

The Second Coming of Christ

Foundational Truth Volume 14

By Peter Tan

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Peter Tan Evangelism
GPO Box 3177
Canberra
ACT 2601, Australia.

Website: www.petertan.net
Email: elshaddai1@bigpond.com

PREFACE

This is the final book of the Foundational Truth series. In this series the foundational principles laid out in Hebrews 6:1-2 are covered: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. In this book, the basic principles of eschatology which include understanding the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are explained.

Modern Christianity has seen many false predictions of the Coming of the Lord, and we will probably see more such errors continue when believers get excited either by the various waves of revival or by certain chronological dates which fit to an observed mathematical pattern in human history. It is hoped that firmly grounded Christians would learn the error of past false prophecies and stay rooted in the principles outlined in the written Word of God: that no one will know the day nor the hour of Christ's Second Coming (Matthew 25:13). Instead of trying to predict the exact date of His Coming, we merely have to live ready for His Coming.

Another frequent error in modern Christianity is the attempt to identify who the Anti-Christ is in their generation. Those who do so forget that there is both a spirit of anti-Christ that works in all ages which is separate from the beast of Revelation 13 (1 John 4:3; Revelation 13:18). Such hasty identification has often brought disrepute to the church especially when the so-called identified anti-Christ dies without fulfilling Bible prophecy.

In an area muddled with false predictions and misguided end time teaching, this book seeks to lay out the foundational principles by which we should approach and study the End Times and Christian eschatology.

May the God of peace Himself sanctify us completely, and may our whole spirits, souls and bodies be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Pastor Peter Tan

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE VARIOUS ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS

The word ‘*eschatology*’ is derived from the Greek Word ‘*eschatos*’ which means the ‘*last things*.’ Whether we call it end time teaching or eschatology makes no difference as long as we stay within the boundaries of the written Word of God in presenting the various views. The first thing that one encounters, when one starts exploring the various areas of end time teaching, is the varying views on the Second Coming of Christ, the Tribulation, the Rapture and the Millennium.

The following are some of words used:

The Tribulation – a seven year period prophesied by Daniel (Daniel 9:27).

Pre-tribulation – before the Tribulation

Mid-tribulation – in the middle of the Tribulation

Post-tribulation – after the Tribulation

The Millennium – the thousand year reign of Christ in Revelation 20:5-7.

Pre-millennial – before the thousand years

Post-millennial – after the thousand years

Amillennial – no thousand year period (views 1000 year as figurative)

Rapture – the secret catching away of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1).

Before we can go into the details of each, we need to first point out the reason for these various views. All the various views have their Scriptural basis and we need to understand how the views came about.

Different Classification, Different Views

If we take all the various passages on the Second Coming, for example Matthew chapter 24-25, Mark chapter 13, Luke chapter 21, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4-5; 2 Thessalonians chapter 1-2, 1 Timothy chapter 4, 2 Timothy chapter 3, Zechariah chapter 14 and Revelation chapter 19, and we classify them as follows:

1. That there is only one grand slam Second Coming of Christ – logic would dictate that we accept the post-tribulation view for it is very clear from the gospel accounts that the Second Coming of Jesus takes place after the tribulation (post-tribulation view).

2. That there is a two-part Second Coming of Christ: one for the church (the Rapture or secret Second Coming) and one for the Jews (the landing on the Mount of Olives – Zechariah 14:4) with a clear dispensational division between them, then logic dictates that it has to be before the tribulation (pre-tribulation view).
3. That there is a two-part Second Coming but no clear distinction between the dispensation to the Gentiles and to the Jews, logic dictates that the mid-tribulation view would be strongest in bringing forth this understanding of the continuity of deliverance for both church and Jews.

As you can see from the above line of logical thought, the problem of the various views on *when* the Second Coming occurs is not whether they are Scriptural or not; rather it is how the Scriptural passages on the Second Coming are classified. All the views are Scriptural; it is only *how* the Scriptures are interpreted and *classified* which makes the same Scriptures support the various views. As the post-tribulation view has only one grand slam Second Coming, there is no necessity to explain why there is a differential to make it a two-part Second Coming. Thus we will consider the reasoning behind the two-part Second Coming and how the other views arise. (At this point, I need to let the reader know that I lean towards the pre-tribulation view and hold the pre-millennial view regarding the thousand year reign of Christ – so that the reader can be aware in case any prejudice colours my arguments).

