw. John himself was banned to Patmos for the same two reasons—witness and word.

#### Verse 5

John then says that "the rest of the dead did not live (again) until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." (Who are the rest of the dead?) The rest (*hoi loipoi*) included everyone else that was dead except the beheaded martyrs. (See I Thess. 4:16; John 5:29; Acts 24:15 on the resurrection). Does this verse teach two chronologically separate resurrections? We must admonish Bible students to be very careful about building up theological positions on very ambiguous language. The general biblical teaching about the resurrection and judgment are clear, but passages such as this one present insoluble exegetical problems. We should be absolutely certain on any matter, before we claim that it is a doctrine of the Word of God.

#### Verse 6

What are the characteristics of those involved in the first resurrection? John says that they are—"Blessed and Holy"; but these are not special blessings which only members of this unique class of martyrs will receive, because all Christians are holy (both in *The Revelation* and all other N.T. books), and those that are invited to the marriage feast are also called "Blessed" (Rev. 19:9). "The second death has not authority over these, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him the thousand years." According to the N.T. scriptures all

Christians are priests of God and Christ. (See I Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). The characteristics of the reigning ones are the characteristics of all followers of Christ; therefore, if these are a special group who receive a special favor from God besides redemption, we cannot learn this from this verse. The reason is simply - that the characteristics - holy, blessed, shall escape death, priests of God are all specifically applied by inspired men of the N.T. to all Christians. Much of what we have said will depend upon whether or not one interprets the thousand years literally or symbolically. Though we cannot enter a debate with all of the millennial groups who take the millennium literally; we do not interpret it as literally one thousand calendar years. (See *Special Study on Millennial Theories*.) Verses 4-6 tells us (1) where the reign takes place, (2) what its nature is, (3) and who participates. It takes place in heaven; it has a spiritual nature, and it involves judging with Christ, living with Christ, and sharing with Christ.

## SECTION 67

### Text 20:7-10

7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

### Initial Questions 20:7-10

1. Discuss some of the necessary features of sinful man which make deception possible - vs. 7.
2. How extensive is Satan's deception according to vs. 8?
3. What O.T. event is similar to the imagery of vs. 9? (A clue: a mighty Empire sent a besieging army to Jerusalem).
4. How long is the torment of Satan, the beast and the false prophet - vs. 10?

## Verse 7

Whenever the appointed time (1000 years) has been fulfilled "Satan will be loosed out of his prison." Notice that Satan does not break out of prison, but he "will be loosed" (*luthesetai* - future tense, passive voice, indicative mood—at some specific time in the future someone (God) will set Satan free again in order to enable him to continue his deceiving.)

## Verse 8

The great battle between Christ and Satan ensues after the evil one is released from his prison. John uses the names of Gog and Magog which come from Ezekiel 38f. They will ultimately be defeated and be cast into the company of the two beasts (see 19:20). The Millennium is not a time of bliss and perfection because Satan still has followers. John says that "the number of them is as the sand of the sea." Evil still had its followers even during the 1000 years reign (vss. 4-5) as multitudes respond to his marshalling war trumpet.

## Verse 9

The imagery of this verse is similar in content to the event of the seige of Jerusalem by Sennacheribs army (II Kings 19: 20ff). The Assyrian hordes had circled the city of David. God sent a sign to the embattered league of defenders. The Assyrian army shall not "shoot an arrow there, or cast up a mound against it." In the night "the angel of the Lord went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of Assyrians." (II Kings 19:32-37.) John declares that the enemy of God's people "went up over the breadth of the land, and encircled the camp of the saints and the having been loved city; and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them." Certainly this imagery fits the imagery of besieged Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah and God's judgment upon all evil.

## Verse 10

"The Devil was cast (*eblethē* - 1st aor. passive voice - was cast finally and forever - by God) into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet (were not in text), and they will be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages." The last enemy of Christ and His servants is forever cast from the presence of God and His saints.

## SECTION 68

Text 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not foundwritten in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Initial Questions 20:11-15

1. Is it possible to escape God's judgment - vs. 11?
2. Does vs. 12 show that there will be a resurrection of the dead, whether righteous or unrighteous?
3. What does vs. 12 say against the false denominational doctrine of "Faith Only"?
4. What is the book of life - vs. 15?
5. Is it important to have one's name written in this book - vs. 15?

Verse 11

The final judgment scene is terrifying to the lost and causes the redeemed to give thanks to God in Christ. Evil dominates the hearts of the dwellers on the earth. This is clear from John's descriptive imagery that "the earth and the heaven fled; and no place was found for them." The whole earth was trying to escape the wrath of the Lamb, but no escape will be found.

Verse 12

Who is called before God in the valley of judgment? John saw "the dead, the great, the small, standing (*hestōtas* - perfect participle - their stance was fixed before God) before the throne; and the scrolls (*biblia* - is literally scrolls. Our English word *book* connotes something different than this word) were opened, and another scroll was opened, which is the scroll of

life; the dead were judged" on the basis of the things that God had recorded there. The record in the scrolls were "according to their works." This passage is just another of many (in Romans, Galatians, James, etc.) which declare that the doctrine of "Faith Only" is foreign to biblical revelation. This passage of scripture categorically declares that we are all going to be judged according to our works. James, most appropriately compliments when he declares that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:14f.)

*Verse 13*

No one will avoid the hour of the wrath of God - merely because they have died. God will call the dead to life again! Death is here personified. The realm of the unseen (for brief statement on *hades* see *Special Study on Major Themes in The Revelation*) surrendered its dead. The cemetery will not be a safe place to hide from God on the day that He shall vindicate holiness, righteousness, and justice in His moral universe.

*Verse 14*

The day God casts death and *hades* into the lake of fire will cause the sceptic, the scoffer, and the unrepentant to cry for the rocks and the mountains to hide them. But God's sovereign sway encompasses even the realm of the dead.

*Verse 15*

This is the final vs. of the great judgment scene. The curtain falls on the drama. The universe has acted out the will and purpose of its Creator. Now God stands before man, the marvel of His creative word either as judge or redeemer. "If anyone was not found in the scroll of life,...he was cast into the lake of fire" with the devil, the beast, and the false prophet and their cohorts of evil. This verse makes it very plain that God's word has no countenance for a second chance, annihilationism, or for soul sleeping.

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 20

1. What two important factors are mentioned in vs. 1?
2. Discuss the binding of Satan - vs. 2.
3. Does vs. 3 imply that Satan will break his binding chains by his own might?

4. What special type of persecution and death had those in John's vision of vs. 4 gone through?
5. Discuss the characteristics of the martyrs - vs. 6?
6. What three things does the 1000 years reign involve - vs. 6?
7. Where can we find the names Gog and Magog in the O.T. - vs. 8?
8. How is Faith and Works related according to vs. 12?
9. What does vs. 15 have to say about the cultic and denominational doctrines of foul sleeping, annihilationism, second chancism?

*Special Study*

A Sketch of the History of Millennial Theories  
With Chart and Bibliography

If we were attempting to provide a comprehensive survey of Millennial theories, it would be necessary to give extended attention to Old Testament and Intertestamental literature, and their doctrine of Last Things. The following works will provide a good basis for such a study. The old, but still very valuable work of Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Scribner's and Son, New York, chapter 29 of volume two - *The Messianic Hope*, pp. 126-189; George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the Age of the Tannaim* (New Testament Period) volume two, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1950, part 7, *The Hereafter*, pp. 279-395. This is the standard work in English; W. O. E. Oesterley, *An Introduction to the Books of The Apocrypha*, London, SPCK, 1953 printing, chapter 7 - *The Doctrinal Teaching of the Apocrypha*, pp. 74-110; and the now seriously dated, but valuable work for an initial encounter with the issues involved see D. F. Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, 4th edition, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1901, Books 2 through 5 for biblical Eschatology.

Chronological Method of Interpretation

Before we launch out into our brief survey we believe that it is important to point out that the chronological method of interpreting *The Revelation* must not be confused with the Millennial Theories under examination. There are four basic chronological interpretations, which are—(1) *The Historicist Perspective*; (2) *The Preterist Perspective*; (3) *The Futurist*

*Perspective*; and *The Idealist Viewpoint*. The first view maintains that *The Revelation* is a symbolic presentation of the entire history of The Church, from Pentecost to the consummation of The Kingdom of God. The second view asserts that *The Revelation* covers only the first century. This view repudiates predictive prophecy. This view is simply impossible, if we take the actual declarations of John seriously. The third view claims that Revelation 4:1 through the conclusion will be fulfilled sometime before and following the coming again of Jesus. The fourth view affirms that the symbolic imagery of *The Revelation* has no particular social or political milieu in mind. Each one of these chronological schemas fail to do justice to *The Revelation* in that their over emphasis on given issues does not enable them to consider features that are just as clear exegetically as the ones they arbitrarily choose to emphasize.

#### Eschatological Interpretations of the Revelation

The English word Millennium (1000 years) comes from two Latin words - *Mille* - a thousand - and *annum* - a year. Millennialism was derived from Jewish belief in the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. The New Testament is very clear that Jesus repudiated this crast, materialistic view of The Kingdom. (All *The Revelation*, chapter 20:1ff. This serious error found extensive dissemination in the early centuries of The Church. Augustine was largely responsible for destroying the impact of this form of Millennialism, when he interpreted Revelation 20 spiritually - in *The City of God*, Book 20.

A CHART showing the relationship of *Millennial Theories* (our English comes directly from the Latin word which means one thousand. The Greek word found in Revelation 20:3 is *chilia* or thousand) - and is related to the coming again of Christ. The three general theories are: (1) *Postmillennialism*, which holds that Christ will come again at the close of the millennium. (2) *Premillennialism* holds that chapter 19 reveals the end of the present age, when Christ returns to overcome *The Anti-Christ*. The saints are supposed to reign with Christ for one thousand years on the earth (chapter 20:1-8). (3) *Amillennialism* maintains that Revelation 20:1-8 does not teach a literal thousand year period either *before* or *after* Christ's coming again.

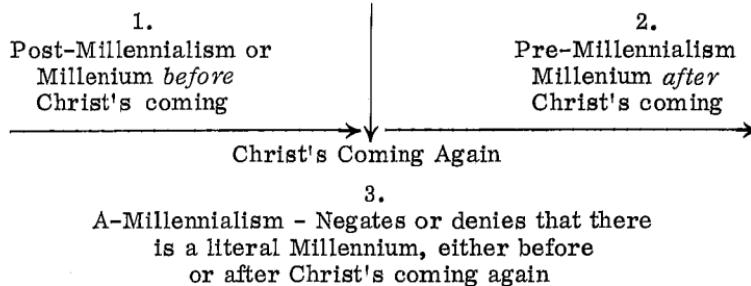
Each of the eschatological schemes mentioned above are

*post, pre, or a - millennial* with respect to the coming again of Christ.

### CHART

*Revelation 20:1-8* is the only place in the New Testament where the term "tachila" or "the thousand years" appears

#### *The Three Theories Compared*



Note: The following reasons are generally offered for claiming that the Millennium mentioned in verse four is literally a physical kingdom on earth through which God rules the world.

(1) The O.T. Kingdom promises cannot be fulfilled in *The Church*. Why not? If the Millennialists (and especially The Dispensationalists would study the N.T. interpretation of many of these O.T. kingdom prophecies, they would notice immediately that inspired N.T. authors do not interpret the O.T. prophecies in the literal manner in which they interpret them. (See the readable account of James Bales', a non-instrumental brother, listed in our bibliography.

(2) The O.T. teaches a period of universal peace (*Isaiah 2:4*) and universal righteousness (*Isaiah 11:45*). These inspired truths hardly prove the thesis of a literal Millennium. The ultimate fulfillment of the prophecies about peace and righteousness will become a reality only in the *City of God*.

(3) The early Church was pre-millennial. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Papias all held some form of a materialistic interpretation of the millennium. The fact that these early Church fathers held a pre-millennial theology in no wise proves that this is the N.T. doctrine. In these same patristic fathers we find the clear departure from N.T. teaching concerning the nature of grace, the nature of the ministry, etc.

We are most grateful to The William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan for granting us permission (free of all cost to us) to print chapter 22, pp. 267-279, Kromminga's work *The Millennium in The Church*, 1945. This is the best survey of millennial theories readily available in English today.

## A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Having now completed our more detailed historical sketch of the course of Christian chiliasm, we are in a position to bring the more important phenomena and representatives together in a birdseye view of the whole field. This will also afford us an opportunity to stress some of the more serious defects which have marred the course of Christian chiliasm. Reserving the critical remarks for the next chapter, we shall devote the present one to a catalogue of representative men and groups. We begin with a list of the chiliastic writers of the *Ancient Church* and some opponents.

1. Barnabas is the oldest Amillennialist, though he worked with the idea of a world-sabbath and with Daniel's ten kings. His antijudaism went to the length of denying the Covenant to the Jews ever since Sinai; a feature which puts him in touch with so modern a Premillenarian as Scofield. But Barnabas applies the promises to Israel unhesitatingly to the Christian Church.
2. Justin Martyr is the first definitely premillenarian writer. He posits a restoration of Jerusalem and a thousand year reign of Christ with both the Old and New Testament believers on earth with that city as the capital; all on the basis of the chiliastic proof text of Rev. 20 and some other biblical material.
3. Ireneus was both premillenarian and covenantal. To him, antichrist was the beast of the Apocalypse. His antignostic polemics threw the emphasis on the beginning of the millennium and neglected its close. He introduced extracanonical proof in the tradition of Papias concerning a future wonderful productivity of the earth. He tried to give rationality to the idea of the millennium, but found it in its significance for the resurrected saints rather than for continuing earthly society.
4. Montanus combined with the idea of a future earthly reign of Christ the novel idea of a preparatory age of the Holy Spirit. This was a slighting of Pentecost and an exaltation of Montanist prophecy to the level of canonicity. His

expectation of the New Jerusalem in Phrygia marks him as nonjudaistic and as confused on the relation between the millennium and the eternal state.

5. Tertullian became an adherent of Montanism in spite of the fact that events had disproved the new prophecy. He reverted, however, to the traditional connection of the millennial Jerusalem with Palestine, saw a fulfilment of Montanist prediction in a natural phenomenon, and developed a theory of successive educational dispensations. In him and Montanus both a kind of trinitarian division of history appears.
6. Nepos, an Egyptian opponent of Origen, was premillenarian, emphasized the physical to the obscuration of the spiritual, and was esteemed by his followers as practically on a level with, if not superior to, Scripture as to authoritativeness.
7. Commodianus was a Premillenarian who held that Nero would return as antichrist and that the seven years of tribulation would be divided between him and Elias. He spoke of the whore Babylon and of a Latin conqueror who would pose as the Christ, and of a liberation of Jerusalem by Christ in His return. The New Jerusalem he placed before the thousand years, and the judgment after them. In the millennium the saints were to have offspring and to be served by the resurrected nobler pagans.
8. Hippolytus, whether an Amillenarian or a Premillenarian, was explicit on the precursory signs of Christ's second advent. The toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image and the horns of Daniel's fourth beast he identified with ten kings of the end-time belonging to the Roman Empire and with ten democracies. Antichrist he expected from the tribe of Dan, and the number 666 he found in the name Lateinos.
9. Methodius, the opponent of Origen, spoke of two resurrections and of the resurrection of the righteous at the beginning of the 'Feast of the Ten Virgins.' To him, the thousand years were at the same time the day of judgment; first of all, of professing Christians. Due to our lack of sources, his chiliasm remains somewhat obscure.
10. Victorinus of Petau was premillenarian, seeing the true Sabbath in the millennium, when Christ and His saints shall reign. However, a commentary on the Apocalypse which

goes by his name is Augustinian in its understanding of the millennium-passage and thus presents a puzzle.

11. Lactantius was premillenarian. He accepted the creation-week-history-periods theory, expected two resurrections, and expected procreation to continue in the millennium, in which Christ will rule from Jerusalem and the living nations will be slave-laborers. The transition to it will be made when ten militaristic kings rule; three of them in Asia, whom the eleventh, the antichrist, will overthrow. The millennium will see some glorification of nature, and at its end the devil will be permitted to make war on the saints. The sixth millennium he expected to end in the near future.
12. Apollinaris, who tried his hand at constructing a doctrine of the two natures of Christ, was a Premillenarian, according to the testimony of Jerome.
13. Origen had opposed some crass chiliasm, but had explained the physical away from the eschatological hope. In his anti-materialism he was not followed by Augustine, but in his opposition to a carnal millennialism he was.
14. Augustine changed from Premillennialism to Amillennialism, repulsed by the carnality of the premillenarian expectations that were then current. He would, however, not condemn a spiritual understanding of the millennium, which would see its joys in the fellowship with God. He became the father, at least in general thought, of the amillenarian exegesis of the millennium-passage of Rev. 20. The reign of the saints with Christ he distributed over the saints in heaven, the believers' victory over lusts, and the rule of the millennium, the end of which he deemed to be near. Then would come the resurrection of the body, the first resurrection of Rev. 20 being the spiritual resurrection which consists in regeneration by the water of baptism.

Thus we see, that the Ancient Church witnessed the emergency of Amillennialism, of starters for Postmillenarianism, and of practically all the material with which historical Premillenarians work to this day. The fact that Premillenarianism subsided instead of winning out is connected with the three names of Origen, the father of Christian Gnosticism; Constantine, who changed the social and political status of the Christian religion; and Augustine, who furnished the interpretation of Rev.

20 which eliminates from it the conception of a distinct millennial period at the close of earthly history. This was the eschatological heritage which the Middle Ages took over; and we have to review next, what the *Medieval Church* made of it.

1. While the continuing dominance of the Church in Western Europe assured the continued prevalence of the amillenarian position, the passing of the year 1000 A.D., made Augustine's expectations as to the nearness of the end of history untenable. The date for the return of Christ was therefore shifted by some from the year 1000 after the birth of Christ to the year 1000 after His passion and, as a last possibility of thus stretching the period, to the year 1065, in which year Good Friday and the Day of the Annunciation coincided.
2. Thereafter modifications of the Augustinian scheme became necessary for taking care of the years beyond the end of the first Christian millennium. This need stimulated the re-editing of the Sibylline Oracles, which Lactantius had already quoted to Constantine the Great in support of his pre-millenarian views. The new visions of those oracles predicted in various forms a universal Christian rule of some duration before the end. They manifest a tendency to transpose Gog and Magog from the end of the millennium to the place where antichrist appears before its beginning.
3. A third step in this process of altering the Augustinian tradition was taken when such predictions lost their apocryphal character and came forward as undisguised contemporary prophecy in such persons as Hildegard of St. Rupert's near Bingen. In her they concentrated on the need of a reform of the Church in criticism of existing ecclesiastical conditions; and thenceforth the hope of a perfection of the Church overshadows the missionary and political hopes in the complex of Christian ideals for the earthly future.
4. Joachim of Floris became the great formulator of this new millennial ideal of the Pure Church. The scriptural basis on which the hope rested was shifted from the millennium-passage to Christ's promise of the Comforter after Montanist example, and Joachim constructed a scheme of periods in the history of redemption and revelation which utilized scriptural elements to arrive at the year 1260, A.D., as the

date for the initiation of the Age of the Spirit, which Age was expected to bring a deeper understanding of Holy Writ under monastic guidance.

5. Amalrich of Bena was a contemporary of Joachim, but his teachings fell under the suspicion of pantheism. Pantheistic chiliiasm was further developed by David of Dinant, who taught a trinity of God, spirit, and matter; and by William the Goldsmith. The coming of the Spirit was interpreted in an antinomian sense as releasing believers from the obligations imposed by the New Testament. This dangerous heresy was quickly condemned by the hierarchy and was driven underground.
6. Meanwhile, the Franciscan Spirituals came on the scene and in their conflict with the papacy they laid hold on Joachim's chiliastic teachings in the person of Gerardino di Borgo San Donnino, who gave them a heretical twise by seeing the fulfilment of Joachim's predictions in the Mendicant Orders, his own Order especially, and by elevating Joachim's writings, as they promised Eternal Gospel of Rev. 14: 6, to a rank equal with and superseding the Bible.
7. This new heresy was attacked by William of St. Amour in an attempt to bar the Mendicants from teaching positions in the university of Paris and in general. He adopted, nevertheless, the idea of a final period of peace before the end. The defender of the Dominicans and the lax Franciscans was Thomas Aquinas, who expected a universal dominance of the Roman Catholic Church before the end.
8. The Franciscan Spiritual understanding of Joachim was continued, in the face of its disproof by the events and of its condemnation by the Church, by Peter John Olivi, who identified the hierarchical Church with the apocalyptic Babylon, and by Ubertino de Casale, who identified the papacy with the apocalyptic Beast. Also Segarelli and Dolcino are related to this tradition, who expected the reformatio of the Church to come about through the medium of some Perfect Pope.
9. Roger Bacon shared in these postmillenarian expectations of a reform of the Church; but in him all the definiteness of the Franciscan Spiritual interpretation of the Joachite views and of these views themselves was stripped off.