The Two-part Second Coming of Christ

There are Bible references to the times of the Gentiles which distinguished the Gentile dispensation from the Jewish dispensation. The Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 met to consider the Gentile question and concluded that God (in the church age) was now visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name and would one day return to restore the tabernacle of David (implying the Jewish kingdom) (Acts 15:14-16). Jesus spoke of the times of the Gentiles and its fulfilment (Luke 21:24). Paul spoke of the rejection of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles until the fullness of the Gentiles is complete (Romans 9:24-28; 11:15-25).

In first coming of Jesus, the gospel was preached to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16; 2:9-10). Jesus Himself made it clear that He came for the Jews first and not for the Gentiles during His earthly ministry (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; John 4:22). When He had completed His witness to the Jews, having died on the cross for the sins of the whole world, Jesus commanded His disciples to go through the whole world and to preach to every creature and every nation (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). We could

say that Jesus had a two-part first coming: his first three years primarily for the Jews and after His resurrection, His ministry to the entire world including the Gentiles. This would mean that there was a separation of about three years in His two-part first coming between the dispensation of the Jews (which includes His thirty years growing to adulthood and His three year ministry) and the dispensation of the Gentiles after His resurrection.

In His second coming, it is possible to divide it into a two-part Second Coming: the first part for the Gentiles (the Rapture: the Coming in the air – 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and the second part for the Jews (His feet landing on the Mount of Olives – Zechariah 14:4). If we take the last week of Daniel to be the Jewish dispensation with the Rapture taking place before it begins, then there would be a seven year separation between the two-part second Coming. Those who accept the separate coming of Christ for the church as opposed to His coming for the Jews (feet landing on the Mount of Olives), view the passages of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians as revealing the secret coming of the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1).

The Rapture: the first-part Second Coming in the Air

Separating the Second Coming of the Lord into two parts, one for the Gentiles and one for the Jews, means that we need to be careful to examine each Scriptural passage of the Bible on the Second Coming very carefully. Some of the passages may refer to His first part coming in the air and some to His second coming to the earth. Some may wonder why scholars do not just call it His second and third coming. This would not be theologically correct as His coming for the Gentiles in the Rapture would be His second Coming for them in the air; and His second Coming for the Jews, landing on the Mount of Olives, would also be His second coming for them. Thus, we coin the term the two-part Second Coming.

What is involved in the Rapture or the second coming in the air? This would signify the completion of the church age with believers being gathered together to Him (2 Thessalonians 2:1). The phrase 'second coming in the air' is derived from 1 Thessalonians 4:17, where it speaks of the Lord descending from heaven with a shout, the dead in Christ being resurrected, and those alive being caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This same event is described in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 where the dead are raised and those alive are transformed in a twinkling of an eye to receive their new spiritual bodies.

Enoch who walked with God and was not, is a type of the Rapture, which is to take place in the Second Coming in the air (Hebrews 11:5 – he was

taken up (Greek root from *metatithemi* meaning *to transport or be carried, includes transmutation*). This second coming in the air is sometimes referred to as the secret coming or Rapture because of references that imply this event coming like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10) and is different from the coming of the Lord to land on the Mount of Olives which is a very public event (Matthew 24:27 – as the lightning flashes from the east to the west). Of course, any landing made on the Mount of Olives – second coming for the Jews - will never be a secret event.

When the Rapture occurs, it would be the second time that there was a major resurrection of the dead. The first physical resurrection (not just a physical resurrection but a physical resurrection into an immortal spiritual body) was when Jesus rose from the dead. As He arose, all those in the Old Testament who had waited for Him in Hades (Abraham's bosom Luke 16:19-31), rose with Him and received their spiritual bodies (Matthew 27:52-53). Jesus literally emptied 'Abraham's section' of Hades and took those who were captive under death to the heavenly paradise with Him (Ephesians 4:8-10). These were likened to the firstfruits of those to be raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

The second major batch of those who will be raised from the dead will be at Christ's second coming in the air (1 Corinthians 15:23, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). Everyone who dies in Christ before this event will be in the presence of the Lord in heaven but without their new resurrected immortal bodies; their spirits and souls will be heaven. Stephen as he died a martyr asked the Lord to receive his spirit (Acts 7:56-60). Paul said that to be absent from the body (to die) is to be with Christ (Philippians 1:21-24). There is no such thing as 'soul-sleep.' Spirit and soul consciousness continue after physical death in the Spiritual World.

The question is sometimes asked 'Why do we need a body when we can continue living and growing as spirits and souls?' There are plans of God that we do not fully understand yet, which require us to have new spiritual bodies which will be ready for the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). The new spiritual body is immortal and like the resurrected body of Jesus of a heavenly material (1 Corinthians 15:48-54).

The second-part Second Coming for the Jews: Landing on Mount Olives

This second-part of the Second Coming will definitely take place at the end of the Tribulation week (Great Tribulation of seven years) prophesied by Daniel. Jesus spoke of the *abomination of desolation* prophesied by Daniel (Matthew 24:15). It is very clear from the book of Daniel that this *abomination of desolation* will take place in the middle of the Tribulation

week, which means that it splits the seven year Tribulation into two periods of three and a half years (Daniel 9:27). Jesus tells all in Judea who see the *abomination of desolation* to flee to the mountains because of the greatness of the tribulation that will be taking place (Matthew 24:15-21). The suffering will be so great that unless the days are shortened, no flesh will be saved (Matthew 24:22 *for the sake of the elect the days are shortened*). Immediately after the great Tribulation, cosmic powers are shaken and then Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory (Matthew 24:29-30).

This second-part Second Coming is a public event with Jesus coming as the Judge of all the earth consuming the wicked by the presence of His glory (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). In this very public Second Coming, the Lord lands on the Mount of Olives and confronts anti-Christ, the man of sin, and all the nations of the world (Zechariah 14:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8). This is the second coming which brings the end of the Adamic dispensation and ushers in the Millennium (Revelation 19:11-20:4). It is interesting that when Jesus read from the book of Isaiah 61:1-2, He stopped at the 'acceptable year of the Lord' which is in the middle of a sentence (Luke 4:18-19). The second part of that same verse spoke of 'the day of vengeance of the Lord' which directly referred to this second-part Second Coming.

CHAPTER 2

THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD

There are various experiences of cleansing and judgment that we all undergo in our Christian life but they are separate from the special event judgments that the Bible speaks about. There is the normal judgment that one must make in the Christian life of what is wrong versus what is right and what is lawful versus what is expedient (Hebrews 5:14; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). The spiritual man judges all things but himself is judged by none (1 Corinthians 2:15). This does not mean that one who is spiritual is consumed by pride but rather true spirituality is humility and meekness through being already chastened by the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). There is also a fine difference between judging things and judging people. We need to judge things (events, styles, doctrines, methodology, practices, etc.) in order to improve them. We never judge people because that would involve condemnation; and such judgment belongs to the Lord and not to us (Romans 14:4-10).

The Judgment of Believers

We all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). Those who have experiences in the Spiritual World will note that many times people experience a 'life-review' when they leave the physical body and enter the Spiritual World. This life review is more a sort of 'self-judgment' as one experiences all the positives and negatives of one's life; feeling intensely the pleasure or the hurt that one causes to another person. Although it is a life transforming experience and brings one to more wisdom and understanding, this is not the event called 'the judgment seat of Christ.'

At the judgment seat of Christ, we all give account for our individual lives (Romans 14:10-12). No one is lost in this judgment seat of Christ but we are all judged in order that we be rewarded. Those who do not live their lives right lose their reward but not their salvation (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). God is love and His judgments are not meant to see who He condemns but rather who He could reward. Roland Buck in his revelation of angelic ministries spoke of being told that the judgment of believers is not a dark night through which one must pass before one breaks into eternal day; it is a Day in which God has chosen to say 'Thanks' to His people (Angels on Assignments by Roland Buck, pages 131-144). The chronological time period in which most scholars have located the timing of the believers'

judgment is between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ for the Jews; and it takes place in heaven where Christ is together with the marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The Judgment of Nations: Judgment of the Adamic Earth

Immediately upon His Second Coming and landing on the Mount of Olives, the Lord Jesus would already be judging the anti-Christ and all nations by His glory and power (2 Thessalonians 2:8). John the apostle saw thrones and judgments committed to those who sat on the thrones (Revelations 20:4). All these are part of the judgment of nations which Jesus spoke about (Matthew 19:28; 25:31-46). The disciples of Jesus, in their carnality, seem to have sought such 'throne-room' positions but out of the wrong motives (Luke 22:24-30). John the apostle saw the Throne room of God surrounded by twenty-four thrones which might have been of a different dispensation and belong to the Spiritual World administration (Revelation 4:4). The earthly reign of Christ was instituted as a pattern on earth, also with thrones, through which Christ rule and reign in the Millennium.