10. Arnaldus of Villanova, like Bacon interested in nature study and, as medic, in a study of the human body, expanded the chiliastic speculations so as to include social and physical changes. He saw the hoped-for reform predicted in the Apocalypse under the sixth seal, expected the reform to be accomplished by an angelic pope, and paved the way for the combination of chiliasm with theosophy. He also developed the suggestion of communism, which lies in the community of goods practiced at first by the Jerusalem Church, and the medieval ideal of apostolic poverty, in the communistic direction. John Pupper of Goch later echoed these notes.
11. Peter Aureoli, a theologian, thought his age was the sixth age, the time of the first resurrection, of which he conceived as a renovation of the whole world, freeing it from error and atrocities, and which age had begun with the labors of Dominic and Francis.
12. Milicz of Kremsier viewed heretics, Beghards, etc., as Gog and Magog, from whom the Church must and will be purged before the consummation. He also had a suspicion that the emperor might be antichrist.

While virtually all these medieval chiliasts were of the Pure Church and the postmillennial type, they expected or saw the appearance and overthrow of antichrist before the initiation of the millennium, and in so far they kept the millennium in its proper place as indicated in the order of John's visions. It is only in modern Postmillennialism, as it seems, that the figure of antichrist is either toned down or else transposed from its position preceding the millennium to a position at its end. As in the case of Premillennialism and the Ancient Church, so in the case of Postmillennialism and the Medieval Church, the development of the central idea and ideal was rather complete, and the *Modern Church* fell heir to both, the ancient political ideal and the medieval ecclesiastical ideal. A brief review of what it did with these two ideals completes our short historical survey. Naturally the picture becomes far more complex than it ever was before. We follow the chronological order in listing the more prominent names.

1. The early Anabaptists combined both premillenarian and postmillenarian elements. Hans Hut and Melchior Hoffmann were premillenarian, expecting the initiation of the

millennial reign by Christ in His return. But at Muenster the revolutionary activism of Jan Mathijs and Jan Buckel-sen, trying to establish the kingdom by force, implied post-millenarian assumptions. Their revolutionism goes back to Thomas Muenzer. The Huterian Brethren, who practiced community of goods, never shared it. The Muenster anti-nomianism was continued by David Joris and Henry Nicholas in a pantheistic sense. The early Anabaptists cherished both the Pure Church and the Kingdom ideal, since they viewed themselves as the former and tried to establish the latter by force.

2. The English Congregationalists adopted and incorporated a postmillenarian article in their modification of the Westminster Confession, the Savoy Declaration, in 1658.
3. At about the same time the Fifth Monarchy Men appeared in England, who were laboring for the establishment of the reign of Christ or the Fifth Monarchy of Daniel. A trifle later their insurrection under Venner compromised Independence with Charles II.
4. Meanwhile, Valentine Weigel had made the combination of chiliasm with theosophy in continental Lutheranism. He conceived of the Age of the Spirit, which is Christ's rule in us, as imminent and as bringing the end of commerce and of procreation.
5. Jacob Boehme continued the combination of chiliasm with theosophy. On the one hand he extended salvation beyond the sphere of the knowledge of the Gospel to that of the Inner Light, but on the other his theosophy was dualistic, holding no hope for the final restitution of all creatures. The nature of the saved he expected to be androgynous.
6. The Behmenists of England were monistic, teaching the restitution of all things, the devil included. Jane Leade and John Pordage were leaders among them. Pantheism and mysticism outweighed their Christianity. Jane Leade had visions of the divine virgin Sophia. They were contemporaries of the Fifth Monarchy Men.
7. In the Netherlands, Jodocus van Lodensteyn thought of a monastic reform of the National Church, and Jean de Labadie took such a reform in hand, trying to establish the Pure Church of the Regenerate only.

8. Johannes Cocceius became the father of dispensationalism, cutting the difference between the Mosaic and the New Testament dispensation so deep as to impair the unity of the Covenant of Grace, though he expected the reign of Christ and the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to come about swiftly at the end without a millennium.
9. Philip Jacob Spener, the father of Lutheran Pietism, was chiliastic, expecting a period of the Pure Church, toward the end of which period there will be a lack of faith.
10. J. W. Petersen, Lutheran superintendent, and his wife, E. von Merlau, passed from Pietism to chiliasm and from that to theosophy, receiving verification of the doctrine of the restitution of all things by direct revelation. He began the list of dispensations with a first one at the creation of the angels and closed the list with a last one for the salvation of the devil.
11. Wm. A. Brakel placed a millennium between the antichrist and Gog and Magog, but expected no physical return of Christ for its initiation. He taught three New Testament periods preceding it: one of the apocalyptic seals, covering the period of the early persecutions of the Church by the pagan Roman Empire; one of the apocalyptic trumpets, covering the period from Constantine the Great till the close of the Reformation about 1560, during which time the antichrist became dominant; and one of the apocalyptic vials, covering the period after 1560 and bringing the judgment on antichrist and the gradual destruction of his rule. To Brakel the beast was antichrist in his political aspect and the false prophet was antichrist in his ecclesiastical aspect, and antichrist was the pope. Brakel's millennium was of the Pure Church type but had also Reign-of-Christ elements.
12. The sufferings of the Huguenots under Louis XIV gave rise to the French Prophets, who appeared first among the Camisards in the Cevennes, but spread to other countries in the flood of refugees. In England they made rather a stir for a short season, and in Germany they communicated prophetism indirectly to groups in the Wetterau.
13. F. A. Lampe was postmillenarian and expected the destruction of the pope and the Turk at the beginning of the millennium and the final judgment at its end. He gave a great impulse to experientialism.

14. Among the Reformed of Germany chiliasm became premillenarian in the person of Jung-Stilling, whose millennial expectations embraced both the Pure Church and the Reign of Christ.
15. J. A. Bengel was the first Lutheran chiliast who succeeded in giving chiliasm scholarly dignity. On the basis of intricate calculations he expected the second advent of Christ to come in 1836.
16. Among the followers of Bengel. F. C. Oetinger combined chiliasm with Swedenborgian speculations. He believed in communication with the dead; that is, spiritism; as did Swedenborg.
17. Swedenborg himself interpreted the second coming of Christ as an inward experience which to his mind constituted the establishment of the Church of the New Jerusalem. He identified angels with dead men in happiness and devils with such in despair.
18. F. Flattich, among continental Lutherans, identified the religiously indifferent civil governments of the time of the enlightenment with Babel.
19. The Holy Alliance, entered into by Alexander I of Russia, Francis I of Austria, and Frederick William III of Prussia, had a post-millennarian coloring traceable to the influence of Madame de Kruedener, a pietistic friend of the Tzar. Its hollowness contributed to the antipathy of political liberals to Christianity.
20. Among chiliastic organizations the Catholic Apostolic Church is prominent. It became fully organized with twelve modern apostles in 1835. It enjoyed, according to the brief of its members, the revival of the charismatic gifts of prophetism and the speaking in tongues. Its apostolate it conceived of as a restoration of Christ's second apostolate, originally represented only by Paul and serving the conversion of the gentiles, and postponed because of corruption. But the corrupt Church, Babylon, is now ripe for judgment. The great tribulation will intervene between the resurrection and rapture of the saints and the overthrow of Satan. Then the millennial reign of Christ and His saints will come. For the escape of believers from the great tribulation they invented a ceremony of sealing.

21. Of about the same time dates the other important chiliastic church organization, the Plymouth Brethren. They have no apostolate, but have the guidance of the Spirit. They distinguish an initial second coming of Christ to reward His people according to their conduct and a further coming of Christ with His people for the judgment of the living nations. While the Irvingians believed sealing was necessary for escape from the great tribulation, the Darbyites held that no Christian shall pass through it. The teachings of the Catholic Apostolic group and the Plymouth Brethren have greatly influenced recent Premillennialism.
22. In America, Wm. Miller became the father of Second Adventism from 1831 onward. His date-setting failed and was abandoned, but his followers organized in several groups, including the Seventh-day Adventists.
23. Sabbatarian were also the followers of Johanna Southcote.
24. A number of chiliastic organizations arose which practised communism, and the United States became their refuge. In themselves too small to count for much, their oddities attract much attention and thus give occasion for much indirect influence of some of their ideas.
25. Joseph Smith, the father of Mormonism, incorporated in his parody of Christianity chiliastic elements, as appears in the name of the Latter Day Saints.
26. Christian Science is akin to theosophy, and the question may be asked, in how far modern theosophy has been fed by the theosophic strains which have appeared again and again in modern chiliasm.
27. The followers of Charles Taze Russell and his successor, 'Judge' Rutherford, recently posing as Jehovah's Witnesses, must be mentioned. Mathematical calculations connected with the measurements of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh are combined with superficial and misleading scriptural exegesis in support of views which include such heresies as the denial of the deity of our Lord.
28. The Princeton theologian Dr. Charles Hodge must be mentioned as a Calvinistic Postmillenarian who expected the universal preaching of the Gospel to result in the conversion of Jews and gentiles and a final period of great prosperity

of Christianity before the appearance of antichrist and his overthrow by the Lord.

This diversity and complexity of the modern chiliastic chart reflects the diversity and complexity of modern Christianity, from which all outward controls have effectually disappeared. This situation makes it difficult to put into a few words any further brief characterization of these views. It is, however, possible to disentangle certain definite strands from the web; such as communistic chiliasm, sectarian chiliasm, political chiliasm, theosophical chiliasm, and dispensational chiliasm. These strains run parallel to the old distinct types of premillenarian and postmillenarian chiliasm and combine with either the one or the other in varying measure, and they embody in a greater or lesser degree either one or both of the old ideals of the Pure Church and of the Reign of Christ. At the same time they furnish the categories into which our criticisms of the historical course of Christian chiliasm must fall.

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## SECTION 69

Text 21:1-27

And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. 5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. 6 And he said unto me, they are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorveres, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

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

thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

#### Initial Questions 21:1-27

1. What did John see - vs. 1?
2. What is the source of the new Jerusalem according to vs. 2?
3. What does vs. 3 tell us about God's ultimate relationship to man?
4. Discuss the things that God will take away - vs. 4? Is this a vital part of the Christian's hope?
5. What is the source of newness in the universe - God or man - vs. 5?
6. Read John 7:37f, and then discuss the last part of vs. 6.
7. To whom does God promise Eternal Life according to vs. 7?
8. Does vs. 8 imply that there are going to be people that are lost?
9. What did the angel show John according to vs. 10?
10. Why is there no Temple in the City of God - vs. 22?

The Vision of the New Heaven and a New Earth  
Chapter 21:1-8

After the overthrow of the last enemy of righteousness, Satan, we are provided with a vision of the heavenly city of God. Here we have vouched safe to us the eternal and glorified state of God's elect. The language comes from the glorified imagery of Isaiah 65:17, etc. John's basic source throughout *The Revelation* is the O.T. He uses the prophetic concepts of restoration as a new creation, a new Palestine, a new Jerusalem, a new Temple, and a new earth. But John is never describing a materialistic kingdom; he always has in view "the Jerusalem above, our mother" (Gal. 4:26). The persecuted Church is now the glorified bride of Christ! John has already received three basic visions: "(1) The Seven Churches (1:9-3:22); (2) Process of world judgment (4:1-16:21). (3) Climax of Judgment 17:1-21 8." and now the last one (4) "The Eternal City (21:9-22:5)." The obstinately sinful have all been cast into hell. Jerusalem the city of the great King is the symbol of the translated Church. The kingdom of God is complete.

*Verse 1*

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth." All old things are gone. In the new earth dwell only new men in Christ. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new." (II Cor. 5:17). Paul and John are in agreement about new creatures and the passing away of the old order.

*Verse 2*

"The holy city, new Jerusalem" was descending from its heavenly origin. Men did not design nor build this city whose foundations were not laid by human hands. We have heard the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:9. The new Jerusalem "coming down out of heaven from God, having been prepared as (*hōs* - like - a bride) a bride having been adorned for her husband." Jerusalem is compared to the bride of Christ in this verse (see Ephesians 5:32; Isaiah 54:1).

*Verse 3*

John had previously stated that "the Word tabernacled among us" (John 1:14) now, "the tabernacle of God is with men." In the city where God dwells, there are the redeemed inhabitants, fellowship with God and man, security, peace, safety, and the beauty of paradise. Sin, death, and tears of pain are forever barred from the new Jerusalem.

*Verse 4*

"God will wipe off every tear out of their eyes." Why? Because death, (*penthos* - means outwardly expressed grief) grief and pain are no longer threats to man. He and all creation has been redeemed and "the first things are passed away."

*Verse 5*

God alone can make things new! The united nations, human legislation, disarmament conferences, International law, one-world government will all fail to bring about the desired end of a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. This message is a hard blow to proud, humanistic, naturalistic man who believes that he is capable of building a better tomorrow through research, applied technology and subliminal research, etc.

God created the church of Jesus Christ to fulfill "the ministry of reconciliation" by proclaiming the "word of reconciliation" as ambassadors of Christ (II Cor. 5:17-21). ("The unwanted walls"—the present author is presently preparing a volume, with this title, dealing with the problem of the nature of the Church and its implications for contemporary Ecumenical and Roman Catholic discussions about the unity of the Church). Paul's Ephesian Epistle speaks of the "constituency of the church," "the construction of the Church," "the purpose of the Church," "the unity of the Church," and "the practical implications of its God given unity." Mankind is divided as never before! The purpose of the Church is to unify mankind through the word and ministry of reconciliation. How effective have we been?

*Verse 6*

The great heavenly voice said to John "It has occurred." What has occurred? The purpose of God has been fulfilled! The true and faithful words mentioned in vs. 5 have now come to pass. Our Lord said "he that hungereth and thirsteth after

righteousness - shall be filled." In the city where there is no night, either physical or spiritual, "the fountain of the water of life" has been opened. God invited all inhabitants to partake.

*Verse 7*

Here we learn of God's demand for victorious Christian living. Can a man once saved ever be lost? The exhortation found in this verse would have no relevance whatsoever if it is impossible for a Christian pilgrim to become lost in his journey to new Jerusalem. Who shall inherit all things according to John? "The overcoming one (the one who continually overcomes) shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son."

*Verse 8*

What are some of the characteristics of those who shall not inherit sonship and citizenship in the heavenly city?—The cowardly and unbelieving and having become foul, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars" shall be cast into hell. Paul tells the Churches of Galatians the same thing in Gal. 5:16-26. Paul says, "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (vs. 21). These practices are in diametrical opposition to the spiritual conditions of the dwellers in the new Eden.

The Vision of the New Jerusalem  
Chapter 21:9-27

*Verse 9*

The heavenly messenger who bore the seven bowls of anger appeared again. John was invited to see "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." Keep in mind that John saw "the new Jerusalem coming down—as a bride having been adorned for her husband." Now, John is commanded to "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

This verse through 22:5 gives us the description of the city.

*Verse 10*

What did the angel show John on "the great and high mountain?" Here we have a clear identification of the Church of

Jesus Christ as being object of the imagery of New Jerusalem (also the bride). New Jerusalem is no utopia where men live in peace which they have created by intelligent planning, and rational discussion; it is rather the body of Christ His triumphant Church. (See 17:7 where John speaks of his vision of the great harlot city).

*Verse 11*

The city of the redeemer has a permanent quality which all mortal cities lack. "Having (permanent possession) the glory (this is the very presence of the living God - Exodus 40:34) of God; the light of it was like...jasper." The jasper was the last stone on the breastplate of the High Priest. It was used in the walls of New Jerusalem 21:8; and also the foundation of the city where new men dwell.

*Verses 12-27*

The following block of scripture, in which we find the figurative description of the house of the holy, is largely self-interpreting. All of the things which men value are used in the construction of the city. (See Ezekial 48:31ff.) The number twelve appears repeatedly throughout this section. It was probably a symbol of perfection. The measurements given are unfamiliar to most of us. Verse 16 mentions 12,000 furlongs. This distance would be approximately 1238 miles. Verse 17 speaks of 44 cubits. Originally a cubit was represented by the distance between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger (approximately 18 inches).

Only "the ones having been written in the Lamb's scroll of life" shall inhabit the holy city.

We shall provide a skeleton outline of the chapter.

- I. The Description of the Spiritual Conditions which exists in the City 21:2-8.
  1. From God, not man; 21:2.
  2. Tabernacle of God among men, 21:3.
  3. No Pain nor sorrow, 21:4.
  4. New 2:5.
  5. Eternal Life, 2:6.
  6. For those who are more than conquerors, 2:7,8.
- II. Physical Description of the City, 21:9-22:5.
  1. The Bride, the wife of the Lamb, 22:5.

2. Perfect Cube of 1500 miles, 22:16,17.
3. 12 Gates represents 12 tribes of Israel, 22:12,13.
4. 12 Foundations, 12 Apostles, 22:14.
5. No physical Temple, 21:22.
6. Glory of God lights the city, 21:23; 22:5.

**III. The Unique Marks of Identification of the City.**

1. The City of God, place where the saved dwell.
2. The Body of Christ.

**Discussion Questions  
Chapter 21**

1. What is the origin of the holy city according to vs. 2?
2. What other N.T. book uses the metaphor of the church as the bride - see vs. 2?
3. Discuss the relationship of human efforts to create a better world and the fact that only God can make things new - vs. 5.
4. What does vs. 7 say for or against the denominational doctrine of "once in grace always in grace?"
5. Are the bride and the new Jerusalem the same - vs. 9?
6. What other city did John see in a vision - vs. 10?
7. Discuss the physical imagery John used to describe the spiritual city of God in chap. 21.
8. What hope would chp. 21 have given the persecuted Church in the 1st century? What hope does it give us today?

*Special Study*

**Jerusalem in History and Imagery**

Jeremiah cried out—"Is it nothing to you all ye who pass by" (Lam. 1:12) as he observed the city of Jerusalem in ruin. The greatest events in human history have occurred in that city.

The twentieth century man's eyes are filled full of slain cities. The city of Jerusalem has been slain often. God chose to erect the throne of His kingdom outside the walls of that city. Jerusalem (in fact all of Palestine) is strategically (geographical) located - (see F. M. Abel, *Geographie de la Palestine*, 2 volumes, Paris, Librairie Lecoffre, and his *Historie de la Palestine depuis la conquête d'alexandre jusqu'à l'invasion Arabe*, 2 vols, Paris, 1952. The religious significance of Salem

of the Jebusites is of the utmost importance in biblical history. The Archaeological and topographical importance of the city of David is beyond dispute. Contemporary Jerusalem is symbolic of divided mankind. The city of the great king is now dominated by those who reject Him as Lord.

Jerusalem is mentioned six hundred and forty four times in the O.T. alone. It is, without question, the most important city in both the O.T. and N.T. Before Jerusalem became the biblical symbol of the City of God (Rev. 21:1ff) it was populated by the Jebusites (see Joshua 15:36; Judges 19.10,11; I Chronicles 11:4). The Jebusites either retook the fortification, or else had never lost it, because David took the strong hold (II Samuel 5:6,7). Solomon made bond servants out of the Jebusites (I Kings 9:20).

The Hebrew etymology of *Yerushalaim* is impossible to determine with certainty. But it is clear that part of the word is composed of *shalem*, peace.

Ancient Jerusalem stood on four different hills. Contemporary topographical research has necessitated that many traditional terms and identification be corrected. There are three valleys which surround Jerusalem. The Kidron (or the valley of Jehoshaphat—see Joel 3:1ff—this valley is the valley of God's judgment) is three miles long and divides Jerusalem from the mount of Olives. The valley of the cheesemakers (The Tyropean valley) separates the western and eastern hills. The Hinnom valley was the western and southern boundaries of Jerusalem. It is called the valley of the sons of Hinnom (Ge-Hinnom). This valley was the central location of Molech worship; and later it became the place where the city refuse was burned. (Note this imagery in order to better understand why it was one of the N.T. words for Hell!)

Archaeological excavation has enabled scholars to basically reconstruct the pre-Israelite period of the city. The Israelite period can be reconstructed both from the biblical records and the illumination which archaeology provides. The major excavations have been carried on by Wilson-Warner (1867-70), Schick-Guthe (1880-81), Bliss-Dickie (1894-97), Parker (1909-11), Weill (1913-14, 1923), Macalister-Duncan (1923-25), and Cranfoot (1927-28).

Archaeology and exegesis of the biblical text are complimentary in asserting that ancient Jerusalem was on Ophel. The writer of Chronicles states that Ophel was strongly fortified (II Chron. 27:3). "Manasseh built an outer wall to the city of

David—and compassed Ophel about with it and raised it up to a very great height" (II Chron. 33:14). Excavators have uncovered long stretches of the walls of the city. Josephus (*Antiquities*, chp. 7, iii, 2) states that David surrounded this city with walls, and named the city after himself ("the city of David"). Some of the unearthed walls run the length of Ophel, and are twenty four feet thick in some places. (We cannot here consider the more complicated problem of the range of application of the term *Zion*, but see the bibliography below.)

Jerusalem was rebuilt on the old location after the exile (Nehemiah 2:11-15, and chp. 5-7). After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by Titus, the Roman general—Jerusalem has a new history which is not our concern in this brief appendix.