All humans who have ever lived on earth in the Adamic dispensation (from Adam to the last generation before Christ's Second Coming) are judged and have their secrets revealed (Romans 2:16). Jesus, the Son of Man who has taken on Himself the Adamic race, will be judging all the earth with truth and compassion for He knows all the nature of men (Acts 17:31). There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom all must give account (Hebrews 4:13). While the judgment of believers is based upon the love, sacrifice and service unto Jesus and for the purpose of reward, the judgment of nations and all the earth is based upon every human being and every nation conforming to the two laws of God: how they have loved God and how they have loved one another. A glimpse provided for us by Jesus of this judgment shows how the King (Jesus) judges based on the treatment of nations and people to one another (Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 2:13-16). Those who do not pass this test are assigned to the everlasting fires (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 19:20; 20:10).

The Millennium

One of the mysteries that puzzle people is why the devil is to be locked up before the thousand years and then released at the end of it (Revelation 20:4-10). Indeed, many wonder why he is not cast away into the Lake of Fire like the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 19:20). For these reasons, some people lean towards post-millennial views (seeing the church age as forming part of the Millennium) and others just take the thousand

years as a symbolic period (Amillennial) rather than a literal period. If one were to interpret the thousand years as a literal period, it is likely that one would take the pre-millennial view; for from the vantage point of the present twenty-first century, there is no point or place in human history where we have seen a thousand years of peace and harmony.

The Millennium is supposed to be a time of paradise on earth. It is a time when the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in God's holy mountain (Isaiah 65:25). The only other time when you have a paradise on earth was in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Many people have wondered what it would be like if Adam and Eve had not fallen (Plan A). I am sure that at some point Christ would have still revealed Himself.

What we see in the story of the Bible could have been a Plan B (Speculating, of course, that in the entire Plan A to Plan Z plus more, Christ would have revealed Himself in some way). There could be still unrevealed parts of the original Plan A (if Adam and Eve had not fallen) for planet earth that have yet to be unveiled. The fact that most of the first generation of men lived close to a thousand years (nine hundred and over) before they died could also imply that at the end of a thousand years of obedience, there could have been a special revelation of Christ waiting. (In the same way that we could speculate on the first generation of Moses entering the promise land, instead of being disobedient for forty years – no one should dare presume that God ordained for them to fail – *Read Foundational Truth Volume 13 on predestination*). Unfortunately, we will only be able to unravel this mystery when the Millennium comes around after Jesus' Second Coming to the earth.

The Great White Throne Judgment: Heaven and Earth flee away

At the end of the Millennium, there is the appearance of the Great White Throne. It has such immense power that even the whole planet earth and all the heavens cannot stand its glory. All heaven and all earth flee before the Great White Throne. This mighty Throne affects all the known earth and all the Spiritual World spheres and planes over the earth plus the planetary systems surrounding. The devil and his cohorts, who had pre-existed before the Adamic dispensation and were actively working against God on the planet earth, have already been dealt with prior to the appearance of this Great White Throne (Revelation 20:10). The dark abodes of the Spiritual realm, Death and Hades, are dealt with under this Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:14).

This Great White Throne judgment is a mighty accounting of all this whole sector of the Universe (earth and the surrounding heavens), of all those who lived in the Millennium, of pre-Adamic and Adamic civilizations and its influence on one another, of angels and of men who serve in this sector of the Universe. Judgment was based upon conformity to the plans of God for this sector of the Universe. Books were opened, one of which was the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12). Although this mighty judgment sounds frightening, it is also one in which God reveals Himself even more as the books are opened.

There are many things that were fore-ordained before the foundation of the earth and the surrounding heavens in this sector of the Universe:

1. There will be the revelation of things kept secret from the foundation of the earth (Matthew 13:35).
2. There are blessings and kingdoms kept for us from the foundation of the earth revealed after the Millennium (Matthew 25:34).
3. The mystery of the law of sin and rebellion, leftover from pre-Adamic times, and of its conception before the foundation of the earth, and its effect on the earth and all its surrounding heavens will be unveiled and judged (Luke 11:50).
4. The mystery of the love of God for Christ and for us through Christ before the foundation of the world will be shown to us in full light of glory (John 17:24).
5. The mystery of the redemption of earth and this part of the Universe through Christ the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the earth will be revealed in all its atonement might (Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8). This mystery also relates to the right of the Lamb of God over this sector of the Universe (Revelations 4:1-7).
6. The mystery of how we were chosen before the foundation of the earth to be conformed to Him is revealed (Ephesians 1:4).
7. The mystery of how all our works were fore-ordained and planned by Him before the foundation of the world is revealed (Psalm 139:16; Hebrews 4:3; Revelation 20:12).

Out of this tremendous revelation of God, a new heaven and a new earth will come about. All the Spiritual World and all the natural world, all heaven and all earth will be made anew. A powerful and new relationship between God, the Lamb of God and His creation is ushered in after the Great White Throne Judgment.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

The prophecies of Daniel hold a key to interpreting the book of Revelation and the end times. To Daniel was revealed the great kingdoms of the earth even up to the time of Christ and the last days. Jesus Himself pointed to the abomination of desolation prophesied by Daniel as an important point during the last week of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15).

The Kingdoms revealed to Daniel

The four kingdoms of the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the Roman Empire were revealed to Daniel through the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and also separately in his dreadful visions (Daniel 2:29-45; Daniel chapter 7-8). We outline their revelation as follows:

<i>Babylonian</i>	<i>Medo-Persian</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Roman</i>
Gold	Silver	Bronze	Iron
Eagle-wing lion	Bear	Leopard	Beast
	Ram	Goat	

Out of the Roman Empire will arise ten horns or ten kings (Daniel 7:24). These ten horns would be the same as the feet (containing ten toes) of clay mixed with iron in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:33, 42). These ten kings shall be partly strong like iron and partly weak like clay. All the empires before these ten kings were monarchies (with exception of the Roman Empire which had some form of senate but the Emperor still ruled like a monarch). A form of democratic union – partly strong and partly weak – would be well represented in the allegory of iron mixing with clay. There is a prophecy that the Second Coming of Christ to the earth will be in the time of these kings (Daniel 2:44-45 *the stone cut out of the mountain without hands*).

The Rise of the Anti-Christ

Daniel was informed by Gabriel that another shall rise after them; he will be different from the original ten kings (Daniel 7:24, 25). He will conquer three of the ten kings and shall do the following:

1. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High
2. He shall persecute the saints of the Most High
3. He shall intend to change times and laws

4. For a time, times and half a time, the saints will be given into his hand. (A time is always taken to be a prophetic year of 360 days, times would be 720 days (360 X 2), and half a time 180 days; added together they would make 1260 days = 3.5 years).

In Daniel chapter 11, there is the prophecy of the king of the North and the king of the South (Daniel 11:6). The historical fulfilment between the struggles of the King of the North (Syria) and the King of the South (Egypt) are well known to scholars who traced some of the detailed prophetic fulfilment to various kings of north and south, including Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes and Ptolemy (I, II and III). Part of this history is recorded in the Jewish records of 1 and 2 Maccabees. The abomination done by Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) was the polluting of the holy altar in the temple by the offering of a sow and forbidding the continuance of daily sacrifices (1 Maccabees 1:44-54).

Many prophecies have a dual fulfilment – a historical and a future prophetic fulfilment. Antiochus Epiphanes was only a type of anti-Christ and Jesus views the future *abomination of desolation* as still unfulfilled even in His time (Matthew 24:15). Some scholars view the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 as fulfilling many parts of Matthew 24 but there is always a dual fulfilment in prophecies of this nature (a historical and a future eschatological one). To this date many scholars have not found historical fulfilments of Daniel 11:35-45 (from verse 35 where it mentions *the time of the end*).

Rise of the Ten Horns: the Revised Roman Empire (RRE)

There is no doubt that the countries of Babylon, Persia and Ancient Syria (now modern countries of Iraq, Iran and Syria with slightly different geographical boundaries) will play a role in the end times as part of the ten kingdoms. The rise of the European Union (EU) would be only one part of the rise of the ten kingdoms. Many modern Christians were concerned when the EU started and thought that when ten nations joined the ten kingdoms would be formed. Lo and behold, as of today (2008) there are 27 member countries with many others waiting to join. We need to see the larger picture of the whole former Roman Empire and not just its European section.

What must be pointed out is that the Middle East was also part of the Roman Empire and the rise of the ten kingdoms will be from the whole ancient Roman Empire and not just the European part of the Roman Empire. It is possible that at some point in the future, the regions of the old Roman Empire will resolve themselves into ten sections or unions. As of this

writing, comparing the map of the old Roman Empire with the modern maps of the nations that made up the old regions, we can see some groupings:

1. EU countries
2. Non-EU independent countries
3. European Islamic countries like Turkey, Albania, etc.
4. Russia and its eastern European countries (although Russia is not officially part of the old Roman Empire, I have included it here because of its great influence over the Eastern European nations which were part of the old Empire)
5. African independent nations like Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, etc.
6. Islamic block of former Soviet countries
7. Islamic Sunni block of countries like Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia (only parts of it under old Roman Empire but included because Mecca is located in it), etc.
8. Islamic Shiite block of countries like Iran, Iraq, etc.
9. Israel
10. Small troubled states or countries like Palestine, Gaza, Lebanon, etc.