The city of the great King provides a vantage point for looking eastward and westward. This is the point at which God chose to enter human history "in the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4). It was the point of origin of the church, the place where the Gospel was first preached. Christ told His disciples to begin at Jerusalem and go to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). The way of the witnesses began at Jerusalem!

Both the city of Jerusalem and The Temple play a great part in the imagery of etchings, great music, and for our special concern, *The Revelation*. (For excellent introductions to *The Temple* see Parrot's work listed in the bibliography and G. Ernest Wright's *The Temple in Palestine - Syria*, pp. 169 - reprinted in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, edited by G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman, N.Y. Doubleday and Co., Inc., (paperback).

Jerusalem is called The Holy City in Matt. 4:5 and 27:53. This secondary name was utilized by the author of beautiful song, *The Holy City*. Note the imagery in the words!

Last nite I lay asleeping, there came a dream so fair,  
I stood in old Jerusalem, beside the Temple there,  
I heard the children singing, and ever as they sang  
Methought the voice of angels in heaven in answer rang,  
Methought the voice of angels in heaven in answer rang,  
Jerusalem! Jerusalem, Hark, how the angels sing,  
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the King!

And then me thought my dream was changed,  
The streets no longer rang,  
Hushed were the glad hosannas the little children sang.

The sun grew dark with mystery, the morn was cold and chill,  
 As the shadow of a cross arose upon a lonely hill,  
 As the shadow of a cross arose upon a lonely hill,  
 Jerusalem! Jerusalem, Lift up your gates and sing,  
 Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King.

And once again my dream was changed,  
 New earth there seemed to be,  
 I saw the Holy City, beside the tideless sea,  
 The light of God was on its streets, its gates were open wide,  
 And all who would might enter in, and no one was denied,  
 No need for moon or stars my night, nor sun to shine by day,  
 It was the New Jerusalem that would not pass away,  
 It was the New Jerusalem, that would not pass away,  
 Jerusalem! Jerusalem, Sing for the night is o'er,  
 Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna for evermore,  
 Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King!

The words of our Lord show His compassion, yet stern judgment of "the Holy City." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her."---Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:37f). The Holy Spirit directed John to use the imagery of the holy city or the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1ff). It was in Jerusalem that The Temple, as place of worship, existed; the place of sacrifice was established; the Sanhedrin, Priests, Prophets, Apostles, and our Lord walked. God chose this point as the center from which biblical Christianity was to be taken into all the world. Jerusalem, thus began as a Jebusite fortification and ended up as the symbol of the *City of God*. In this city there is no sin present. The great victory of God in Christ has enabled the conquerors through Christ to dwell in the city where there is no death, tears, nor fears. *Paradise Lost* (Genesis, chp. 3f) has now become *Paradise Regained* through the atoning power of the blood of the Lamb. "Only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life" shall inhabit the new Jerusalem!

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Note: Sermon Suggestions

The Seven Matchless Marvels of  
The City of God

(See Edward A. McDowell, *The Meaning and Message of the Book of Revelation*, Broadman, pp. 212).

These seven characteristics can be developed individually or as a theme sermon discussing all seven features.

1. "The New Jerusalem is perfect in her glory." One could study the O.T. and N.T. doctrine of the glory of God, the dwelling place of God, etc.
2. "The New Jerusalem is a city of perfect worship." (See the *Special Study* on Worship). Study the O.T. and N.T. teaching about God's revealed form and content of worship which is acceptable to him. Study also non-biblical forms of worship and non-Christian religions and their forms of worship.
3. "The New Jerusalem is perfect in its universality." All you who accept Jesus as Lord shall dwell here regardless of nationality, education, degree of wealth, or color.
4. "The New Jerusalem is perfect in its holiness." The inhabitants are all pure because Christ has presented His spotless bride to the Father. This city is not a utopia which has been created by social engineering, but rather is the city of God. God has eliminated all traces of sin, both in man and the whole of creation (see Romans 8:18-25---"the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." More than man was effected by the Fall, the whole creation was involved).
5. "The New Jerusalem is the city of perfect life." What would a perfect life be like? What do we think would be involved in a

perfect life in Christ? List both positive (things that would be) and negative (things that would not be) characteristics.

6. "The New Jerusalem is the city of perfect light." The metaphor of light is used in non-Christian religions, in the literature of the Qumran Community (Dead Sea Scrolls), and in the Word of God. John said in him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness---Verse 9 - There was the true light - even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." (John 1:4,5,9.) Jesus Christ said, "I am the light of the World"---(See also the theme of *Light* in I John).
7. "The New Jerusalem is the city of perfect dominion." Originally God gave man dominion over all creation. Sin came and marred this God given right to reign over the things of creation. Now, in the city of God, sin has been cast out. Perfection is regained. Man now serves and worships the Lord God of creation and redemption. "They shall reign forever and ever."

Note: An excellent study of the Biblical Theology of Newness can be found in Roy A. Harrisville, *The Concept of Newness in the New Testament*, an Augsburg Publishing House Theological Monograph, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1960.

Concerning the biblical vocabulary for newness there has been propagated some erroneous lexicographical information through R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of The New Testament*, 9th edition, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953, pp. 219-225; Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, T. T. Clark, Edinburgh. This lexicon gives the Hebrew (O.T.) Word and the Greek Word used to translate it. It is now dated by Kittel's *Wörterbuch*, but is an excellent beginning study in vital Biblical Theology Vocabulary, as it enables one to begin tracing biblical terms from Hebrew O.T. through Septuagint to the New Testament.

Johannes Behm wrote the article covering the vocabulary *kainos* and *neos* in Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testamente*, Stuttgart, Germany and its deficiencies demanded further investigation. Dr. Harrisville's work fulfills that need. The Following data shows the content of the monograph. There is much excellent preaching and teaching data in this work.

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## SECTION 70

### Text 22:1-5

And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, 2 in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; 4 and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

### Initial Questions 22:1-5

1. Jesus identified the "rivers of living water" as the Spirit in John 7:38. What possible significance can the river of water of life have in vs. 1?
2. What was the purpose of the fruit of the tree of life - vs. 2?
3. What will God's servants do in the New Jerusalem - vs. 3?
4. Discuss the paradox of reigning (see vs. 5) servants (see vs. 3). Servants are not generally spoken of as reigning.

Epilogue: The Last Words of the Angel,  
the Seer, and the Savior  
Chapter 22:1-21

The great drama is over and righteousness has prevailed! God is sovereign; His Lordship is universal. The Seven Churches of Asia Minor have been warned and exhorted. These warnings and exhortations need to be heard afresh in our own day. We have seen the performances of *The Seer*, *The Savior*, and *The Saved* in the drama which depicted the struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood, light and darkness.

We have spanned the years from the tragedy of *Genesis*, chapter 3, *Paradise Lost* to *Revelation* - chp. 22. *Paradise Regained* (study and compare the biblical themes and imagery used by Dante and Milton).

*Verse 1*

The refreshing waters of eternal life can come from only one source, "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Man's primitive innocence has been regained at the expense of "the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world." The imagery John employs reveals the rich abundance of our salvation. The symbolism of the garden paradise points to a perfect environment for perfect man (the new man in Christ). Man was banished from his garden paradise because of his sin (Gen. 3; He has been restored by God in-Christ). Compare this with the city (the great harlot) which was destroyed in chp. 18:21ff. The light, joy, fellowship are gone forever!

*Verse 2*

In God's city there is the tree of life and the river of life. The tree bears fruit each month (abundance). Even the leaves of the trees are for "healing (*therapeian* - is one of the N.T. words for worship. It is also a medical term found in the medical papyrus of the period. Sinful Man is sick. Only God's work through Christ can make man well again!) of the nations."

Note: God's Holiness is Man's Wholeness!

Contemporary man is seeking therapy for his malady. There is more counseling, psycho-therapy, etc., being done in our age, both in and out of the Church, than ever before in the history of western civilization. Men are trying to find out what life is all about. What is the

significance of our lives? Can we ever be what God made us unless we possess the holiness of God? How is *your* spiritual life? Do you actually find healing in your worship (the word *therapein* is one of the many N.T. words translated worship) of the living God on the Lord's Day?

The nations of the earth are seeking wholeness through the medium of councils and discussion groups. John says that God alone can provide the means whereby sinful, fallen man can be whole again. Only "eternal life heals the scars of sin and misery!"

#### Verse 3

In the city of God nothing is accursed. The assertion of equal sovereign is most clearly declared by the Spirit guided John. "And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the garden paradise); and his slaves will serve him (*latreusousin* - originally means to serve for pay. In both O.T. and N.T. the word in its various forms are used with reference to the public worship of God in Christ. (See Acts 26:7; Romans 9:4; Hebrews 9:1,6).

#### Verse 4

God withheld His face from Moses (Exodus 33:20,23). Our Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Paul said, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:"----(Hebrews 12:14). He also declared to the congregation at Corinth that - "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" - (II Cor. 4:6). "For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face:"----(I Cor. 13:12). All of us who strive to serve Christ are anxiously awaiting that hour when we shall see Him face to face. Praise God - for His coming again!

#### Verse 5

"The light that lighteth everyman that cometh into the world" is the sole source of light in the paradise of God. Those who are citizens" will reign unto the ages of the ages." John has mentioned the glorious eternal reign with our Lord Jesus Christ already in 1:6, 3:21, 5:10. We reign with Him because we have been made into children of the King of kings; therefore, we are in the royal lineage.

## SECTION 71

Text 22:6-7

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

Initial Questions 22:6-7

1. What must shortly come to pass - vs. 6?
2. Does it make any difference to God whether or not we obey the words of the prophecy - vs. 7?
3. Does "this book" refer to the entire New Testament, The Book of Revelation, or both - vs. 7?

Verse 6

What is the source of the message which John has received while banned on Patmos? Is the message authentic? Is the man who was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" writing down the *Word of God* or the *Words of a Man*? "The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets" is the ultimate source of John's *Revelation*. God had "sent His angel to show (to show openly or make public) to his slaves the things which must (*dei* - all degrees of necessity) occur quickly" (*tachei* - shortly when time is the emphasis or quickly when suddenness of the action of the verb is involved). The adverb modifies the verb occur, thus it tells us how it is to occur - suddenly).

Verse 7

Listen! "I am coming quickly." Jesus is coming again - thanks be to God! His coming will be certain, sudden, and silent. Will *you* be ready? In this verse John uses the last of the Beatitudes of *The Revelation*. "Blessed is (not in text) the one keeping (the one who constantly keeps). The person who only keeps God's word when he feels like it or on special occasions will be condemned.) the words of the prophecy of this scroll." We must point out that often we hear people quote this verse and apply it to the entire Bible. Note that John is led by God's spirit to say—"the words of the prophecy of this scroll;" therefore, John's warning actually applies only to *The Revelation*.

(Though in principle it applies to all of God's Word). The only way for us to be ready when He comes as a thief in the night is to be "hearers and doers of the Word." We can "constantly keep the words of prophecy of this scroll, only by doing the truth.

## SECTION 72

### Text 22:8-9

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

### Initial Questions 22:8-9

1. Should not John know that Christians are not supposed to worship angels - vs. 8?
2. Does the angel accept John's worship - vs. 9?
3. What does the angel command that John do - vs. 9?

### Verse 8

John failed to learn his lesson from the heavenly messenger in 19:10. John attempted to worship an angel and the angel rebuked him. Here again, John "fell to worship before the feet of the angel" who had revealed the holy secrets to him. The following rebuke is in harmony with the general biblical attack on the flourishing angel-worship in Asia Minor.

### Verse 9

John was emphatically rebuked the second time. John was so emotionally involved as he was trying to write down the last words of the angel's message that he became more enthralled with the messenger than with his good tidings. The angel declared that he was a faithful follower of the Word of God, but that this did not give him any special standing before God. Even angels are creatures and not the creator.

## SECTION 73

Text 22:10-16

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. 12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. 15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

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

Initial Questions 22:10-16

1. The angel told John that "the time is at hand." "At hand" for what - vs. 10?
2. What is the relationship between being righteous and doing righteousness - vs. 11? (The same for the filthy.)
3. Does this imply the finality of a man's spiritual condition at the coming of Christ?
4. What is the basis of Christ's reward - vs. 12?
5. What do the names given in vs. 13 tell us about the one coming quickly - vs. 12?
6. What is the basis of discrimination for those who would come to "the tree of life" - vs. 14?
7. Will anyone be excluded from the City of God - vs. 15? How does the content of this vs. harmonize with universalism?
8. Does vs. 16 make it very plain that Jesus is not to be identified with the angel messenger?

Verse 10

Daniel (12:4) was told to "shut up the words, and seal the book," but John is commanded seal not (*me sphragisēs* - the not is the first for emphasis - certainly do not do it. The word seal occurs 18 times in *The Revelation*. It signifies to confirm or to seal up for security) the words of the prophecy of this scroll;

for the time is near" (*eggus* - means close at hand). The prophecy contained in *The Revelation* was (and still is) relevant. It is to be studied. We are to read and hear its message. It is a time for opening up the sealed mysteries of the book, not for sealing them up.

#### Verse 11

This is a clear refutation of the doctrines of purgatory and second chancism. John claims that the state of both the righteous and the unrighteous will be fixed. There will be nothing nor anyone who can modify their state. "The one acting unjustly, let him act unjustly (*adikēsatō* - 1st aor. imperative - signify that the condition of the person is categorically sealed) still; and the filthy one, let him act filthily (this is the same form as above and signifies the sealed condition of the filthy one); and the righteous one let him do righteousness still; and holy one let him be made holy still." The force of this verse is crystal clear. This verse is a complete refutation, from the biblical view point, of universalism—the doctrine that everyone will ultimately be saved.

#### Verse 12

The reward bearer is coming! He will "render to each man as his work (collective noun) is" (*estin* - present tense - as his work is when the reward comes).

#### Verse 13

These titles of the reward bearer have been discussed in the *Special Study* on *The Titles for Christ in The Revelation*.

#### Verse 14

"Blessed are (not in the text) the ones washing (*plurontes* - present participle) their robes, in order that (*hina* - purpose clause) their authority will be over the tree of life, and they enter by the gates into the city." Every Christian has a robe of righteousness. We weave it by the thread of our thoughts, words, and deeds. There is no power in the entire universe that can cleanse a dirty robe, except the foundation of blood which was opened up on Calvary to cleanse the filth of sin from our souls. Its purging power is adequate! Thanks be to God that we have had recourse to the constant cleansing of the blood of the Lamb. Only those who continually come to the cleansing foundation have a right to the tree of life which is within the walled city of God.

*Verse 15*

John says again what he has already stated in 21:8, 27. Will anyone be excluded from the city? Emphatically the answer is Yes. We have a new outcast in this verse that has not been mentioned before - dogs. The dog is an image of the lowest, most defiled object in the East. (The dog in the East is like the frog - hated and despised).

*Verse 16*

Jesus Christ provides the divine attestation of *The Revelation*. He has authorized John to write down the vision and send them to the Churches. Who is the one who gave the divine stamp of approval? He is "the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." (See the *Special Study on Titles for Christ in The Revelation*). The Messiah - Redeemer has authorized this work be sent to the Churches in the name of the Lord of the Universe.

## SECTION 74

## Text 22:17

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

## Initial Questions 22:17

1. How does the Spirit call men - vs. 17?
2. Who is the Bride - vs. 17?
3. How does the Bride call me - vs. 17?
4. Is the individual Christian responsible to invite those outside of Christ to accept Him as Lord - vs. 17?

*Verse 17*

The great invitation is extended—"Come" (*erchon* - the command is sounded). "The Spirit and the Bride" give the

invitation by co-witness. Both, the Holy Spirit and the Church of Jesus Christ bear the same testimony. "And the one hearing (this is singular and means that every single Christian is to issue the invitation) let him say, Come." The personal responsibility of *each Christian* to bear testimony to the Lordship of Christ is here asserted. The contemporary Church is snarled up in the clergy - system. Congregations hire "a minister" to do the work that God gave the entire Church to do (see Ephesians 4:11-16). (Compare Paul and John's metaphors for the Church of Christ. See the brilliant work by L. Cerfaux, *The Church in The Theology of Paul*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1959; Excellent, by Roman Catholic Biblical Theologian). "And the thirsting one let him come. The one wishing (wanting to) let him take the water of life freely."

## SECTION 75

Text 22:18-19

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

Initial Questions 22:18-19

1. What warning does God give us in vs. 18?
2. What will God do to those who disobey - vs. 18?
3. Does God condemn taking away as well as adding to this word - vs. 19?
4. How severe is God's judgment upon all adders or subtractors of His Word - vs. 19?

Verse 18

Jesus is still speaking (see vs. 16). "I witness to everyone hearing the words of the prophecy of this scroll, if anyone adds

to these things (*auta* is a neuter plural - to them), God will add upon him the plagues having been written in this scroll;" We must all heed Jesus' warning - do not tamper with the Word of God! God revealed it just as He wanted it. If He would have needed our advice, I am quite certain that He would have asked us. The emphasis in this verse was do not add (*epiθē*) to God's revelation.

#### Verse 19

In this verse we read the same warnings being issued to those who would subtract from the Word of God. This is such a serious matter that God imposes a very severe judgment upon the person who takes away (*aphalē*) from the Words." What is judgment? "God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city"----.

Either adding or subtracting from God's Word are explicitly condemned. God expects us to witness to His Word - neither more nor less!

## SECTION 76

#### Text 22:20-21

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

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

#### Initial Questions 22:20-21

1. Will the committed Christian be waiting for Christ's return?
2. John expressed his desire for Christ's coming again. How did he show this concern - vs. 20?
3. What does the word grace mean - vs. 21?

#### Verse 20

"The one witnessing these things says, yes, I am coming quickly." The phrase "I am coming quickly" is used three times

in this chapter 22:7,12,20. John heard this majestic declaration and responded with a shout of joy - "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus."

*Verse 21*

The man who suffered persecution on Patmos rather than to deny his Lord, concludes *The Revelation* which he received "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" with "the grace of the Lord Jesus be (not in text) with all."

We can thank our heavenly Father that He vouches safe these holy visions to *The Seer* who continues to inspire *The Saved* with the thought of the coming again of the cosmic conqueror - *The Savior*, Jesus Christ.

This great N.T. book is not for the curiosity seeker or religious fanatic, but for all those who would continue to the end - for the same shall wear the robe of righteousness and the crown of life. We must guard these with our very life because the righteousness is not our own but His; the crowns we do not merit either.

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 22

1. What other section of O.T. Scripture does the imagery of vs. 1-3 describe?
2. What does being "blessed" in vs. 7 imply?
3. Is it ever acceptable with our Lord to worship a creature, even if an angel - vs. 8?
4. How does the angel's command to John differ from God's command to Daniel - vs. 10?
5. Will a lost sinner who has died ever get another opportunity to accept Christ - vs. 11?
6. What is the condition which must be met before we have a right to the tree of life - according to vs. 14?
7. Who sent His angel according to vs. 16?
8. Who issues the great invitation in vs. 17?
9. What will happen to the person (or persons) who add to or take away from God's Word according to vs. 18-19?
10. How does John respond to Christ's declaration in vs. 20?

Note: "Christ in You The Hope of Glory!" (Col. 1:27)

Contemporary man is seeking for a source of hope, but he is more than reluctant to accept the biblical ground of hope - "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Ibsen depicts modern man in most penetrating imagery. He wrote of a man who viewed the crucifixion and had a toothache; he remembered the toothache but forgot about the crucifixion.

Man could not exist long without the grace of hope. What is unique about the Christian's hope? Why should all men turn their hope toward Jesus Christ?

Hope is always our aspirations projecting toward the future. Paul says that—"Now abideth, faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13).

The Christian's hope does not come from within himself, but is grounded in the work and victory of God in Christ. The Christian's hope is not ultimately grounded in a doctrine, but in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us that God - "begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3). He also admonished us to be in a state of readiness"---to give an answer (*apologia*) to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you,"---(I Peter 3:15).

In order to provide some basic *sermon suggestions on the biblical doctrine of hope*, we shall provide an outline of Wm. Barclay's study listed below in the bibliography. (See pp. 42-46 of that work. Also check the various vocabulary of O.T. and N.T. usage in a concordance).

- I. In what does the Christian hope consist?
  - 1. Hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6).
  - 2. It is the hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2).
  - 3. Hope of the new covenant (II Cor. 3:12).
  - 4. Hope of righteousness (Ga. 5:5).
  - 5. Hope of salvation (II Cor. 1:10).
  - 6. Hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7).
  - 7. Hope of the second coming (Titus 2:13; - I John 3:3).
  - 8. Hope which is laid up in heaven (Col. 1:5).
- II. What are the Sources of Hope?
  - 1. Product of Experience (Romans 5:4).
  - 2. Product of the Scripture (Romans 15:4).
  - 3. Being called of God (Ephesians 1:8).
  - 4. Product of the Gospel (Col. 1:23).
  - 5. Dependent on work of our Lord (Col. 1:26; I Tim. 1:1).
- III. What great things happen by Hope?
  - 1. Hope comes through grace (II Thess. 2:16).
  - 2. Through hope that we rejoice (Romans 12:12).
  - 3. Saved by hope (Romans 8:24).
  - 4. Keeps Christian steadfast (Hebrews 3:6; 6:11,18).
- IV. What are the Foundations of Hope?
  - 1. Hope is in Christ (I Thess. 1:3).
  - 2. Hope is grounded in God (I Tim. 4:10).
  - 3. Hope looks to God (I Peter 1:21).