The above loose classification is in a state of flux and things may change over the next decade or two. My ten loose classifications are not necessarily indicative of how the ten horns will be formed. They are done to illustrate the possibility of viewing afresh the areas of the old Roman Empire from a different perspective instead of always focussing on the European Union as the key prophetic fulfilment (although monetary wise it would play an important part). Within these blocks you can see the clash of civilizations (Christianity versus Islamic), Sunnis versus Shiites, former communist societies versus modern democratic societies, Jews versus Islam, etc. Note also that in most of these main blocks, Islam is very dominant and at the moment the one object that stands against Israel restoring and building its Third Temple is an Islamic mosque. God is in control of human history, especially where it has a prophetic timing and will allow various things to prevent the untimely fulfilment of prophecies in accordance to His own time table.

In the future as the ten horns from the old Roman Empire resolve themselves into the Revised Roman Empire (RRE), regional wars (or political subterfuge) would be fought (most likely led by the anti-Christ) until he conquers (subdues) three of the horns (Daniel 7:24). When these ten horns are linked to the ten horns in Revelations 17:12, it is possible that their existence only lasts a short time (one prophetic hour – whatever that means when converted into earth time). Apparently, they will be of one mind with the beast (the anti-Christ) and reign with him.

The other factor to note is that based on Daniel 11:36-45, whoever controls the regions of Iraq, Iran and Syria will play a major role in the events of the last days (King of the North). The third factor to note is that there are prophecies in Isaiah 19:23-25 which speak of a highway between Egypt, Israel and Assyria. The last capital of ancient Assyria is Nineveh in modern Iraq. Should you see modern developments linking Egypt, Israel and Iraq, know that all this contributes to the group dynamics of the formation of the ten horns.

The Last Week of Daniel: the Great Tribulation

Daniel was praying about the 70 year prophecy of the desolation of Jerusalem and its restoration by Jeremiah the prophet (Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10). The temple of Jerusalem was destroyed about 586 B.C. and was rebuilt and consecrated around 516 B.C. There was a literal fulfilment but there was also an eschatological future fulfilment revealed to Daniel by Gabriel (Daniel 9:24-27). This dual historical and eschatological fulfilment is common in most prophecies. Angel Gabriel revealed that the seventy years refer to 70×7 years. This counting of 490 years would begin from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. There were three commands that were given:

1. Cyrus in 536 B.C. to restore the Temple.
2. Darius in 519 B.C. reaffirming Cyrus edict.
3. Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. to build a temple to God in Jerusalem (Some scholars estimate this date to be 456 B.C. to 458 B.C.)
4. Artaxerxes in 447 B.C. to build the city and the walls (Some scholars estimate this date to be 446 B.C. to 448 B.C.)

The restoration from the edict of Artaxerxes was carried out by Ezra about the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (around 457 B.C.) (Ezra 7:6-8, 26). The prophecy states that seven plus sixty-two week of years ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) would take place until the cutting off of the Messiah (Daniel 9:25-26). This would bring the date of the crucifixion to 27 A. D. This would mean that Christ would have been born as early as around 7 B.C. or later depending on which date is calculated. (Our modern calendar which was modified from the Julian and Gregorian calendar became more accurate from 1582 A.D. – still off by 26 seconds per year. I know some people would rather try to squeeze history to make everything look nice with Christ being born at A.D. 1 but I would rather leave it at the most accurate historical records we have even if the resultant dates look strange to us).

Whatever our estimated dates are (depending on which historical records and starting points in history taken), most scholars agree that the last week

of Daniel (the last seven years) are still in the future after the church age. These last seven years represent the Great Tribulation (to differentiate it from normal tribulations which are present when the righteous are persecuted by the sinful – John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; Revelations 1:9. Great Tribulation mentioned in Revelations 7:14).

These last seven years of the Great Tribulation will be divided into two parts each of 3.5 years. Since Jesus said that the days will be shortened for the sake of the elect, it is possible that the actual counting of this Great Tribulation period uses the prophetic counting of 360 days per year instead of 365.25 days per year (Matthew 24:22). The original rotation of the earth around the sun before the flood was 360 days a year based on the counting of Noah (150 days for 5 months equals 30 days a month – Genesis 7:11, 24; 8: 3-4). It took time for mankind to realise that the length of the year had changed after the flood and amend their calendars accordingly. If we count each half of the 3.5 years of the Great Tribulation by the prophetic 360 year count, we have 1260 days per section (360 X 3.5 days).

This timing of 1260 days is important as it is also the reckoning of time in the book of Revelation under the beast (Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5-7). This same chronological period is also known as time, times and half a time or 42 months or 1260 days (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2; 12:14; 13:5). It is from our understanding of the book of Daniel that we can see that a great part of the book of Revelation is speaking about what will take place in the last week of Daniel. Pre-tribulation views hold that the Great Tribulation is an awesome display of God's wrath upon the earth as the anti-Christ rises. Being part of the wrath and judgment of God, God raptures the church before the outpouring of judgment and wrath upon the earth (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 6:16-17; 11:18; 16:19; 19:15). The Old Testament typology is in Enoch's rapture before the flood.

What about those left behind in the Great Tribulation? These elect or saints or Messianic Jews will have their own ordained protection under God's plan of preservation for this part of the Jewish dispensation. There will be much martyrdom and persecution especially in the second part of the Great Tribulation – after the *abomination of desolation* (Daniel 9:25; Matthew 25:15-22; Revelations 7:14). Apparently, God will prepare a place of protection for them in the wilderness around Israel and provide for them supernaturally (Matthew 24:16; Revelation 12:14). Some scholars have identified this area as around the wilderness and mountains of Edom, where there are prophecies of the Second Coming of Christ in judgment related to Edom (Isaiah 63:1-6; Daniel 11:41).

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Having understood the basic eschatological predictions of Daniel, we can now look at the book of Revelation with a clearer light. The chronological similarity of the 1260 days or 3.5 years or 42 months (time, times and half a time) of the last week of Daniel to that of the book of Revelation is where we can rightly outline the various symbols used in Revelation to tie it to events that take place in the Great Tribulation. It would place most of the book of Revelations as occurring during the period of the Great Tribulation (GT). The table below illustrates this (Pre-millennial pre-tribulation view; for other views just place the Rapture either in the middle of GT or at the end of GT; for post-millennial view, just place the millennium with the church age, the amillenial view is not affected as the millennium is not viewed chronologically):

<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Daniel</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
The Church Age		Revelation 1 to 3
The Church Rapture		Revelation 4 to 5
First Half GT	Daniel 7:24	Revelation 6 to 11; 13
Abomination	Daniel 9:27	Revelation 12
Rapture of Two Witnesses and 144,000		Revelation 11:11-13; 14
Second Half GT	Daniel 11:36-45	Revelation 15 to 19
The Millennium		Revelation 20
New Heaven, new Earth		Revelation 21 to 22

As we can see from our previous discussions of prophecy and its fulfilment, there are always dual fulfilment (historical fulfilment of actual events and future eschatological fulfilment of prophecies) and the exactness of timing, even looking retrospectively, is not easy to draw on. Secondly, although the book of Revelation speaks primarily of the Great Tribulation, it does not mean that the principles and verses inherent in those chapters are irrelevant to us. All principles and all truths in whichever part of the Bible, Old Testament or the book of Revelation, are always applicable to us all the time even though their direct historical references may be to past or future events.

The Church Age

The period of the Church Age from Revelation chapters 1 to 3 speak prophetically of the church. The seven churches mentioned are actual historical churches but they have situations in them that God uses to

prophesy through John of the various phases of the church (dual fulfilment – historical and eschatological). We first see that all the seven churches together make up the various aspects of the vision of Christ shown to the apostle John:

Full Vision of Jesus described in Revelation 1:10-20 compared to admonishments to the seven churches in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. All churches viewed together form a complete picture of Jesus:

<i>Churches</i>	<i>Description</i>
Ephesus	He who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands.
Smyrna	These things says the First and the Last, who was dead and came to life.
Pergamos	He who has the sharp two-edged sword.
Thyatira	These things says the Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.
Sardis	These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.
Philadelphia	These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens no one shuts, and shuts and not one opens.
Laodicea	These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the Creation of God.

In spite of all the churches, with the exception of Philadelphia, having specific problems and admonishments, there are those who overcome within each church. The promises to the overcomers form seven aspects of the authority, reward and power of the believer in this life and in eternity:

<i>Churches</i>	<i>Promises to the Overcomers</i>
Ephesus	To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.
Smyrna	He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.
Pergamos	To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.
Thyatira	And he who overcomes and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

Sardis	He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
Phladelphia	He who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write upon him My new name.
Laodicea	To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His Throne.