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Wm. Childs Robinson, *Christ—The Hope of Glory: Christological Eschatology*, Eerdmans, 1945. Good study by basically conservative Calvinist who was aware of the relevant literature which had been published up to time his work became available, 1945. (See also George E. Ladd's two works listed in general bibliography. Dr. Ladd is professor of the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. The school is now in a time of crisis because of a general attitude toward The Bible. Some there are taking a mediating position toward The Scriptures.

X. Leon Dufour, editor, *Vocabulaire de Theologie Biblique*, 1962, Editions du cerf, Paris, (Roman Catholic).

Kittel, editor, *Article-ilpis* (Greek for Hope); Wörterbuch, Austria.

Alan Richardson, editor. *A Theological Word Book of The Bible*, MacMillan and Co., New York, 1956, (now in paperback).

Note: These works do not always show a high regard for the scripture, except Ladd's and Robinson's works.

We have now come to the end of our journey through the blood-stained pages of a period of history of the Church written by Martyrs' blood. But we can only say with the author of the great hymn—

*My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*

My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and  
righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in  
Him be found!

Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!

*Refrain*

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand. A-Men.



## **SERIES OF SPECIAL STUDIES**



*Special Study*

## N.T. Archaeology and The Book of Revelation

(Compare Sir W. M. Ramsay's, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia* listed in the bibliography below with W. Barclay's *Letters to the Seven Churches*, London, 1957).

The only area where extensive archaeological excavation has been carried on with regards to *The Revelation* is the seven cities of Asia Minor.

1. *Ephesus*. The city was the center for the worship of the great diana (Acts 19:23ff). Emperor worship and all kinds of magical arts were also involved in the religious activity of the citizens of this city.

2. *Smyrna*. This city was a Greek colony over a thousand years before the birth of our Lord. The modern city of Smyrna lies almost directly over the ancient site. This made extensive excavation impossible. We are dependent on ancient written materials for our archaeological information.

3. *Pergamum*. Here, several religious cults made their home. The god of healing, *Asklepios* was chief among the many gods worshipped by the people. Probably, the most important single discovery made here was the giant altar to the god Zeus. This altar has been reconstructed and is presently in a Russian Museum.

4. *Thyatira*. Here Apollo and the female diviner, Sibyl were worshipped. The very serious error of Montanism had a great following in this city at least as early as 150 A.D. (Keep in mind that archaeology provides written materials as well as cities, temples, and other artifacts, etc.

5. *Sardis*. The most important single archaeological find here was the bilingual text in Lydian and Aramaic. It dates from the 10th year of the Persian king Artazerxes.

6. *Philadelphia*. It was strategically located for the defense of the entire Phrygian territory. There is almost nothing from this city but coins and inscriptions.

7. *Laodicea*. There is no new information about this city available. Ramsay's work is the best to which we have access.

There has been extensive excavation in only three of the seven cities—Ephesus, Sardis, and Pergamum.

## Bibliography for Further Study

For excellent, non-technical reports on contemporary excavation see:

*The Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, Drawer 93A, Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut. See also *The Biblical Archaeologist* - same address as above.

Near Eastern Archaeology, *Bulletin of Near East Archaeological Society* - edited by Joseph P. Free, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois (student membership, \$5.00).

#### Books

W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to The Seven Churches*, N.Y., 1905. This is still an excellent work. Before more recent excavations in the geographical area covered by *The Revelation*, this work was indispensable. The bulletins listed above will give information of contemporary work which has been and is still being done - which is vital for the archaeology of *The Revelation*.

J. A. Thompson, *Archaeology, O.T. Pre-Christian Centuries*, N. T., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids - second edition, 1959. This text is a popularly written well informed statement by an alert Evangelical O.T. scholar. It is an excellent guide for Bible Study groups, and should be in the Church Library.

Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and The New Testament*, Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1962. Chp. 15, pp. 274. This is a very alert work by an Evangelical (a Dispensationalist) of Dallas Theological Seminary. This is the best intermediate text for the study of N.T. archaeology that is presently available.

Wright, G. Ernest, *Biblical Archaeology*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1957. Get the newer edition, if possible.

Note: W. G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfillment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus*, SCM Press, London, 1961, English edition.

Dr. Kümmel now occupies the chair formerly held by the leading European theologian, R. Bultmann (with the sole exception of Karl Barth). Because of its highly specialized character, we shall only raise the problem involved in Dr. Kümmel's work, and then direct you to the great work by the Dutch Calvinist, Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, Presb. and Reformed Pub. Co., Box 185 Nutley, New Jersey. Dr. Ridderbos' work is a much greater one than is Dr. Kümmel's and we have the extra advantage of his absolute commitment to the Word of God as special revelation.

Dr. Kümmel's thesis is that Jesus asserted that He would return within the span of the apostolic period. This coming again was not realized; therefore, Jesus was mistaken about His eschatological message. Dr. Kümmel claims that the biblical use of the terms *eggus* and *eggizein* necessitate that we hold to the doctrine of an immediate coming of Christ. Since there has been an almost 2000 year gap and still Jesus' words have not been fulfilled, He must have been mistaken. If He was mistaken, then He certainly could never be our Lord and Savior. Conscientiously study the two works listed in this note and you will see that our Lord was not mistaken, and we still anxiously await His appearance!

Earlier in this commentary we referred to the problem of Time and Eternity in Biblical Theology. Instead of writing a brief separate study we chose to include that problem in our *Special Study* of a *Theology of History*. See that *Special Study* and the appropriate section on time and eternity.

### *Special Study*

#### Some Major Doctrines in The Revelation

We aspire to give, in brief scope, of the major doctrines in the works of John, but our specific point of departure will always be

#### *The Doctrine of God*

The doctrine of God which we encounter in *The Revelation* stands firmly on the O.T. foundation by claiming that God is one. The monotheistic emphasis is clearly revealed in John's cry that God is the "Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." He is the creator, as John asserts—"for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created" (4:11). The whole earth is admonished to "worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters" (14:7). He alone is holy, and the four living creatures sing the praises of God - night and day saying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God"----(4:8). He alone is true. The martyrs cry—"How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (6:10). He will also call the dead into account. "And I saw the dead, the great and

the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." And the sea give up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades give up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every men according to their works." (20:12-13). It is imperative that we keep in mind that these characteristics, and others we have not mentioned are also attributed to Jesus Christ.

### *The Doctrine of Angels*

One need not read too extensively into contemporary literature on the biblical doctrine of angels until it is painfully apparent - that this doctrine is a stumbling block to our scientific age. Again and again we have read how this doctrine is dismissed as first century Rabbinical superstition, which the biblical authors (and our Lord also - John 1:51) unfortunately shared. Though we cannot critically discuss this matter here, we must note that the contemporary non-Christian mind has rejected every form of the traditional proofs of God's existence from Augustine, Aquinas, Newman, and all contemporary efforts to reconstruct these proofs in order to make them logically and psychologically compelling. They are not logically compelling to the intellectual of our day! When these arguments for a supernatural Being are repudiated, then it should come as no surprise to us that the biblical doctrine of angels, demons, etc. (the entire spirit world) is also rejected, because of the claim that the church is unable to provide defensible reasons for believing in angels as actually existing beings. Anyone can believe anything he choose, but if we are to attempt to communicate to the contemporary educated world, then we must provide *reasons* for believing a given doctrine if the belief in angels is to be elevated to a rational belief!

For our brief purpose here, we can do no better than to point out that the deity of our Lord is at stake. He affirmed that there are such beings as angels, and if He is mistaken, then He could hardly be the person who He claimed He was - God in human flesh.

Angels are referred to at least 73 times in *The Revelation* (though I do not thereby claim that the word always means the same thing in *The Revelation*). Each of the seven churches have an angel which is specifically referred to in chapters 2-3. In the

series of judgments, angels often revealed to John the content of his vision such as—"and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth"----(10:3). (Check Young's concordance for the 73 occurrences of angels and study the full doctrine).

*The Doctrines of Heaven and Hell*  
(Hades is not equivalent to Hell)

It is common knowledge that the world view of The Bible has been under attack from the earliest negative critical period to Bultmann. Biblical cosmology does not present the universe as a three layered phenomenon - the heaven above, the earth as center (this is Aristotelianism but not the Biblical view) and hell below, as has been repeatedly claimed.

The Seer's doctrine of heaven includes instructions for all who would be inhabitants of the city of God. Only those who are faithful to the end - the same shall be saved! Only those who hear and heed the call of the Spirit and the Bride shall enter the new Jerusalem. Those who are victorious because of the victory of the Lamb will populate God's heaven. In *The Revelation*, heaven is the region from which God judges the world. Heaven is also the dwelling of the blessed. John said—"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away."----(21:1). Heaven will not be a utopia (etymology means - no place) created by applied technology and social engineering, but will be a reality when God's will and purpose is fulfilled.

Hell is a very unpopular doctrine in our day. How relevant to daily living is the biblical doctrine of Hell? How does the Bible harmonize God's righteousness, justice, mercy, and love with its teaching about final and irrevocable judgment upon those who are not found in safety of the everlasting arms of Christ? John tells us who will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem—"But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death"—(21:8). (Also see the brief appendix on *Yes, There Is a Hell!*)

*The Doctrine of Hades*

"HADES (*hades*), the region of departed spirits of the lost (but including the blessed dead in periods preceding the Ascension of Christ). It has been thought by some that the word

etymologically meant the unseen (from *a*, negative, and *eidō*, to see), but this derivation is questionable; a more probably derivation is from *hado*, signifying all-receiving. It corresponds to "Sheol" in the O.T. In the A.V. of the O.T. and N.T., it has been unhappily rendered "Hell," e.g., Psa. 16:10; or "the grave," e.g., Gen. 37:35; or "the pit," Num. 16:30,33; in the N.T. the Revisers have always used the rendering "Hades;" in the O.T. they have not been uniform in the translation, e.g., in Isa. 14:15, "hell" (marg., "Sheol"); usually they have "Sheol" in the text and "the grave" in the margin. It never denotes the grave, nor is it the permanent region of the lost; in point of time it is, for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna. For the condition, see Luke 16:23-31.

The word is used four times in the Gospels, and always by the Lord, Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; it is used with reference to the soul of Christ, Acts 2:27,31; Christ declares that He has the keys of it, Rev. 1:18; in Rev. 6:8 it is personified, with the signification of the temporary destiny of the doomed; it is to give up those who are therein, 20:13, and is to be cast into the lake of fire, ver. 14."

The above quotation has been taken from *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, with their Precise Meanings for English readers, W. E. Vine, M. A., Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, N. Y., p. 187-188, fifth impression, 1952.

### *The Doctrine of The Devil*

The high strategy of Hell is to convince us that Satan does not exist! Paul said that Satan fashions himself into an angel of light. John presents Satan as the great dragon; and he is unmistakenly "the prince of this world." The great trinity of evil is very explicitly declared in the book of the visions of victory. The first Epistle of John also has a strong doctrine of "the anti-Christ." John speaks of "a synagogue of Satan" in the city of Smyrna. This phrase clearly speaks of a gathering of people who enthralled by Satan, and the power of darkness. Chapters 12 and 13 present us with the most extensive discussion of Satan in the book of the Seer of Patmos. The fall of Satan is mentioned in 12:7ff, and is in complete harmony with the O.T. teaching about Satan, his fall and his angels of darkness. This doctrine is not a late Rabbinic tale full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

John also gives expression to the doctrine of Satan in the Gospel record 8:44 (see also I John 3:10) compare the doctrine of evil, the personal forces of darkness in the Gospel, the Epistles, and The Revelation. How relevant is this teaching to our contemporary world situation?

### *The Doctrine of Christ*

The grammatical structure of the title of *The Revelation* shows that the book intends to reveal the person and work of Christ. Dr. Merrill Tenny's work on *The Revelation* (pp. 117) already mentioned in the commentary) contains a chapter just loaded with excellent preaching materials on the doctrine of Christ in the last book of the Bible. (See also the materials on John's Christology in Charles, Swete and Gebhardt listed below in the bibliographical note. (Advanced students will need Holtz, *Christologie der Apokalypse des Johannes.*)

John's first vision shows Christ as Lord of the Church 1:12-17). The second vision reveals the Lamb, into whose power and wisdom has been committed the judgment of the non-Christian world (5:1-14). In the third vision He is the Word of God leading the redeemed in their march of victory (19:11-16). The last vision places Christ in the midst of the new city of God.

The prologue introduces Christ communicating to the entire universe (1:108). The first vision presents Christ in the Church (1:9-3:22). The second vision reveals Christ in the Cosmos (4:1-16:21). John's third vision shows the Christ in Conquest (17:1-21:8). The last great portrait John provided of Jesus is the Christ in Consummation (21:9-22:5). This excellent outline could be used as one sermon on the *Christ of The Revelation* or as a series of portraits of Christ from the pen of the prophet from Patmos. (See *Special Study* on the great themes of *The Revelation* which provide great preaching materials from this sadly neglected book. The book is difficult, but as a part of God's final revelation it should receive more attention in the pulpit than it does.

### *The Doctrine of The Holy Spirit*

There is nothing new added in *The Revelation* about the Holy Spirit, which is not already available in the other N.T. literature. We might expect to find an extensive presentation of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the only N.T. book of prophecy, but, as a matter of fact, we find very little specific teaching about the Holy Spirit. Yet, it is John that gave us some of the most extensive discussions on the Holy Spirit in the entire N.T. (see John chps. 14:16f, 15:26f, 16:1-14).

John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (see 1:10; 4:2 - for the phrase "in the Spirit"). He also speaks of "spirit of error" and "the spirit of truth" (I John 4:6). He also warns Christians not to believe every spirit, "but prove the spirits, whether they are of God:.... In *The Revelation*, John clearly speaks of the personality of the Spirit as independent of the Father and the Son (1:5; 4:5; 22:17; 2:7; 14:13). The activity of the Spirit is delineated in 5:6 ("...which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.") The Spirit speaks to the churches in 2:7, 11, 17) and gives the last invitation to "Come" in 22:17.

We have been invited to the great banquet hall of Christ through the proclamation of the word of God - empowered by the Holy Spirit!

#### *The Doctrine of The Eternal Gospel*

John does not employ the word evangelize (or any form of it) in any of his writings, but he does give us an amazing picture of an angel flying in the meridian with the eternal Gospel. All can hear this messenger of God! (For an excellent, brief study of the word Gospel - *euaggelion* see Swete's great work, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Eerdman's, reprint, p. 1). The Greek words *aiōnian euaggelioai* should not be translated "the everlasting Gospel" as is found in A.V. The content of this good news is the announcement of the coming again of Jesus Christ and the final results which this coming will bring to the whole of mankind. John reveals the audience of the angel in these words "unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people."---- God's message of judgment is not the message of an angry God, who demands that man placate His wrath. God's will has been and remains the same, only those in Christ can escape God's judgment of condemnation. Study the entire section of scripture - 14:6-7, where this angel and the Eternal Gospel is mentioned.

#### *The Doctrine of Christian Life*

All of John's writings speak eloquently of the Christian Life. His First Epistle is preoccupied with *The Tests of Life*. What is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian life? John answers to this question. The First Epistle asserts that we walk in the light when we love in the Christian

sense, when we believe the truth, and when we behave in accordance with that belief - see Robert Law's classic work on the First Epistle - *The Tests of Life*. The Christian life is a pilgrimage to the heavenly city. Only those who persist unto the end shall wear the victor's crown. Only those who thirst for the fountain of the water of life (21:6; 22:17) have yielded themselves to the master.

We note a great emphasis on the prayer of life of the saints in *The Revelation* (see 4:10, 11; 5:8-10, 16-18; 7:10; 15:3-4; 12:10,11; 19:1-7). The same book calls sinning Christians and entire congregations to repentance (chps 2-3). Only the persistent pilgrim will walk in the streets of the new Jerusalem (also see *Special Study on Victory* in this commentary). See the brief discussion and bibliography for further study in the *Special Study* on *The Anti-Christ* in this commentary.

#### *The Doctrine of The Consolation of The Christian*

What possible consolation can there be for Christians who are passing through the fires of persecution? What can words do to comfort? Often it seems to be the Christian's ultimate blessing to hope against hope! John claims that Eternal Life is the Christian's present possession. The ultimate consummation of Eternal Life will come when God's purpose is fulfilled and the curtain comes down on the great drama of *The Revelation*. Our consolation comes through the forward look of hope. Christian hope is not an effort to escape from reality or to avoid this world, but we look forward to that hour when Jesus comes again. In that hour "we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). Thanks be to God that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). This is our sole source of consolation whether during first century persecutions or present burdens.

#### *The Doctrine of The Judgment*

John dramatically pictures the great judgment morning in 20:11-15.

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

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

John clearly states that there will be a day of reckoning for all men. Education, wealth, social status will not avail any thing on that day! Even those who have died in the past will not escape, because God shall call them to life again and will judge "according to their works whether bad or good." There is no possible way to escape God's judgmental condemnation, except one be found in Christ.

#### *The Doctrine of Works*

At least since Luther's interpretation that redemption involved "Faith Alone" (*ganz allein*) from the human side, the tension between Faith and Works has generally permitted protestant thought. Paul and James are very clearly not making contradictory claims about Faith as Luther claimed. One of John's central concerns in the Gospel and First Epistle is to show that belief and behavior are inseparably related. (Note that the golden text - John 3:16 - contains not the noun faith, but rather a present tense form of the verb - "God so loved. . . , that whosoever keeps on believing (present tense verb) on him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is one of the purposes of verbs in any language to show the type of action being performed by the subject of a sentence. One should be amazed, even upon a first reading to note the doctrine of works in *The Revelation*. Exegetically, we can easily establish that the works which John speaks of as essential for the ultimate victory of the Christian are absolutely necessary for our redemption. Psychologically it is not difficult for us to understand how Luther could revolt against the Roman Catholic system of works, which dominated the practical life of the medieval church, but it does not follow from Roman Catholic perversion, that the Bible claims that a sinner need have only faith if he would be saved. (Note the often quoted passage in Acts 16:31—"Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved". . . . The form of believe is very clearly a verb and not the noun form, faith.

John claims that men will be judged "according to their works" (20:1-15). John is not speaking of legalistic works, as if we were still under Old Testament authority, but of works which flows out of the committed life. Protestants in general will acknowledge that a true believer produces good fruit, but John is going far beyond this claim; he is claiming that we cannot be saved without these works. The faith that John is speaking about (like Paul and all other N.T. authors) produces "the endurance of the saints 2:19; faithfulness in persecution 2:13; 13:10" (see Charles pp. cxv-cxvi).

### *The Doctrine of The Church*

John uses both the plural and singular form of the word Church in *The Revelation*. John moves from seven actually existing congregations in Asia to the imagery of The Bride of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9). The imagery of the marriage of the Lamb is clearly a metaphor for the Church (19:7ff). "The Spirit and the Bride say, come." (22:17).

The Church's ministry is not discussed in this last book of the New Testament, but Swete is certainly mistaken in asserting that John—"speaks of the itinerant, charismatic, ministry of Apostles and Prophets, but not of the bishops or presbyters and deacons who were doubtless to be found in the Christian communities of Asia" (Swete, p. CLxvii). The New Testament is too clear on the matter of the nature of the ministry, and government of the Church for us to spend much time refuting Swete's assumptions based on later ecclesiastical development.

The Church is the fellowship of the redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. The Church is ultimately victorious, because of the victory of the Lamb. John speaks of individual congregations, Christians and The Church Triumphant in the City of God. The Church alone will be ready when the Lord of Glory appears a second time to render judgment. Only the persistent pilgrim can shout with John—"Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

Note: The following works will be helpful in further study of the great doctrines available in John's works.

R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John*, volume I, section 12, pp. cix to cxvii. Some Doctrines of our author. He discusses - The Doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Works, the first Resurrection, the Millennium, and the second Resurrection.

Hermann Gebhardt, *The Doctrine of The Apocalypse* and its relation to the Doctrine of the Gospel and Epistles of John, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1878. This is a great, old work, but is still quite readily available as a used book, though sometimes quite expensive. There is a vital need for a new work of this subject in view of the vast contemporary critical literature on *The Gospel, The Epistles, and The Revelation of John*. This work is filled with running debate with the leading 19th century theologians therefore much of the content is irrelevant except for considerations in Historical Theology. The same is also true of the great theological commentary on the First Epistle of John, Robert Law, *Tests of Life*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark. This is an excellent examination of the First Epistle of John and should be reprinted.

Gebhardt considers the doctrines of God, Angels, Heaven, The Devil, Perdition, the Earth and Mankind, Christ, The Spirit, The Gospel, Christian Life, Christendom, AntiChrist, The Last Things, The Call to the World to repent, the consolation of the Christians, The Future of Israel, The World in Wickedness, The End of the World, The Coming of the Lord, The Resurrection of Believers, The Judgment, and the Final State. Gebhardt provides an excellent analysis of the major doctrines of The Revelation in pages 1 through 303 from 304 to 424 he compares the theology of the Gospel, Epistles and The Revelation. Gebhardt also shares some of the negative German attitudes of his day toward the Bible and its doctrines. We shall consider only some of the doctrines discussed in the last section of Gebhard's work.

G. B. Stevens, *Johannine Theology*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895. This is still a valuable work to consult, but like Dr. Steven's other works, it clearly reveals that he does not have an adequate view of The Scriptures as the Word of God.

Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John. op cit.*, chp. 14, Doctrine, pp. clix to clxxiii. There is much valuable material in this excellent reprint. Dr. Swete discusses the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, Salvation, Angels, the Last Things, and Christian hope.

### *Special Study*

#### **Titles For Christ in The Revelation!**

(These titles and their significance can provide excellent preaching materials for a series of sermons).

This appendix does not pretend to give an exhaustive list of the titles applied to Christ in *The Revelation*. Neither does it claim anything resembling an adequate discussion of these great names and phrases which describe the nature of the person of Christ, and the function of His work as redeemer.

We shall use Warfield's two general categories for the names of Christ in *The Revelation* (see his work listed below in note pp. 287): (1) Simple Designations; (2) Descriptive Designations. We will not discuss the distinction which must be made between the terms as proper name and as Messianic titles.

### *Simple Designations*

(1) *Jesus Christ* (1:1, 1:5). This compound title is a combination of Jesus, which is transcribed from the Greek name and was used to translate the Hebrew *Jeshua*. The root of this Hebrew name means "He whose salvation is Yahweh." Jesus was a very common name in the first century A.D. Josephus gives over twenty persons with this name. Many of these were contemporaries of Jesus Christ, our Lord. (See Acts 13:6 - "a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus." *Bar* is Aramaic for son; therefore this man was the son of a Jesus).

The other title of the combination, *Christ*, is used in The Septuagint for the Hebrew word translated anointed. (Kings, Priests, Prophets and the Messianic Son of David were anointed.) Jesus Christ summed up all the implications of these two great names in the combination Jesus Christ.

(2) *Jesus* is used in 1:9; 12:17; 14:12; 17:6; 19:10; 20:4; 22:16. See brief discussion above on the compound - Jesus Christ.

(3) *Christ* used in 20:4,6. *The Christ* is used 11:15; 12:10 (compounds used 1:1,2,5).

(4) *The Lord Jesus* is used 22:20,21. The name Jesus has already been mentioned. The other part of this compound title is one of the most important applied to Jesus, so we will give a more extended consideration.

(5) *The Lord* is used in 14:13 (probably); 1:10; and part of title in 19:16 and 17:14. To the infant Christian community in Jerusalem, the ascended Jesus was their God, whom they addressed in prayer and from whom they sought in prayer the activities which specifically belong to God. Quite naturally in these circumstances the chief narrative name for Jesus in Acts becomes the honorific *the Lord*, which is employed about twice as frequently as the simple *Jesus* (thirty one times), and which is occasionally given more precision by taking the form the Lord Jesus or even the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is equally clear that in the use of this term the meaning primarily expressed is the profoundest reverence on the part of the

community before the highest conceivable exaltation and authority on the part of Jesus himself. It is often extremely difficult to determine whether, by *Lord*, Jesus or God the Father is intended. Some scholars maintain that the word *Lord*, appearing alone, always is God the Father in the New Testament.

We would have no problem concerning this title, had it not been for the publication of Wilhelm Boussett's *Kyrios Christos*, and the literature resulting therefrom. Dr. Vincent Taylor suggests an interval after Christ's ministry before the term was applied to Jesus.

What does the term *Lord* imply? What is its source - Hellenistic or Judaistic? How does the New Testament employ the term? Was the deific implication latent in the term before Pauline terminology became the dominant language of Christianity? Conflicting answers are given in Rudolf Bultmann's *New Testament Theology* and Adolf Deissmann's *Light From the Ancient East*. The problem is more than apologetic. It raises the question as to how the believing community regarded Jesus, and the grounds on which their regard rested.

In classical usage, *lord* describes a person who has control over another person or thing, either by right of divinity or by right of ownership. In the case of Christ, these two propositions are inseparable.

In the Septuagint translation, *kurios* ("Lord") is used as the translation of some twenty different Hebrew words and phrases, some of which apply to God specifically, and a few of which apply to man.

The New Testament use of the term involves at least three aspects: (1) "ownership"; (2) right of service"; and (3) "right of obedience." Paul uses this title for God almost exclusively in quoting from the Old Testament.

Elsewhere the term is employed of rulers, Roman deities, both male and female, and as a title of respect. It is used in Acts to show the subjection of the believer to Christ, thus manifesting two of the aforementioned three basic ideas in the term: ownership and right of obedience. Christ is designated in a discourse of Peter as "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36); the Greek for all is neuter, meaning Lord of all things - that is to say, universal sovereign. The phrase recalls the great declaration of Romans 9:5 to the effect that He is God over all. This use might also contain a theocratic suggestion of authority over all things. The sense of majestic exaltation is so clearly implied

we shall not labor its defense. To the early Christians, Jesus was Lord, as Jehovah God was Lord. They were neither led to that declaration nor deterred from it by Gentile applications of the term to their gods and great men.

(6) *The Lord's Christ* (also *God's Christ*) 11:15; 12:10. Here the term Lord is plainly applied to Yahweh. Note also that this term is applied without qualification to Jesus Christ.

(7) *The Son of God* is used in 2:18—(Note Jesus' words - My Father 2:27; 3:5,21). This title categorically asserts the Deity of Jesus Christ. Neither the O.T. nor the Hellenistic usage can possibly account for the biblical significance of this term as applied to Jesus by inspired writers. The title claims that Jesus Christ is unequivocally the Son of God (via His divine nature and not by way of adoption, as sinners *become* sons of God through Christ).

(8) *Son of Man* is used in 1:13; 14:14. This is a title which finds its origin in the Book of Daniel. This is the title which Jesus used - himself. It emphasized His human nature, just as other titles emphasized His divine nature.

(9) *The Word of God* is used in 19:13. (Hebrews 4:12-13; John 1:1-18). For our brief remarks see Special Study on The Biblical Doctrine of The Word of God after Chapter 19.

(10) *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* is used in 19:16 and in varied form in 1:5; 2:1,12; 3:7; 5:5; 17:14. The entire biblical teaching concerning the Kingdom of God in both O.T. and N.T. is summed up when the Seer of Patmos called Jesus Christ - "King of Kings." As Lord of the universe, He will reign over heaven and earth. The O.T. Messiah was to set on the throne of His Father David. Jesus fulfilled the prophetic declarations of the O.T. as He reigns eternally from the throne in the hearts of believers. But even the lost, unbeliever will one day need to acknowledge that Jesus is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." There is no greater ruler in the universe!

#### *Descriptive Designations*

(See B. B. Warfield, pp. 290)

(1) "Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins by His blood" - is used only in 1:5. This descriptive title has been basically considered in the text of the commentary. Every Christian must be grateful to Christ for redeeming us by His blood. This is our only hope of escaping the deadly power and guilt of our sins. (Also see note on *Blood* in this commentary.)

(2) The Lamb that hath been slain" - used in 5:12, 5:6,9; 7:14; 13:8. The title Lamb has already been discussed in the commentary. This is the imagery of the sacrificial lamb. Here is a clear and categorical claim for the vicarious atonement by God's Lamb, our Lord! (See *The Hebrew Epistle* for further marvelous claims about Christ's redemptive sacrifice.)

(3) *The Lamb* is used in 5:8, 13; 6:1,16; 7:9,10,14,17; 12:11; 14:1,4,10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7,9; 21:9,14,22,27; 22:1,3. The entire imagery of Isaiah 53:7 (see Acts 8:32f) is brought into play in this symbol. John the Baptist also came heralding - "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"! John 1:29,36. This is also our unchanging message to the contemporary world which is filled with lost men!

(4) *The First born of the Dead* is used only in 1:5. The Greek word *prototokos* - firstborn is derived from the O.T. - Exodus 4:22, where it is used of Israel; Jeremiah 31:9 where it is used of Ephriam and Psalm 89:27, where it is used of the Messianic King. The implication of the term derives from the fact that God required the firstborn of the flocks, and the first-born male inherited a double portion of the inheritance and the birthright. This background necessary to understand; John's use of the title. (See also Romans 8:29; Col. 1:15,18; Hebrews 1:6.)

The Arians, both ancient and their contemporary counterpart, the Jehovah's witnesses, attempted to use this term to show that Jesus Christ was a created being. This is a far cry from the scriptural assertions that Jesus Christ is God come in human flesh.

(5) *The Faithful Witness* - used only in 1:5. This title describes Jesus as faithfully bearing testimony concerning His heavenly Father. Their will or purpose for and message too - us are identical. "Nevertheless, thy will be done" - Matt 26:39.

(6) *The Faithful and True* - used only 19:11. Again, Christ is described as faithful to His Messianic vocation. He is said to be true. The Greek noun form means truth as distinct from the false, and it also has the connotation of being real or genuine in contrast to the unreal and counterfeit.

Note: For an excellent, but strange source for further study on the implications of the Greek vocabulary for *truth*, etc., see Martin Heidegger's, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, New Haven, Yale University Press. It contains a brilliant analysis. *The Manual of Discipline* (Dead Sea Scrolls) also contains some interesting information on the general Hebrew attitude toward the truth, the real, etc.

(7) *The Amen* is used in 5:14(?); 18:4. The English form is the transliteration of a Hebrew adverbial form of a verb meaning to support, or to confirm. These implications fit neatly into the picture of our Lord given in *The Revelation*.

(8) *The beginning of the creation - of God* - is used only in 3:14. The word translated "beginning" is *hē archē*. From the period of Homer forward it has the significance of beginning, first cause, government, as in Ephesians 6:12. This title declares that Christ is the source and origin of the creation of God (See also John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:1-4.)

(9) "He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the keys of David, He that openeth and none shall shut and that shutteth and none shall open" - 3:7.

(10) *The Lion that is of the tribe of Judah* is used only in 5:4. This title is found only in *The Revelation* (in the N.T.). Jesus is connected with the Davidic throne and the people of Israel. A lion would never be attacked by any animal its size, particularly when it is in its den. When John saw "in the midst of the throne, he saw not a lion, but a lamb standing as though it had been slain." Note the paradox - The Lion and the Lamb!

(11) *The ruler of the kings of the earth* is used only 1:5. Its meaning is clear and is also asserted in other titles.

(12) *The Root of David* in 5:6 only. This title is also found only in *The Revelation* (in the N.T.).

(13) *The Root and the Offspring of David, the bright, the morning Star*. Only in 22:16. The Bright, the Morning Star is found only here in the N.T. (See Numbers 24:15-19.)

(14) "The Son of God who hath eyes like a flame of fire and His feet are like unto burnished brass" - 2:18.

(15) "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks - 2:1.

(16) "He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" - 3:1.

(17) *He that hath the sharp two-edged sword* - only in 2:12. The Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword in Hebrews 4:12-13. Here the living word personally wields a sword of judgment, which is also the Word of God! The sword is for the battle with evil.

(18) *The First and Last, which was dead and lived again* - only in 2:8. See the commentary for brief explanation of the verse. The words First and Last are clear claims for the deity of Christ. These titles are taken from Isaiah 44:6 - "I am the

first and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." (See also Isaiah 48:12).

(19) *The Living One* - only 1:18. This participle asserts that Christ is eternally alive. He has forever abolished death!

(20) *Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End* - only in 22:13. R. H. Charles shows that this title was used by the Greeks, Romans and the Jewish Rabbis to denote the entirety of all things.

The term God (*Theos*) is not directly applied to Christ in *The Revelation* but His deity is asserted with the most unequivocal language. Swete (*op. cit.*) has an excellent, brief statement, pp. c 1 XII (p. 162).

- "1. He has the perrogatives of God.
- 2. He searches men's hearts, 2:23.
- 3. He can kill or restore life, 11:18; 2:23.
- 4. Receives worship - 5:13.
- 5. His priests are also priests of God - 20:6.
- 6. He occupies one throne with God - 22:1,3.
- 7. Shares one sovereignty with God, 11:15.

8. Christ receives the titles of God - He is the Living One 1:18; Holy and True, 3:7; Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, 22:13.

9. Passages which in O.T. relate to God are without hesitation applied to Christ, e.g., Deut. 10:17; 17:14; Prov. 3:12, 3:19, Dan. 7:9; 1:114; Zech. 4:10; 5:6."

There is some great biblical preaching to be done on the great names of Christ. They describe His person and function of His work. The imagery is not hard to communicate in preaching and teaching.

Note: The following works will be valuable for further study on the titles for Christ used in the N.T. in general, as well as *The Revelation*.

William Barclay, *Jesus as They Saw Him*, Harper and Row, New York, 1962. Very good preaching material.

O. Cullmann, *The Christology of The New Testament*, Westminster Press, Phil. English translation, 1959. Very fine examination of the titles, and their implication for the person and work of Christ. Cullmann is an excellent "mediating," European Lutheran scholar. He has control of the vast range of literature, and he also provides excellent bibliographical information, both of which are imperative in any critical, scholarly work.

Dr. Paul Heinisch, *Christ in Prophecy*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1956. This contains a very valuable study of the messianic concepts of non-biblical religious as well as the O.T. doctrine of The Messiah. Dr. Heinisch discusses the great messianic titles used throughout the O.T. The discussions are excellent, but the beginner must be warned that he accepts the negative critical results concerning some of the O.T. books. He also includes a chapter on the supposed biblical foundations for the Catholic doctrine of Mary - pp. 237.

S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1956. The work considers the great Messianic titles. He is the father of Scandinavian O.T. scholars. His scholarship is of the highest order, but he works with the presuppositions of Scandinavian scholarships, and must be used only by those aware of this. There is a great reward here for those able to discriminate.

Vincent Taylor, *The Names of Jesus*, MacMillan and Co., N.Y. reprinted, 1954. Good brief study by a capable, mediating scholar.

B. B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory*: A Study of the Designations of our Lord in the N.T. with especial reference to His Deity. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, chapter, The Witness of The Apocalypse, pp. 286-297. Warfield was the greatest conservative mind in his field. He was a brilliant Calvinist. This work is still excellent because of his biblical exegesis; but the work is dated regarding the works cited, and general critical attitudes then prevalent. Still excellent for Bible Study and personal study!

### *Special Study*

#### *Introduction*

No one could seriously deny that *The Revelation* is a neglected source of biblical preaching today. The present author has been engaged in studying the text of the seer's book since he had a N.T. Seminar in the Greek Text of *The Revelation* during the spring semester of 1960 with Professor S. M. Smith of Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

I have enjoyed countless hours of creative discussion with my dear and beloved friend, Wayne Shaw, minister, Ellettsville Church, Indiana. He and his wonderful wife, Janet, opened their home to me while I was finishing residence requirements for Ph.D. in Philosophy at Indiana University. Wayne is working on a Ph.D. in the Speech Department at Indiana University. He also has the B.D. and M.S. degrees. He plans to teach in the Graduate School of Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, Illinois, upon completion of his work at I.U. His special concerns are

Homiletics and to help restore great preaching in the Restoration Movement. He graciously consented to prepare this following brief challenge to all preachers of the Word—You Can Preach intelligently from the great themes of *The Revelation*. Some of the great themes listed below come from the seminar on *The Revelation* mentioned above; but the rest of this special study is his generous contribution to this study commentary. May it challenge every preacher to give serious study to the relevant N.T. book of our ages of crises.

#### A SERIES WITH THE SEER: PREACHING VALUES IN THE REVELATION

by Wayne Shaw

In the opening lines of his book, *As Seeing the Invisible*, D. T. Niles gives an apologetic for studying Revelation, which, at the same time, states its demand to be preached: "The book of Revelation is part of Scripture, so that an adequate understanding of it is essential for a right appreciation of the biblical message as a whole. This is all the more true during times such as these when the sin of men and of nations is yielding such rich harvest, and the common man is asking what the meaning of life's tragedy may be."<sup>1</sup> Quite apart from his liberal attitude toward the Bible, Dr. Niles reminds us that we dare not ignore the ministry of the Word of God in Revelation for two reasons: it is a part of Scripture, and it has a vital message for us in our twentieth century.

For various reasons most preachers slight the Writing of the Revelator in their pulpits today. To some the message is too difficult to decipher and too mystical to proclaim with certainty. To others it is simply not worth the effort to explain the apocalyptic imagery and attempt a vigorous application to present-day man. To still others it seems a winding path far removed from the thoroughfare of first principles recorded in the book of Acts. The Lord's messengers are not so much guilty of adding to or taking away from the words of its prophecy as obscuring its important message by neglect.

Even the brave who plunge in have too often blunted the Revelator's cutting edge by becoming so preoccupied with intricate details that they entangle themselves in an exhausting yoke of bondage. Instead of the book's penetrating relevancy, they

lose themselves in points that can never be settled for certain; but worse, they lose the book's vision of Christ centered in the dramatic description of His church and His creation. "Lord, deliver Thy church from both its de-emphasis and its wrong emphasis of the book of Revelation that has stifled preaching from its pages."

The purpose here is not to provide sermon outlines but to suggest homiletical sources, preaching approaches, and sermon themes from the Revelation; in other words, to help the preacher translate the matter of the commentary into the method of the pulpit.

#### Homiletical Sources for Preaching from the Revelation

Recent books that offer helpful suggestions include:

1. Clovis Chappell, *Sermons from Revelation* (Abingdon, \$2.00).
2. C. H. Spurgeon, Volume XX of the new series of his sermons published by Zondervan at \$2.95. (Helmet Thielicke, the German theologian, has sparked renewed interest in Spurgeon with his *Encounter with Spurgeon*, Fortress, \$4.75.)
3. R. C. McCan, *A Vision of Victory* (Broadman, \$3.00), combines both exposition and application by first presenting the meaning for the original readers in their day and then probing the problems of today.
4. D. T. Niles, *As Seeing the Invisible*, (Harper, \$3.50), has a section on "Theological Meditations" in which he works the apocalyptic language of Revelation into brief meditations on relevant doctrinal themes for our time.
5. William Barclay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, (Abingdon, \$2.00), provides resource material for a series of sermons on the seven churches of Asia. Devoting two chapters to each locality, he first describes the situation in each of the seven cities and then explains each letter verse-by-verse.
6. Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Eerdmans, \$3.50), treats Revelation from a permillenarian and moderate futurist standpoint; he attempts to state all views fairly and offers a variety of perspectives for approaching the book homiletically. Not the least of his contributions is his chapter on "The Christology of Revelation," which emphasizes the centrality of Christ in the four visions.

7. Although he takes a liberal approach to some passages, Dwight E. Stevenson, *Preaching on the Books of the New Testament*, opens up an important area for exposition when he explores the possibility of preaching entire Bible books. His chapter on Revelation, entitled "Fire on the Earth," gives the background of the book and suggests five different approaches to a book sermon. He does not intend the volume to replace New Testament study; but rather to serve as a homiletical manual for those who have done their Bible homework.

In no wise do these seven books signify bibliographical completeness; they do illustrate how others have struggled to preach powerfully and relevantly Revelation's message to the church.

#### Illustrated Approaches for Preaching from Revelation

For several months this writer has studied with special interest the preaching of James S. Stewart, Professor of New Testament, New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. This outstanding Scottish preacher has used a variety of approaches to the Scripture texts from Revelation that he treats in his two volumes of sermons, *The Gates of New Life*<sup>2</sup> and *The Strong Name*.<sup>3</sup> A glance at these will show homiletical possibilities for other passages in the book.

His approach in "Clouds and Darkness and the Morning Star"<sup>4</sup> is to contrast man's doubt of the final purpose of God — "which means to doubt the rationality of the universe, and the significance of human experience, and the worth of moral values —"<sup>5</sup> with the certainty revealed in Christ. He dramatizes this doubt with the words of Isaiah 5:30, "If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof"; and then sets Revelation 22:16 over against it, "I am the bright and morning star," stressing the power of Christ's light to scatter the darkness of doubt.

His sermon from Revelation 19:6, entitled "The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth,"<sup>6</sup> amplifies three consequences of the topic-text: the liberation of life, the doom of sin, and the comfort of sorrow.

In "The Final Doxology" he offers Revelation 1:5,6 as the one single sentence that summarizes all that religion means to him. His treatment is clearly textual, and he is careful to restate his points as he goes: "Unto Him that loved us"; "Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood";

"Unto Him that made us Kings unto God"; "Loved us—loosed us—made us Kings—and made us priests to God"; and "Unto Him who has done all that—loved us and loosed us and made us Kings and Priests—unto Him be glory and dominion for ever."

When he preached on Jerusalem as "The Mother of Us All,"<sup>7</sup> he chose three texts from the Psalms to capture the meaning of Jerusalem for the Jew; it symbolized his history, his religion, and his home. For his application he used Revelation 21:2, "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," to tie together symbolically three deep elements of our nature—the hunger for God, the craving for the fellowship of a beloved community, and the instinct of immortality.

The text for his sermon, "The Cry of the Martyrs," comes from Revelation 6:9,10, and raises the problem of evil in the world. The passage means, says Stewart, "that the tragic element in life, as represented by their sufferings, cries out insistently to be interpreted, lays on God Himself the terrible onus of vindicating and justifying the way in which His world is run."<sup>8</sup> He then offers the divine answer in three words—the patience of Christ, the victory of God, and the communion of saints.

Stewart admirably illustrated the relevance of Revelation in a message entitled "What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches" when he gave the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in April, 1962, on the general theme, "Preaching to This Generation." This writer attended the lecture curious to discover Stewart's theological view of the seven churches and his method of applying this section of Scripture to contemporary needs. As he finished, at least one person in the audience had the feeling, not that he had attended a lecture on Bible history and exegesis, but that the Word of God had been speaking through the preacher to his heart and to his involvement in Christ's Church today. Taking only one point from each of the seven churches, asserting it in the present tense, and making careful transitions between Asia in the first century and America in the twentieth, he led the congregation in Princeton Chapel to participate in the message as they listened. There was no need to tack on an application. Relevance had been there throughout. It had been woven into the fabric. The preacher who can do this with the rest of Revelation will grip his hearers and will bless them as they listen.

## Themes for Preaching from Revelation

The plan here is to offer three series of sermon themes from Revelation as connected preaching units around which one can build a course of sermons or Bible study lessons. But employ caution here. Be selective. Better to have several series at spaced intervals than to run on indefinitely. Here, as elsewhere in preaching, length seems to attract boredom. Dr. Andrew W. Blackwood suggests three months as the duration for a course of teaching sermons from a Bible book. Thirteen sermons, then, are maximum; sometimes ten or less make a better unit. The idea is to select carefully from the suggested themes as they speak to your heart and the needs of your congregation.

The first group of themes utilizes the material in the appendix on major doctrines in Revelation. With the topic restated attractively and in the present tense, the preacher can take advantage of the usual curiosity about the contents of Revelation to proclaim the great doctrinal teachings of the book. With his Bible and this commentary before him, the earnest preacher should be able to plan three months of worthwhile preaching from the following topics:

1. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about God"
2. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about Angels"
3. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about Heaven"
4. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Devil"
5. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about Hell (Perdition)"
6. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Earth and Mankind"
7. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about Christ"
8. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Holy Spirit"
9. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Gospel"
10. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Christian Life"
11. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about Christendom"
12. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Anti-christ"
13. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Last Time"

14. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Call to the World to Repent"
15. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Consolation of the Christian"
16. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Future of Israel"
17. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the World in Wickedness"
18. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the End of the World"
19. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Coming of the Lord"
20. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Resurrection of Believers"
21. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Judgment"
22. "What the Book of Revelation tells us about the Final State"

The second series of themes comes from D. T. Nile's *Theological Meditations*.<sup>12</sup> The subjects, Scriptures, and topics are included to make the list as helpful as possible; however, the reader should consult Dr. Nile's book to profit from his brief, Scripture-packed, devotional treatment.

1. Title (1:1-2) "The Subject of Revelation"
2. Address (1:3) "The Nature of Time"
3. Greeting (1:4-6) "The Situation of the Christian"
4. Preface (1:7-9) "The Being of God"
5. Contents (1:10,11,19) "The Necessity of Decision"
6. The Opening Vision (1:12-18) "The Object of Faith"
7. The Letters of the Churches (2:1-3:22) "The Verdict of Love"
8. The Throne in Heaven (4:1-5:14) "The Ruler of the Universe"
9. The Four Horsemen (6:1-8) "The Dissolution of History"
10. The Cry of the Martyrs (6:9-17) "The Wrath of the Lamb"
11. The Sealed Multitude (7:1-17) "The Tribulation of Life"
12. The Unsealed Scroll (8:1) "The Redemption of Sons"
13. The Altar in Heaven (8:2-5) "The Hope of the Gospel"
14. The Four Trumpets (8:6-12) "The Fall of Nature"

15. The Shout of the Eagle (8:13-9:21) "The Wages of Sin"
16. The Gospel of Redemption (10:1-11:11) "The Mystery of Mercy"
17. The Last Trumpet (11:12-19) "The Reversal of Man"
18. The Dragon Against the Child (12:1-17) "The Motherhood of Grace"
19. The Four Monsters (13:1-10; 17:1-18) "The Manifoldness of Evil"
20. The Mark of the Beast and of the Lamb (13:11-14:5) "The Assurance of Heaven"
21. Four Harvest Cries (14: -13) "The Certainty of Judgment"
22. The Harvest Is Reaped (14:14-20) "The Fulfillment of the End"
23. The Bowls of Wrath and Song of Deliverance (15:1-8) "The Persistence of Pity"
24. The Four Plagues (16:1-9) "The Death of the Soul"
25. The End of Evil (16:10-21) "The Suicide of Wrong"
26. The Judgment of Rome (18:1-8, 21-24) "The Punishment of Power"
27. Lamentation (18:9-20; 19:1-4) "The Waste of Wealth"
28. The Great Hallelujah (19:5-16) "The Consolation of the Saints"
29. The Four Powers (19:17-20:6) "The Foretaste of the Kingdom"
30. Gog and Magog (20:7-10) "The Close of the Ages"
31. The Opening of the Books (20:11-31:1, 5-8) "The Promise of the New"
32. The Eternal City (21:2-4, 9-22:5) "The Coming of the Lord"
33. Seven Last Words (22:6-21) "The Seven Beatitudes"

The third series of themes is more general. It contains random comments on vital contemporary issues without reference to specific Scriptures which may kindle sermonic fires that burn to the depths of human need. The suggested topics are set off by quotation marks followed by the comments.

1. "The Christian View of Tragedy"—suffering, persecution, and our Christian commitment.
2. "Temptation: Individual and Corporate"—the temptation for the individual or the church to compromise in times of trouble.

3. "The Reality of A God Who Cares"—The transcendence of our Creator God and the emmanence of our Redeemer God. God really cares about our needs.

4. "The Lordship of Christ"—in the church, in the Christian life, and in the world.

5. "The Recovery of the Church"—suffering churches in need of repentance are not hopeless, but their recovery depends on their willingness to repent.

6. "Christ's Concern for a Pure Church"—His message to the seven churches.

7. "The Christian View of Progress"—never dependent upon evolution but on God. There is a difference between change and progress. Man is depersonalized in our age of technological advancement.

8. "The Spiritual Struggle Beyond Our Vision"—Satan and the World Powers: there is more to our world situation than meets the eye!

9. "The Victory Which Only God Can Give"—victory comes through God's power, not man's. Our salvation is available only in Christ because of the blood of the Lamb.

10. "Being the Church in Times of Crisis"—Revelation was written against the backdrop of crisis. We are to live *in* but not *of* the world. (The opportunity and the danger.)

11. "The Purpose of God in History"—God's ultimate goal for the world as He makes even the wrath of men to praise Him. What does all that goes on in the world mean to the committed Christian in light of God's power?

12. "The All-Inclusive Judgment"—individual, nation, and international; no individual or nation is exempt.

13. "Living in Two Worlds"—this one and the next; it takes both of them to make sense in light of the Bible's teaching on the healing of the nations.

14. "The Victory of Faith"—faith in God and the victory of the righteous. The nature of the Christian victory compared with non-Christian concepts of victory: barbaric victory via brute force contrasted with victory via the righteousness of Christ.

15. "The Humiliation of Man"—the hopelessness of unaided man, the failure of humanism, naturalism, and rationalism. The tension between the pessimism of God's judgment and the Christian optimism based on the ultimate victory of Christ.

16. "Jerusalem the Golden" (title of a hymn written by Bernard of Cluny in the twelfth century)—Jerusalem in history

and symbol; Jerusalem of the Jews and the New Jerusalem, the Mother of us all.

17. "The Dark Line in God's Face"—the wrath of God demonstrated by pouring out the seven bowls of wrath. How does a righteous God treat man with both justice and mercy?

18. "The Happiest Moment in Heaven"—the marriage of the Lamb as the church realizes its eternal destiny.

19. "You Cannot Hide From God"—there is no hiding place; God's judgment is complete.

20. "The Promise of Christ's Return"—looking, longing, living. Christ's coming: sudden, serious, certain. ("I come quickly" is used three times in chapter 22).

#### Homiletical Hints for Preaching from Revelation

Andrew W. Blackwood has given abiding counsel on how to preach teaching sermons on Bible books. Clarity, mingled with simple beauty, is not the least among his homiletical virtues. He has packed so much practical advice into one sentence that it could almost be called Blackwood's preaching theory in a nutshell: 'In making ready for a sermon with 'teaching—preaching,' the practical aim guides in choosing a text both relevant and clear, in phrasing a topic both appealing and clear, in collecting materials both Biblical and current, in making a plan both sturdy and clear, in selecting a few examples both luminous and clear, and last of all, before the actual writing, in deciding on a way of introduction both interesting and clear, as well as brief and terse.'<sup>13</sup>

With its dramatic style, the book of Revelation has always gripped the church's heart and imagination more than her understanding; a course of sermons ought to clarify and make relevant the message without milking it of its grandeur and majesty. The following homiletical hints are offered to guard against dull and boring sermons from a Bible book packed with breathless excitement.

1. Preach, do not lecture. Whenever possible, without doing violence to the text, preach in the present tense to men in need of a word from the Lord today. Far too many messages leave application out entirely or tack it on to the end. It is much better to choose a relevant topic and text, and treat them in a way that builds application into the structure of the sermon. But if the Lord's messenger declares the whole counsel of God, he cannot

always do this, for ancient imagery sometimes obscures the Scripture's timeless relevance—that "principle of penetration" which makes Bible-based preaching possible and vital. However, the three series suggested above help to clear this homiletical hurdle in two ways: first, enough topics are suggested in each series to allow the preacher to select only those that cause an echoing response in his soul or that speak vitally to the specific needs of his congregation; second, they are worded in such a way that their relevance is apparent, and one can then unveil the hidden light that a difficult passage throws on the topic.

2. Vary the structure and treatment within the series from sermon to sermon. Basic, but often ignored, is the homiletical rule of iron that the headings (points) flow naturally out of the topic as important and related parts of a unit; however, from that starting place, a sermon may vary in many ways. You might begin the introduction with an illustration, start another time with a question that goes to the heart of the theme, an interesting narrative, or a life-situation with which the hearers can identify. Vary the sermon structure by merely changing the number of points. Three headings do not guarantee either holiness or success. F. W. Robertson was a master of the two-point sermon. As a working principle, two to five are best; over five, except in rare cases with memorable material, are dangerous, if not impossible, for the congregation. Or preach with a telescope one Sunday and with a microscope the next; use a longer passage, than a shorter one. Partition a text that captures the topic imaginatively; or begin with a major problem confronting the human situation and proceed to the Biblical answer. A notebook kept on the different types of sermon outlines used by able preachers will supply an endless source of tested outline plans.

3. State the headings in complete, parallel sentences, as memorably as possible. One-word-pegs are excellent memory aids, but they should be expanded to complete sentences in order to avoid ambiguity. Rhetorical devices (such as alliterations, analogies, and epigrams) should be used with caution lest they appear clever, strained, or trite; however, used with taste and not too often, they aid the memory and lend clarity and force.

4. Arrange the sermon headings climactically, heeding especially Dr. Blackwood's admonition to follow the Biblical order (evident in the Epistles) of putting doctrine first because it is the most important and duty second because it is the most interesting. This order is theologically sound because Christian

action flows out of Christian belief. In Revelation, John's vision is given by the living Christ to stabilize the faith of Christians who will be tempted to act in unchristian ways because of impending persecution.

5. Be sure to raise the relevancy of the topic in the sermon introduction. Dr. Blackwood warns that unless one puts God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit in the introduction or under the first heading, it becomes increasingly more difficult as the sermon proceeds.

6. Conclude your sermon by leaving the congregation aware that you have preached the Word of God to men in the twentieth century. Remember that the conclusion is your last opportunity to plant the sermon topic in your hearers' hearts. If the introduction and conclusion are relevant, it is easier to make relevant the Biblical truth treated under the sermon headings.

7. Plan to preach at least one book sermon on Revelation. Better still, plan a survey sermon on the message of the book to open the course and a summary sermon at the close to re-state the major topics under one majestic theme. This writer utilized Dr. Merrill C. Tenney's excellent chapter on "The Christology of Revelation"<sup>14</sup> to preach a book sermon emphasizing the Centrality of Christ in the drama. Tenney offers the following outline of Revelation: The Prologue: Christ Communicating (1:1-8), Vision I: Christ in the Church (1:0-3:22), Vision II: Christ in the Cosmos (4:1-16:21), Vision III: Christ in Conquest (17:1-21:8), Vision IV: Christ in Consummation (21:9-22:5), The Epilogue: Christ Challenging (22:6-21). For the sermon, the title was changed to "Pictures of Christ in Revelation." The introduction attempted to explain the nature of apocalyptic literature, the value of its hidden message in a time of persecution, and the theme of its dramatic form centering in the leading figure—Christ. The four visions present four pictures of Christ. Vision I: Christ is the Head of the Church, 1-3 (with a brief explanation of His seven descriptions to the churches of Asia). Vision II: Christ is the King of Nations, 4-16 (with a brief explanation of the imagery used in His three titles: Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Root of David, and the Lamb Slain). Vision III: Christ is the Conqueror of the World, 17-21:8 (with judgment as the key theme, His three names are: Faithful and True, Word of God, and King of Kings and Lord of Lords). Vision IV: Christ is the Center of the City of God, 21:9-22:7 (with the following pointing to Him: the Marriage Feast of the

Lamb, the Foundations are His Apostles, the Center of Worship is the New Temple, Christ is the Light of the City, the Citizens are Christ's Redeemed, their Occupation is to serve Christ). Conclusion: the entire message is set in the promise of the second coming of Christ (for the church as a whole, V. 7; for humanity, V. 12; for the individual Christian, V. 20). The sermon outline is offered not as a model for imitation but to illustrate that valid theological language and insight can be put into homiletical form that presents the living Christ as real today as in days long ago when He walked among men by Galilee's sea. Admittedly, there is too much here for one sermon, but at least it offers a perspective and opens doors for a sermon course.

James S. Stewart expressed eloquently the possibilities of Biblical preaching such as we have discussed when he closed a lecture entitled "Exposition and Encounter" with these words: "It is tremendous, this issue which is bound up with our Biblical exposition, this issue of encounter with that living Christ. It is not a moving thought that there may be some who will confess in after years that they owe their soul to some divine encounter during your expounding of the Word and will say, 'I met God there; it was there Christ led me captive?'"<sup>15</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. D. T. Niles, *As Seeing the Invisible* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Pub., 1961), p. 15.
2. James S. Stewart, *The Gates of New Life* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937).
3. Stewart, *The Strong Name* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940).
4. *The Gates of New Life*, pp. 1-10.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 11-20.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-251.
8. *The Strong Name*, pp. 179-186.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-228.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
11. *Planning A Year's Pulpit Work* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1942). Recently available in paperback.
12. *As Seeing the Invisible*, pp. 117-183.
13. From his introduction as editor of *Evangelical Sermons of Our Day* (New York: Channel Press, 1959), p. 28.
14. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. 117-134.
15. Notes from taped lectures taken by the writer at Reigner Film and Tape Library, Union Theological Seminary of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

*Special Study*

## The Biblical View of History

This statement precludes any attempt at being creative while discussing the crucial problem of the Old Testament attitude toward history. Neither of the terms - history nor philosophy, were utilized by the Hebrews.

In any adequate statement it would be imperative that we ask—"what constitutes history?" The designed task in the following pages is to point out the correlative factors of the Hebrew concept of God, Exodus, Election, Covenant, the Servant of Yehweh as the focii of Israel's theology of History."

No attempt shall be made in this statement to discuss the *supposed* variety of concepts of history involved in the motives of the early narratives, The Prophets, The Deuteronomic Historians, The Post exilic Prophets and Apocalyptic interpretation of history. (Daniel, Ezekiel, etc. - this is adequately stated in a chapter by Millar Burrows, "Ancient Israel" in a composite volume edited by Dr. Dentan - *The Idea of History in The Ancient Near East*; and in *The Old Testament Interpretation of History*, by C. R. North. The theses of these works can be answered by elimintary knowledge of the Logic of Science involved in a supposed scientific view of history.)

I shall not labor a defense of the major presupposition of this paper which is the uniqueness of "Israel's Faith." This thesis is maintained by Albright, Rowley, Wright, *et al.*, and I have basic security following scholars of their repute. But the Word of God asserted the uniqueness of Israel's Faith long before any of these internationally famous scholars were born.

No basic advance could be made in a discussion concerning a "theology of History" until we obtained common agreement as to the nature of historical knowledge and the problem of objectivity. The question is—Is *History* a Science?

The question of Historical Relativism and the quest for an absolute standard is settled in this paper by affirming the absoluteness of Israel's Faith. What is the origin and ground of perpetration of this Faith? The Old Testament unmistakably declares that the people of Israel were in possession of revelation from God! This historical revelation is the origin and them in "Events" as well as verbally (i.e., the events were interpreted in The Scriptures). The word of God (I use this phrase in a generic sense. There are several Hebrew words

for the word - but *dabar* carries this implication and means both word and event!) The Events in which Israel's salvation history rested are to be discussed in this paper. Israel was committed to Yahweh; for he was the sovereign God of the universe and His will was being worked out in spite of their freedom to rebel against Him.

The monotheism of Israel is the foundational element in their understanding of history. God manifested Himself in Nature via the great creative events. That the events occurred no one would seriously challenge but the explication of them are beyond any scientific scrutiny. In Israel's thought these were never merely datum; they were datum plus the interpretation of Faith in Yahweh as their God.

The uniqueness of Israel's understanding of God has been and still is challenged by competent scholarship.

A thorough consideration of this subject would take us far beyond the total bounds of this essay, but we shall enumerate some of the hypotheses regarding the source of Old Testament monotheism.

The various elements involved in our cursory considerations all hinge upon Israel's belief in Yahweh as sovereign of all the universe. To know (*Yadah*) God does not signify knowledge obtained via discursive reasoning, but rather an experimental knowledge.

The Wellhausen school maintains that pre-mosaic religion in Israel had been polydemonism. Archaeological investigation repudiate the affirmation that Near Eastern religions sank to such levels. They were polytheistic in character. A study of pre-history and Ethnology would be imperative in an adequate study; because the concepts of so-called primitive peoples are purer than those of their neighbors already engaged in agriculture and cattle raising.

Albrecht Alt's position is that Polytheism is the foundation of worship in ancient Canaan (his most famous pupil, Martin Noth's *History of Israel* is imperative for this school of study.) The "loca numina" were amalgamated with Yahweh in the process of time. This thesis does not consider the crucial point how was the gap bridged from Polytheism to Monotheism. (Journal of Biblical Literature, January, 1958, Part I, Volume LXXVII.)

This monotheism cannot be the result of a peculiar Semitic racial genius. Israel could not have received Monotheism from

neighboring nations simply because those nations did not have it themselves.

A consideration of the age of the documents and the stage of development of the concept of God can never eliminate monotheism from the Old Testament documents or from the "Faith of Israel." The contemporary attitude is based upon the most recent archaeological and Linguistic research and from this datum the historical aspect is reconstructed and the theological articulation is explicated.

There were many monotheistic currents in the ancient orient, but these can never explain Israel's early monotheism.

The Babylonians had many gods with Marduk at the apex after the time of Hammurabi. The thought that Marduk could be god exclusively was wholly foreign to the Babylonian manner of thinking. (For fuller treatment see *Theology of the Old Testament*, P. Heinisch, The Liturgical Press, 1950, England, translated by Heidt, p. 61-64; also *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, W. F. Albright, 1957, p. 178-9.)

The Canaanites, the Egyptians, and The Persians all show progressive deterioration in relationship to a full monotheism as seen in Israel.

The issue is succinctly stated by G. E. Wright—"the nature of deity worshipped is the basic consideration upon which all other considerations rest." (*The Old Testament against Its Environment*, G. E. Wright, Alec R. Allenson Inc., Pub. Studies in Biblical Theology, 1954, p. 16). In polytheistic theology a new god in the pantheon meant a new helper; in the theology of Israel any inclination to a different god implied apostasy from the true faith. The history of Israel from Moses till the end of the Babylonian exile, and even after the exile, is the history of monotheisms' struggle to win acceptance.

The strength of Yahweh was known by Israel because He had chosen them to be His people. At this juncture it became apparent that the three aspects of Exodus, Election, and Covenant are inseparably bound. These are independent yet, intrinsically bound together. These factors are different perspectives of the great event which made Yahweh Israel's God and Israel Yahweh's people. In these factors Israel's unique Philosophy of History becomes apparent only by "Faith." This fundamental notion could never be subjected to empirical scrutiny. Therefore, the attitude of Israel toward history must be approached with this in mind.

Israelite tradition universally connected the Exodus with the work of Moses. During this period - Israel - by faith, accepted God's call - *The Election*, *The Exodus*, and *The Covenant* became the whole fabric of their existence. (The multiple implications of these aspects of Israel's Faith are discussed in Pederson's *Israel*, p. 19ff, Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 58f, Ricciotti, *The History of Israel*, pp. 167-229, and Jacobs, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 183-226 and Köhler, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 59-82.

The former sceptical attitude toward the Exodus narrative can no longer be maintained. Now it is the fundamental issue in Old Testament Theology. Yahweh became the God of Israel and the issue is not which god, but as Wright so aptly says—"The issue is not the careful weighing of the various merits of the god. It is rather, who is God? Decide on the evidence and act accordingly! What is evidence? It is the evidence of history. What God has the power to do what he wills, and to fulfill what he promises? (*Old Testament Against Its Environment*, G. E. Wright, p. 43.)

The confidence of Israel's Faith in Yahweh could have its origin only in the Exodus events themselves. (The contrast of attitudes toward the place of the Exodus in Old Testament studies can be appreciated by examining the *History of Israel*, Oesterly and Robinson, Vol. I, pp. 69-96 (now seriously dated work); Lod's *Israel*, part II, *The Hebrews Before Their Settlement in Palestine*, pp. 151-209, and Albright's, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pp. 13-15.)

The nature of this brief statement forbids discussion of the validity of the Patriarchal narratives. (Since the work of R. de Vaux, these scriptures are accepted as historically accurate—even by negative critics. See the profound chapter, Recent Discovery and the Patriarchal Age, a lecture delivered by H. H. Rowley in 1949 in the John Rylands Library found in the volume the *Servant of the Lord* by H. H. Rowley, Lutterworth Press, 1952; and *The Journal of Semitic Studies*, Manchester University Press, Spring, 1962, J. C. L. Gibson, *Light from Mari on The Patriarchs*, pp. 44-62; C. H. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Testament Times*, Ventnor, New Jersey, chp. 8 - "The Patriarchal Age," pp. 100.) But they play a vital part in the background understanding of Election in the history of Israel. Israel became a chosen people in Abraham - if the patriarchal narratives are correct; the covenant became a reality at Sinai during the time of Moses.

The reign of God over Israel began in Election and the response of the people to the grace of the covenant.

The Election was grounded in *hesed*. The chosen people were so because of God's purpose not for priority. Wright calls Election the clue to an understanding of the Old Testament. Many of Israel's confessions were grounded in this fact (Amos 2:9-11; Micah 6:2-5; Ezekiel 20:5-7).

Israel's concept of her mission finds its origin in the purpose of God for all mankind! In the Election, God chooses Israel. Freedom is granted only in the acceptance or rejection of *The Covenant*. God's election is not like the arbitrary caprice of despot; it is always directed toward a precise end and this end is the salvation of man. The obligation of election is service, and this involves faithfulness to the covenant which shall be discussed later. Israel distorted her election by a feeling of superiority and by forgetting her mission. God's righteousness and justice demands that they comply to the stipulations of the agreement, or swift punishment will ensue (exile, etc.). It is for this reason the doctrine of the remnant appears in the prophetic literature.

The very possibility of punishment for rejecting the covenant implies the sovereign power of Yahweh. This sovereign reign of God is of vital importance in later prophetic literature for the purpose of showing God's purpose will always be done in the universe - ultimately. This doctrine is of crucial importance for the Old Testament philosophy of history. H. H. Rowley's statement strikes at the central problem of the relation of response to election—

The Servant of Yahweh is a single figure without parallel in the Old Testament. He is chosen for his service, and his response to his election is complete. Others at whom we have looked sometimes responded and sometimes did not respond to their election. But always election and response in service and loyalty belong together, and the final repudiation of the service is equally the renunciation of the election. He who responds feels that he can do no other than respond, for he feels the constraint of the Divine call. Yet they who fail to respond are the evidence that election does not really turn man into a puppet and sweep away his will. Many are called, but few are finally chosen, because few there are who finally respond to the choice. (H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1952,

page 120; this is by far the most adequate statement concerning the election in English that I know anything about. Jacob Jocz's work on *The Theology of Election* is also a must. For a brief statement regarding New Testament doctrine see *Scottish Journal of Theology*, December, 1958, p. 406. The calvinistic conception of Predetermination is an attempt to speak to this problem. The resurgence of the heresy of universalism is an attempt to speak to the problems involved. Neither Calvinistic exclusivism nor Universalism's inclusivism represent the Biblical doctrines involved).

This paves the way for the covenant in relation to election. These concepts are really very similar, at least historically, but in reality to keep the covenant is to acknowledge election. Rowley's fine chapter on Election without covenant points this out clearly. For this reason Israel's election is not founded on blind favoritism but conditioned by their faithfulness to the covenant. The History of Israel shows that election was not for preferential treatment but service. God's providential control of the nations manifest that election without covenant was a living reality in the history of Israel. (This distinction is met in the two words *hesed* and *hen*. The first was covenant love and the second was love outside of the covenant, cf. book of Ruth for both uses.)

The Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians, etc., all performed the purposes of Yahweh in punishing Israel for her apostasy. In the individual sphere there was great variety of election outside of covenant, cf. Nebuchadrezzar, Jeremiah 25:9, Cyrus, Isaiah 40:1ff, and Pharaoh, Exodus 4:21 and 9:12. These references point to a distinction of election and covenant in the nations over against Israel.

Wright affirms that Israel's election found expression in the Sinatic covenant. This pointed to the unique relationship that Israel had with Yahweh. This unique relationship was the perspective from which they viewed the purpose of God to the ends of the earth. This relation was conditioned and the prophets repeatedly claimed that the conditions were unfulfilled, therefore, the place of the remnant is vital!

The significance of the covenant idea cannot be exaggerated. Yahweh, the creator of heaven and earth had elected Israel to service and the foundation of this service was conditioned by the covenant.

Only the idea of covenant (for a popular presentation see Wright's *The Challenge of Israel's Faith*, Chicago University Press, 1944, pp. 72-81. Köhler's *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 60-74; The greatest document in English covering this idea is Pedersen's, *Israel*, pp. 263-335; Mendenhall's *Idea of Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East*; Bright's *The Kingdom of God*, first part; Eichrodt develops three great volumes of Old Testament Theology around the concept of covenant, *Theology of the Old Testament*, German original 1933, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1961. J. Barton Payne's recent work on *The Theology of The Older Testament*, Zondervan, 1962 - builds the entire work around The Covenant Concept. Also George A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of The O. T.*, John Knox Press, 1959; and T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of O. T. Theology*, Massachusetts, Charles T. Brandford Co., 1958. These will do to show the emphasis on the Covenants in contemporary theological discussions. Does it not seem strange that almost no one is aware of The Restoration Movement and its biblical emphasis on the Covenant distinction)? The Covenant concept makes it possible to understand that love of God, His righteousness, His grace, and His salvation; it alone makes comprehensible the character of sin. This explains the central place which it occupies in the Theology of the Old Testament.

Köhler's work is a mixture of both old and new wine. In his section on covenant his beginning paragraph states that the covenant was given in a polytheistic framework because Yahweh is a proper name distinguishes him from all other gods. This point cannot be established technically.

God is always responsible for this agreement. Israel is free to accept or reject the covenant but they have no part to play in determining its content.

The covenant is with "The People" and not an amalgamation of individuals. Köhler's emphasis on the collective needs the qualifications given by Wright. The individual was not completely absorbed in the collective whole. The fundamental passages dealing with covenant in Exodus and deuteronomy speak in the singular. The Decalogue is written in the singular, and if it is the basic content, that Köhler, at least, needs to rephrase his emphasis. The people is not a limited community as a quantitative community it includes the children of the promise. Every obedient individual could come under covenanted relationship with Yahweh.

This point provides entrance into the last phase of our brief study--The Servant of Yahweh. Who is the Servant of Yahweh? What place does he play in the history of the Covenanted people? How does he fit into the Old Testament Philosophy of History? What part does he play in the purpose of Yahweh?

We must pass by the eschatological factors involved in the Old Testament Philosophy of History. If space permitted we would need to explicate "The Day of Yahweh," "time and eternity in the Old Testament vocabulary," "Judgment," etc.

The question of the identity of *The Suffering Servant* has received extensive treatment. (See H. H. Rowley's three chapters 1, 2, and 3, in *The Servant of The Lord*, pp. 3-88; Klausner's *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, pp. 153, 157, 162-168; Mowinckel's, *He That Cometh*, trans. Anderson, pp. 187-257; The finest statement in English is North's, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah*—the entire book is a historical survey of Theories of The Servant. These negative critics refuse the inspired New Testament identification of The Servant in Acts 8:32-35. See Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altertient alischen Königs Ideologie im Alten Testament*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1961. See also publishers E. J. Brill, Leiden for the definitive work on *Sacral Kingship*.) We must face the question - Was Israel in any sense—the suffering servant? This is the apex of Hebrew thought in regard to her philosophy of history. If Israel is the servant (in any sense of the phrase), then the issues discussed in this paper fit neatly together. God elected Israel and she became a covenanted people, and Israel's part of the covenant was an obedient life or one of service. This service involved the purpose of Yahweh for all mankind. The throne of the King became the point of perspective for Israel's view point of history. Her purpose was God's purpose and God's purpose was the salvation of fallen man. God's loving kindness *Hesed* was foundation for the demand for righteousness. Righteousness made peace possible, and Yahweh became victor over the powers of darkness—not by sword or armies, but via Israel doing His will which was for the *purpose* and not *privilege*. In a profound sense Israel's entire obedience to Yahweh's will was involved in her faith that God had chosen, called and covenanted them for a universal purpose. If this be not so, then Israel's faith is inexplicable. This faith is beyond the grasp of empirical methodology and her interpretation of each phrase involved in her history—Exodus, Election, Covenant and Suffering Servant, etc.,

cannot be subjected to scientific examination. These events were actual historical phenomena, but their significance (their biblical interpretation) could have come only by Revelation!

### Some Basic Problems of The New Testament View of History

The ground of correlation between the Old and New Testament datum concerning history is that one must stand within the faith (or be a non-Christian) in order to accept the Christian meaning of God's redemptive events centering in the person of Christ.

The central problem of a Christian Philosophy of History is - how can God be revealed through temporal events? How can the relative disclose the absolute? How can time be a vehicle for eternity? How can Jesus be the bringer of the reign of God? How can a process universe sustain the Christian affirmation that God did something in a divine event which is once for all? This paradoxical situation must find correlation, but where and how? Is our attitude toward history summed up in Kierkegaard's "Absolute Paradox"? We must give a categorical - No! Before and since Anselm's "*Cur Deus Homo*" men of keen insight sought an answer, but few have attained even a comprehension of the magnitude of the problems involved.

The noun history does not occur in the New Testament. The verb *historein* occurs only one time in Galatians 1:18, but here in it is used with its Hellenistic meaning - (to visit in order to get acquainted with) and does not imply what historiography signifies by the term. (For a history of Historiography see Fitzsimmons-Pundt-Nowell's, *The Development of Historiography*, The Stackpole Co., 1954. For an excellent discussion concerning the problem of historical relativism see Mandelbaum's *Problem of Historical Knowledge* and J. V. L. Casserley, *The Christian in Philosophy*, pp. 120-138-200-211, 214-215.)

The form-criticism (see the works of Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*; and R. Bultmann's *Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition*; B. Easton's *The Gospel Before the Gospels*; V. Taylor's *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* are indispensable in studying "Form-Geschichte analysis." This is the leading European and American negative theory of analysis.) approach was a necessary development in the problem of the Gospel records. Historical relativism progressed to a historical scepticism. The presupposition that the faithful community

had interpreted the Christ event and that these interpretations are found in the records is a vital aspect of the general problem.

From this general attitude scholarship moved to one of denying that the historical Jesus could be ascertained. Now we can see the perspective of the contemporary "*Heilsgeschichte*" (see Albert Schweitzer's classic, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, and C. C. McCown's, *The Search for The Real Jesus*; see the recent work of Eric Rust, *Salvation History*, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1963; his *Toward a Theological Understanding of History* is due from the Oxford University Press later this fall. Dr. Rust is a mediating Southern Baptist Scholar). method which recognizes that the records were written by those within the Faith, therefore, the records are articulations from the perspective of the faith bringing Gospel.

#### The Eschatological Message of the New Testament and Its Relation to a Christian Theology of History

The New Testament is unified by the affirmation that Christ is the bringer of The Kingdom of God and that He came in the fulness of time. (Gal. 4:4 - "hote de ēlthen to plēroma tou chronou exapesteilen ho theos ton huion autou genomenon ek gunaikos genomenon hupo nomon." "But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his son, becoming of woman, becoming under law, . . ." Also for a survey of concepts of time see W. Lewis's *Time and Western Man* and Callahan's *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*. Note also the unique development by all existential and process interpreters, especially P. Tillich's *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I.

The Greek New Testament contains two words for time, *chronos* and *kairos*, in the Galatians passage the term *chronos* appears. A problem arises from the Biblical language concerning time and eternity. This particular issue is part of the broader problem which we shall examine in this paper—that of a comprehensive doctrine of Eschatology. A thorough study of this area would provide us with the datum of a Theology of History from the Biblical perspective. (I found the most penetrating volumes to be Danielou's, *The Lord of History*, Regnery Press, Chicago, 1958; E. Rust, *The Christian Understanding of History*; and Cullmann, *The Early Church*, Westminster Press - this is not the volume mentioned previously under Eric Rust's name.)

Several New Testament words are involved in the vocabulary of a theology of History. *Hour* is a vital word in Johannine

terminology and it is set over against the infrequent use of time, *kairos*. (For a complete examination of Old and New Testament words for time see F. H. Brabant, *Time and Eternity in Christian Thought*, Bampton Lectures, 1937; O. Cullmann's *Christ and Time*; J. Marsh, *The Fulness of Time*; and James Barr, *A Biblical Theology Document on the Biblical Vocabulary of Time*.

The *kairoi* falls into two basic areas. One speaks of the last (*eschatos*), and the other speaks of the end (*sunteleion*). The New Testament shows that the last time of God's decisive action began and ends in the coming again of Jesus Christ. *End* implies three basic meanings of the Christian scriptures—cessation, final period, and outcome. These all carry great significance for a Christian understanding of history. The Greek words for everlasting and eternal (*aion - aionios*) imply Christ-filled time not uncharacterized duration.

Plato taught Western Philosophy to contrast time with eternity. Such an antithesis is alien to biblical thought in so far as the contrast rests on a philosophical conception of either term. The coming of Jesus Christ into the world has marked the close of one age (for development of the concept of the two ages from Daniel forward see H. H. Rowley's *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, Lutterworth Press, 1955.) and the beginning of another. That Jesus is the event which is the center of history and its source of a significance is the point of contemporary discussion.

What is God's relation to history and how is He related to history? This is the contemporary problem of the relationship of the immanence to the transcendence of God. If the relation is perceptible only through faith, then we can see the continuity of the Old Israel's faith, and the New Israel's faith via the Lordship of God in Christ. What is involved in the reign of God which judges the past and present by the future? God's reign came in a manner which cannot develop, or be in process, or be a product of this world. The kingdom is both present and future in the same manner that the Pauline doctrine of salvation is past, present, and future.

The Kingdom of God has been interpreted in three basic ways. It has been interpreted as exclusively future, and that the sole function of Jesus was to announce its coming. In the second instance the Reign of God is exclusively present and men are invited to join it, and realize its reality in their own

Christian experience. The third position affirms that the Kingdom is already present, but hidden, and its ultimate realization is still to be consummed in a future act of God. From this basic analysis we see four vital questions. Did Jesus believe that the end of the world was imminent? (For affirmative answer and contemporary bibliography see W. Kümmel's *Verheissung und Erfüllung*; and R. H. Fuller's, *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus*, particularly the first three chapters, pp. 9-77). Most scholars of the present generation would hold this view, but it is contrary to the biblical data. Did Jesus really believe that his death would usher in the end of the world? This was Schweitzer's position, but even negative critical scholars reject this today. Did the early disciple believe that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Kingdom had dawned? This position finds its chief advocate in C. H. Dodd. (C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its development; The Parables of the Kingdom*, make use of Dodd's new edition - not 1936 edition. But note basic change concerning his "Realized Eschatological" view in his commentary on John; see also *The Festscript to C. H. Dodd, Eschatology and Background to New Testament Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1956.) Like most other emphasis there is a basic element which is true, but it distorts clear and textually credible passages, or precludes them from discussion altogether. Did Jesus himself believe that with his activity and his person the Kingdom had already come? Most recent New Testament scholars would admit this contention against Schweitzer.

The variety of theological methods produce differing interpretations concerning biblical eschatology. The apocalyptic interpretation separates the future hope from the past acts of God in history as recorded in scriptures. The ecclesiological-sacramental interpretation affirms that the Church is regarded as the place where time is eliminated by the sacraments.

The individualistic eschatology is extensively formed in Protestantism, and confines the "Last Things" to individual survival after death. The cosmic eschatology of the scripture is either left in background or abandoned.

The rediscovery of the biblical doctrine of The Kingdom of God aided in the movement from individualism to interest in spreading the Kingdom. Eschatology is an expressing of the urgency of missions.

The dialectical tension between (*telos*) and (*eschaton*) is brilliantly expounded by Niebuhr. (For Niebuhr's views see *Faith and History*, *Nature and Destiny of Man* and Robert E. Fitch's article on philosophy of history in R. Niebuhr, *His Religious, Social and Political Thought* ed. by Charles W. Kegley and R. W. Bretall. Niebuhr cannot correlate time and eternity because he rejects the incarnation as an historical or temporal event; see also Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of The Church, Faith and the Consummation*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1962.) Reinhold Niebuhr has contributed more than anyone else in America to a Christian understanding of the historical order. Niebuhr discusses the Biblical doctrine of history as rooted in two ideas. First, the idea of universal history over which God is sovereign and through which his purpose is attained. Secondly, history testifies to man's misuse of his freedom and his consequent denial of the Lordship of Christ by becoming a god. He repudiates all progressivism which envisages man inherent ability to irradicate all the negative factors of his environment. Niebuhr affirms one of the three general areas of eschatology already mentioned, that of the presence, yet future aspects of the kingdom of God.

The Christological eschatology is represented by Karl Barth. God has revealed his nature through a series of mighty acts, the greatest of which is Jesus Christ as the mediator of God. He repudiates all secular and philosophical attempts to understand the course of history. His concept of Revelation is vital to his teaching about history - only God can define his purpose, and this is done via the Christ event. We know God and history only when God breaks through in Christ according to Barth.

Barth accepts the New Testament Eschatology as valid for our day. This he was able to do by interpreting eschatology or eternity as the absolute transcendent which stands in radical antithesis to time. Here there is no end of history and no future advent of the Kingdom of God for the end is always equally at hand. Today Barth shows dissatisfaction with his older approach in his *Römerbrief*. Dr. West shows brilliant insight into Barth's concept of Biblical History.

The anthropological-existential exposition of eschatology comes from R. Bultmann. The eschatological message of the New Testament needs to be demythologized according to Bultmann. Bultmann utilizes Heidegger's *Sein und Seit* as the basis

of his existential analysis of man. This anthropological position is the foundation of his hermeneutics! Bultmann's ultimate conclusion is that man is history. (See R. Bultmann's Gifford Lectures, *The Presence of Eternity or History and Eschatology* for a clear statement of his redefinition of history; also *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Bartsch.) The real significance for Bultmann is the existential choice which decides man's destiny in the present. This decision to accept this new life is eschatological. His position is one of the approaches to the New Testament around which a great controversy now rages—the "Heils geschichte" and of "Existence."

Negative Scholars affirm contradictory variety of New Testament teaching, but if they would attempt correlation of the factors, as they stand, without rejecting other biblical features merely because they do not fit into their apriori-framework, then they supposed contradictory character of the data would be dissolved. (Danielou, Lord of History, Lowith, *Meaning in History*, Cullmann's *Christ and Time*, see also his *Immortality of The Soul or Resurrection of The Dead*, p. 17, where he affirms that he wrote *Christ and Time* intending to propagate *Heils geschichte* and instead scholars thought he wrote about time and eternity. See also F. V. Filson, *Jesus Christ the Risen Lord*; Wilder, *New Testament Faith for Today*; and Dawson's, *Dynamics of World History*, Sheed and Ward, New York.) The apriori of the New Testament framework is Faith or commitment to the Lord of History. This does not reduce history to anthropology as Bultmann does *a la* Heidegger.

The Pauline doctrine of eschatology contains most of the factors which are isolated by the various articulations mentioned. The two major points not discussed elsewhere are the two ages (I Cor. 10:11, *telē tōn aiōnōn katentēken*) and the idea that history is a battlefield between satanic powers, (see particularly the *Colossian Epistle*) and the redemptive activity of God. We shall conclude this survey by deliniating the view of history implicitly and explicitly maintained in *The Revelation*.)

#### The Theology of History in *The Revelation*

Jesus Christ has own final victory over Satandom! The Lord of Glory appeared to John "on the Lord's Day" (chp. 1:10). This was the day of His victory over sin and the grave. The entire book is intended to make the eschatological character of the

resurrected Christ stand out in all its glory. (See the excellent insights in Dr. Merrill C. Tenny's, *Interpreting Revelation*, chp 12. The Christology of Revelation, pp. 117. The Prologue: Christ Communicating (1:1-8); Christ in The Church (1:9-3:22); Christ in the Cosmos (4:1-16:21); Christ in Conquest (17:1-21:8); Christ in Consummation (21:9-22:5); The Epilogue: Christ Challenging (22:6-21).

The basic division of the book which relates "the things that thou sawest," the things which are," and the things which are about to occur" (1:19) provide us with the framework for a Christian view of history which asserts the fulfillment of the will and purpose of God for His entire creation.

The Lamb of God is the executor of the will of God. The Revelation moves from the first century (or period of Roman Persecution) to the consummation. The Slain Lamb is standing presiding over the unfolding of history. At no time, even when evil intensifies, does The Lamb of God fail to be sovereign over the entire creation (note the passive form "was given" throughout the Revelation).

The coming again of Christ, the final resurrection, the judgment, the subjection of the powers, are all involved in a Christian view of history. The *pleroma* (fulness) of Christ's victory is vividly asserted in John's imperative - "come (*erchon* - present imperative form) Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Even a banned prophet (John on Patmos) knew that the victory had been already gained and he could endure the suffering knowing full well that ultimate victory was his through Jesus Christ - The Lord of History! (See the excellent, suggestive study by Stanislas Giet, *L'Apocalypse et l'histoire; e'tude historique seer l'Apocalypse johannique*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).

"Come, Lord Jesus"!

Note: *History and Dialectical Materialism*

The Leading Contemporary contender with the Christian View of History is Dialectical Materialism (communism). This view maintains that man will eliminate all negative social factors when private property (the cause of *all* social evil - so asserts Marxism) becomes state or community owned.

The best single volume interpreting the Marxist view of history is still M. M. Bober, *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History*, second revised edition, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1948.

For an excellent survey of Russian views of history see, Anatole G. Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography*, second revised, D. Von Nostrand Co., Inc. Princeton, New Jersey. Dr. Mazour discusses views of history from the 18th century through the Marxist view of History, good bibliography - p. 252.

The present author is preparing a 150 page "Annotated Bibliography on Communism for Christian Students." The subject of history will receive more extensive treatment there.

For further study on the philosophy of History and the Challenge this area brings to our historically grounded Faith, see—

F. P. Gooch, *History and the Historians in the 19th Century*, Longman Green and Co., 1913. General background of the Marxian era.

Patrick Gardiner, editor, *Theories of History*, Free Press, Glen-coe, Illinois, 1959. This is a book of readings in historiography and critical studies. Excellent - raises the question which historians have pontificated about, but have produced no adequate agrument. Is History a Science?

Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957. A brilliant criticism of the totalitarian doctrine of historical inevitability (*a la* Marxism, Evolutionism, etc.)

Marxist Philosophy of History stands in irreconcilable tension with the Christian view of History (specifically the view delimited in *The Revelation*).

Note: Dr. John McIntyre', *The Christian Doctrine of History*, Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957. This is a fine outline study of some of the central issues for a Christian Theology of History.

Any view of History must clarify and defend its attitude toward historical *explanation, causation* and *fact*. This has not been done by Dr. McIntyre or anyone else committed to the unique phenomenon of Biblical history. What are the problems of the logic of historical explanation (see following notes and bibliographical data for direction in reading material).

Christians must maintain that there have been unique events which have occurred in space and time, i.e., incarnation, etc. What does the most behavioristic logician say about "unique historical phenomenon"? We can not here consider probability theories of explanation and prediction, but we can know that many things in the scientific world approach the probability of (0 based on classical probability theory the scope runs from 0 to 1), yet are actually true; therefore, no necessary and sufficient attack can be made on the biblical claims just because they are highly improbable. The contemporary rejection of the validity of *Induction* is also a must area for serious Christian Apologetics. Karl Popper's *Logic of Discovery*, and his *Conjectures and Refutation* are imperative works for advanced study in this area. The present author has just finished attending Dr. Karl Popper's seminar: *Special Problems in the Logic of Science* at Indiana University (the spring semester 1963). Since the collapse of Newtonian Physics and the falsification of the claim that water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen (H O), the

*Logic of Induction* has been under the most severe criticism. Both of the above claims (Newtonian Physics and water as compound, and other similar claims) had vast inductive evidence to support their assertions, but they are now known to be false, inspite of the mass of inductive evidence. There is no known escape from this *Dilemma of Induction*. Among top flight Logicians of Science the problem of Induction is presently receiving intense scrutiny. The problem of Induction is a central problem of the Logic of historical explanation, prediction, and postdiction (and also retrodiction). The outline of Dr. McIntyre's work might be helpful in providing directions for further thought and study.

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Note: *The Biblical View of History and Scientific Historiography*

It is imperative that those of us committed to Biblical Christianity come to grips with the claims of so-called *Scientific-Historiography* with respect to the biblical records. This is one of the three areas of *Christian Apologetics* which call for immediate attention in *The Bible Colleges*.

For the best single *introductory volume* in the English Language - see Ernest Nagel, of Columbia University, *The Structure of Science: Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation*, Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York, Inc., 1961, chp. 15 - *Problems in the Logic of Historical Inquiry*, pp. 547.

William Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History*, New York, 1957 - excellent, indispensable! Editor M. F. Ashley Montague, *Toynbee and History*, Boston, 1956. This work is made up of critical studies of Tonybee's attempt to establish Laws of History.

An understanding of the problems of historical causation, historical fact, historical explanation (necessary and sufficient condition as vital issue in the logic of history), the genetic fallacy (i.e., if one knows the origin of a concept, then one can therefore explain it.) This particular problem needs examination in view of the negative critical attitudes toward the biblical records. The issues of history and the biblical records can by no means be reduced to the fact that liberal theologians reject many biblical claims, and that conservative theologians accept the Bible as the very word of God. The Bible makes claims that are either true or false. If the Biblical claims are in harmony with the actual state of affairs, then actually they are true, if not they are false. (We are not here implying that the Bible contains false assertions). We cannot permit ourselves to side step the ultimate problem by taking up the escape position of *Heilsgesichte-geschichte*. The biblical records are either right or wrong! An understanding of *The Logic of Historical Inquiry* is imperative, if those of us who love the Word of God, as life itself, wish to give defensible answers to the negative critical reconstructions of Old and New Testament Literature by von Rad, Bright, Albright, Martin Noth, *et al.*, and the New Testament by Bultmann, *et al.*

We are vitally concerned with the problem of History and The Revelation! Does the apocalyptic form of this work preclude it from historical accuracy, and valid assertions about the culmination of human history? We thank God that we can give a categorical - No! to this question.

Note: *Handel's Use of Texts from The Revelation in The Messiah*

G. F. Handel's oratorio was composed in 1741 in 24 days (from August 22 - September 14). It was first performed in Dublin, Ireland, April 13, 1741.

Handel's *Messiah* was written on the basis of the *prophecy, promise and presence* of the Messiah. The first part covers *The Advent* on Christmas season; the second part covers *The Passion* or the

accomplishment of salvation through the redemptive sacrifice of Christ; the third part instructs us in the most moving manner about the Resurrection. Handel employs four pages from *The Revelation* - Chorus 44 - Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16; Chorus 53 - Revelation 5:12-13. The beautiful Hallelujah (this word is composed of two Hebrew terms meaning praise Yahweh) Chorus contains phrases and message from chapter 19:6 and 16, and 11:15.

See number 44 Chorus page 193 in Schirmer, Inc., New York edition of G. F. Handel's *The Messiah* for use of the following passages from *The Revelation*.

Rev. 19:6 — "Halleluia because our Lord God the almighty reigned (*ebasileusen* - 1st aor. indicative)."

Rev. 19:16 — "King of Kings and Lord of lords."

Rev. 11:15 — "The kingdom of the World became the kingdom (not in Greek text but implied) of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign unto the ages of the ages."

Rev. 5:12 — "Worthy is the Lamb having been slain to receive the power, and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory; and blessing."

Rev. 5:13 — "the blessing and the honor, and the glory, and the might unto the ages of the ages."

### *Special Study*

#### The Theme of Conflict and Victory in *The Revelation* and The Dead Sea Scrolls

The best single source which examines the theme of *Conflict and Victory in The New Testament* is Ragnar Leivestad, *Christ The Conqueror*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1954. This excellent study is controlled by the Scandinavian hermeneutical principle of "Motif Research," and therefore must be used with care by the uninitiated in technical theological issues. For the critical and discerning mind it will open up vistas of New Testament research which will produce great preaching materials.

One of the key theological words in *The Revelation* is *nikāo* - victory. The term is used twenty-seven times in the entire New Testament, and seventeen times it appears in *The Revelation* (Moulton-Geden - *Greek Concordance of New Testament*, pp. 665-666). The victory attained by The Lamb of God is available to all obedient, faithful followers. The Bible can, of course, speak of victory and conflict without using either term directly. The victory of Christ stands in irreconcilable contrast with the

Greek concept of victory by brute force. The Greek idea of *nikao* was the superior power overcoming the inferior power. Greek victory was available only to the person who had the power to *take* what he wanted. The new conception of victory and power which we find in Christ, is that a holy, righteous, justice person has the power to *give* what the receiver cannot give to himself. This is what Paul meant when he spoke to former barbarians - the Romans - "The Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation." Romans 1:16f).

The one who is victorious over sin and death, and the principalities and powers becomes the recipient of eternal life through Christ. Our victory is a derived one! John speaks of the martyr's victory, and this certainly is paradoxical. This thesis is parallel with Christ's victory over death—through death on the cross! Victory becomes a synonym for Eternal Life for the Christian believer.

The following list contains the use of the various forms of *nikao* in *The Revelation*.

John's record of Christ's words to those who have gained victory through him are most important to every Christian.

*Revelation 2:7* — "*tō nikōnti doso autō phagein ek tou xulon tos zones ho estin en to paradiseo ton theou.*"

"To the victorious one I will give to him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

*2:11* — "*ho nikōn on me adikethē ek tou thanaton tou deuterou.*"

"The victorious one will by no means be hurt by the second death."

*2:17* — "*Tō nikōnti doso autō ton manna ton kekrummenou*"—  
"To the victorious one I will give to him of the manna having been hidden."—

*2:26* — "*kai ho nikōn kai ho tērōn achri telous ta erga mou*"—  
"And the victorious one and the one keeping my words unto the end."—

*Revelation 3:5* — "*ho nikōn houtōs peribaleitai en himatiosis leukois*" —

"The victorious one thus shall be clothed in white garments."

*3:12* — "*ho nikōn, poiēsō auton stulon en tō naō ton theou mou*" —

"The victorious one, I will make him a pillar in the tabernacle of my God."

*3:21 — "ho nikōn, dōsō autō kathisai met emou en tō thronō mou hos kago enikesa"* —

"The victorious one I will give him to sit with me in my throne, as I also overcome (or was victorious)."

*Revelation 5:5 — "mē klaie idou enikesen ho leōn ho ek tēs phules Iouda."* —

"Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Judah overcame (was victorious)."

*Revelation 6:2 — "kai exēlthen nikōn kai hina nikēsē."*

"And he went forth overcoming (victoriously), and in order (or for the purpose of) that he might be victorious (he might over-being victorious) come."

*Revelation 11:7 — "kai nikesei autous kai apoktenei autous."*

"And will overcome (be victorious over) them and will kill them."

*Revelation 12:11 — "kai autoi enikēsan auton dia to haima tou arniou"* —

"And they overcame (were victorious over) him because of the blood of the Lamb." —

*Revelation 13:7 — "kei nikēsai autous"* —

"and to overcome (be victorious over) them." —

*Revelation 15:2 — "kai tous nikōntas ek tou thēriou"*

"And the victorious ones (overcoming ones) over (of) the beast."

*Revelation 17:14 — "kai to arniou nikēsei autous"*

"and the Lamb will overcome (be victorious over) them." —

*Revelation 21:7 — "ho nikōn kleronomesei tauta"* —

"The victorious one shall inherit these things." —

John also declares in his first Epistle (5:4) that "because everything (one) having been begotten of God overcomes (*nika -* is victorious over) the world; and this is the victory (*hē nika*) that keeps on overcoming (*hē nikēsasa*) the world" — Thanks be to our Lord for our Victory!

Note: The theme of *Conflict and Victory* is also a leading doctrine in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The best single work on The Scroll of Wars is Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of The Wars of Sons of Light Against The Sons of Darkness*, edited, plus introduction and commentary by Yadin, Oxford University Press, 1962. This theme follows from the Old Testament and Intertestamental Literature.

### *Special Study - Persecution*

#### How is The Church to Relate to the State?

*The Revelation* was written to a generation of Christians who were facing the hideous realities of persecution. Because of the great persecutions many Christians felt that evil dominated the human situation, and that the God of righteousness and peace had abdicated His heavenly throne. Many things in *The Revelation* are still inegmatic to the finest of dedicated scholarship, but one thing is crystal clear, that God chose the medium of apocalyptic symbolism to announce to the redeemed that He was still sovereign over heaven and earth. Victory had been gained; hold out to the end and every faithful follower will participate in His victory!

Why did the cultural environment of biblical Christianity persecute the Christians? What had they done, either individually or collectively, to merit the animosity of the world?

This particular problem raises the fundamental issue of how The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ shall relate to the world - either in the first or twentieth centuries.

Christ has said - "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). This same Lord also said - "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21). Peter continues this same line of thought as he declares - "Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling or to governors as sent by him—Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:13f.) Paul desires the same attitude toward kings. He declares, "pray for kings, and for all that are in high station—" - (I Timothy 2:2; see also Romans 13:3f). If the early Church carried out these biblical stipulations, then why persecutions? I believe that the problem of being the body of Christ, and at the same time encountering the world in order to "witness" is the largest single issue facing The Restoration Movement in our time.

How many ways can biblical Christians possibly relate to the world? I believe that they ultimately reduce to four possibilities. (1) *Ghetto-Christianity* or a monastic withdrawal of the Church - is an option which is actually chosen by many. (2) *Pious Parallelism* is a possibility, which finds its modern historical roots in the Lutheran-Pietistic controversies. (3) *Immersion in the World* generates the problem of being unable to distinguish between the Church and the World. (4) *Critical Inter-action* seems to this author to be the only serious attempt to fulfill our Lord's request to be "in but not of the world." This position is the most difficult one because it requires informed, committed Christians, and that they also know the intellectual and cultural grounds given by others for their rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord. (Note the New Testament metaphors for the Christians relationship to the world - pilgrim, alien, sojourner, etc.) What is the relationship of human efforts to the purpose of The coming of The Kingdom? Contrary to the attitude of the Liberals - man cannot create The Kingdom of God, but what is the function of human efforts to witness to Christ's redemption in the purpose of God on earth?

None of the above considerations could or would have prevented persecutions; but this does not preclude that our generation of the Church grapple seriously with the above mentioned issues. Because redeemed man is a citizen of *The City of God* and *The City of This World!*

In the *Book of Acts* we read of the first persecution of The Church - by the Jews. Stephen had been stoned by the Jews (Acts 7;) and immediately following this event we read—"there arose on that day a great persecution against the Church which was in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles.----They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word (Acts 8:1,4). Saul of Tarsus was persecuting "the disciples of the Lord." (Acts 9:). The Herodian persecution took the life of James by the sword (Acts 12:1-5). The tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians would require attention, if we were giving comprehensive analysis of our subject. There were many oppositions and stumbling blocks before the young church, but none of these reached the white hot animosity of the great persecutions. The Epistle of James speaks of the dispersion (*diaspora*) of the twelve tribes (See James H. Ropes, *The Epistle of James*, International Critical Commentary, for a discussion of the scattering of the Jewish Christians).

Christians were severely persecuted until the Roman Empire was (forcefully) baptized, then for all practical purposes, persecutions ceased. We would be mistaken if we took the relative date of *The Edict of Milan* as the end of persecution. Its publication merely brought an *official* end, but certainly not an *actual* end to persecution. The Edict was only the beginning of the end of the Empires' hostility to the body of Christ.

The first major persecution was during the reign of Nero. In this brief statement we shall deal with only two persecutions - Nero and Domition, because these cover the possible range for *The Revelation* background. Much of the New Testament literature comes during and after this general conflagration. The persecution during the month of July 64 A.D. resulted in the destruction of the entire quarter lying between Palestine and the Aventine. (See the descriptions given by Tacitus, *Annals* 15, sections 38-44; Suetonius, *Nero*; 31, 38, 39; Dion Cassius, 62, sections 16-18). Seneca, Nero's teacher, praised the martyred Christians when he mentions these men who died with joy, with serenity, amid such sufferings and torment. (See Seneca, *History* 5, section 55). Roman Catholic "tradition" places the martyrdom of Peter and Paul in the period of Nero's persecution. This assertion cannot possibly be sustained except by the most far-fetched inferences from early Patristic literature.

Soon the populace demanded lighter sentences for the "crime" of being a Christian. It was during Nero's reign that many great public works were started and Christians served as laborers. The Neronian persecution ended in 69 A.D. and for over twenty years afterwards the Christians lived in comparative peace throughout the Roman Empire. During this "period of peace" Balba, Otho Vitellius, Vespasion and Titus were on the Roman throne - successively. From Nero's persecution onward there was a complete distinction between Judaism and Christianity. Up to this period the distinction was not always apparent to the non-Christians. (See *The Book of Acts*, chp. 1-12 - Peter and Jewish emphasis, chp. 13-28 - Paul and Gentile emphasis).

The period of tranquility was broken when Domitian (81-95 A.D.) renewed what Tertullian called the "*institutum Neronianum*" (see Tertullian, *Ad Nationes* - to The Heathens I,7). *The Revelation* was written against this background.

After much persecution and anonymous accusations of Christians, Domitian became convinced that Christianity could not seriously harm his reign, and he suspended further persecutions.

There were other great persecutions of the Church in the second and third centuries. The persecutions of Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus, Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Claudius and Aurelius, Diocletian, and the last extensive persecution by Julian the Apostate, all contributed to the flow of martyrs blood, but Christianity finally triumphed because the power of God shall prevail over all forms of evil. Jesus Christ said "I will build my Church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." No human effort, not even persecutions for the "crime" of being a Chrsitian, will ever prevail against it. The Lord has spoken and His Word shall not return unto Him void!

#### Bibliography for Further Study

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following list is to aid those concerned with further study of this great closing book of our New Testament. We have tried *not* to list books again which have been referred to in the body of the commentary, notes, or appendices. This list will be too large for some, useless to others, but it is given to provide a vast range of study in *The Revelation* and its theology. This list by no means exhausts all that the present author has examined in his study of this marvelous book of promises and victory. The advanced scholar, or student will not find any (or many) things that he has not already critically examined, but this work has been written for the beginner, and the intermediate student of the word of God. We have made a conscious effort to provide materials in the notes, appendices and bibliography for advanced study of The Book of Visions.

I. *English Translations*, Original Texts, Concordances and Lexicons

## A. English Translations:

*American Standard*. 1881, 1900 - the text used in the commentary at the head of each section.

*Revised Standard Version*, 1946. The more recent controversial translation produced by American scholars.

*New English Bible*. This translation was produced by English scholars.

*King James Bible*. Compare this text with the 1900 American Standard for good view of sound differences and similarities.

*The Roman Catholic Confraternity Translation* - 1948 - translated from the Latin Vulgate. (This is a revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version)

*The New Testament Octapla* - Eight English versions of The New Testament. Luther A. Weigle, Thomas Nelson and Sons, (reprinted with addition of more recent translations from 1873 edition). The text contains the following eight English translations.

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Great Bible (1539)	King James (1611)
Geneva Bible (1560)	American Standard Version (1881) 1901
Bishop's Bible (1568)	Revised Standard Version (1946)

Compare the eight translations of *The Revelation*.

## B. Original Texts:

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#### D. Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon - Old Testament:

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(Limited to Daniel, Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah) For critical examination of the Old Testament quotations in *The Revelation* it

would be necessary to examine the original Hebrew (or Aramaic of Daniel) and compare with the Septuagint translation, then note the specific quotation or imagery. Often this background is necessary if we are to do anything more constructive than guess at the meaning of John's symbolism, etc. The excellent set of Soncino Commentaries will be very helpful to the intermediate student. It contains both the Hebrew Text and an English translation with a basically conservative commentary.

The Soncino Press, 5 Museum House, Museum St. London, W.C. I.; volume VI, *The Twelve Prophets* contains, of course, Joel and Zechariah. These are vital for quotations and imagery in *The Revelation*.

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Listed in just one occurrence but it does not mean that they only occur once.

It does not list Biblical authors (prophets, etc., not emphasized) nor the names of our Lord or God the Father. This by no means implies that they are not far more important than the names we have actually listed—His name is above every name!

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