The Seven Historical Phases of the Church

The seven churches represent seven various phases that the church has gone through from its inception in the book of Acts. Some of the shift and changes in these phases are gradual just like the shift of the church in the book of Acts from a primarily Jewish church to a Gentile church at the end of the book of Acts (it ended with a prophecy of the rejection of Christ by the Jews – Acts 28:26-28). Looking backwards over two thousand years of church history, we could easily pinpoint phases that the church went through in line with the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

1. Ephesus the loveless church

The first phase of the church was an important phase as the canon was still being formulated. The early church fought against doctrinal errors and in their focus on doctrinal correctness, neglected love. Although persecution started around 64 A.D. under Nero, the last apostle John lived until towards the end of the first Century. The Nicolaitans, according to the writings of the early church fathers (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius and Tertullian), lived lives of lasciviousness, unrestrained indulgences, adultery, eating things sacrificed to pagan idols and generally lovers of pleasure; things which the council in Jerusalem advocated restrain (Acts 15:19; 1 Corinthians 10:6-8, 20-22).

According to the early church fathers, the Nicolaitans did what Balaam did with the Israelites by luring them into sins of the flesh (Jude 4, 11-12; 2 Peter 2:1-2, 14-15). Apparently, it was Nicolas, one of the proselyte from Antioch, who started this practice (Acts 6:5). While the name *Balaam* means *he has consumed the people*, the name *Nicolas* means *he overcomes the people*. Nicolas must have started well filled with the Spirit, among the

seven deacons, but his former Gentile and pagan lifestyle must have pulled him down into sin and error (Acts 6:5). It is not just wolves outside the church that we must be wary of, but also wolves who arise from amongst the church (Acts 20:29-30). In spite of their failure to keep their first love strong for the Lord, the church did succeed in resisting the errors of the Nicolaitans.

2. Smyrna the persecuted church

Persecution of the early church began around 64.A.D. and continued until about 313 A.D. Some scholars have defined ten persecution periods of the early church as follows:

1. Nero (64-68 A.D.)
2. Domitian (81-96 A.D.)
3. Trajan (98-117 A.D.)
4. Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.)
5. Septimus Severus (193-211 A.D.)
6. Maximinus (235-238 A.D.)
7. Decius (249-251 A.D.)
8. Valerian (253-260A.D.)
9. Diocletian (284-305A.D.)
10. Galerius (305-311A.D.)

Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Mivian Bridge on October 27th 312 A.D. He claimed divine assistance and was sympathetic towards Christianity. Constantine and Licinius met at Milan and signed the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. granting freedom of worship to Christians and those of other religions; all the property belonging to the church and Christians were restored. The church entered a new phase.

3. Pergamos the compromising church

As Constantine became a patron of the church, the church grew in wealth and political influence and power. As in the parable of the sower and the seed, where it had faced the frontal attack of persecution, it now faces the flank attack of world riches; both attacks aimed at making it fruitless (Matthew 13:21-22). Most of the Roman Emperors that came after Constantine professed Christianity and under them, Christianity became the official religion replacing the old Roman religion of a pantheon of gods. Many of the Roman buildings and temples were used as churches and Christian services took on grandeur and importance. Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople on 11 May 330 A.D.

Having lost its place as capital of the world, Rome began to exert itself as the capital of the church. The five main presiding bishops of the church lived in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome and were also called 'Patriarchs.' The Patriarch of Rome took the title of 'Papa, Father' later modified to 'Pope.' The Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople wrestle with each other for headship of the official church. In 588 A.D. the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, took upon himself the title 'Ecumenical Patriarch' as the 'Universal Bishop of the church.' This was bitterly contested by the Pope in Rome. In a synod held against the Patriarch of Antioch in 588 A.D., John was described as the 'Archbishop and Ecumenical Patriarch.'

In 606 A.D. Pope Boniface III, who had a close relationship with Emperor Phocas, sought and obtained a decree from Phocas which stated that the 'See of Blessed Peter the Apostle should be the head of all churches.' This effectively ended all attempts by the Patriarch of Constantinople to be the 'Universal Bishop' as now this title belonged to the Pope in Rome. The Pope's political power grew, taking the place of the Roman Emperors who had ruled over Italy, and soon took upon himself the power to crown kings. Charlemagne was crowned by Pope Leo III on 25 December 800 A.D. as rival of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople. Thus the church entered into a phase of papal power.

4. Thyatira the corrupt church

In the ninth and tenth Century, corruption crept rapidly into the centralized and politicized church. Pope Nicholas I who reigned from April 24, 858 A.D. to 867 A.D. consolidated papal power and influence over Western Europe, which was beset by Muslim and Norse invasions and political uncertainty. From 897 A.D. to 955 A.D. (a period of 58 years) there were 17 popes and the use of money to buy ecclesiastical positions was common. There was widespread nicolaitanism and breaches of celibacy with some popes marrying and others taking concubines. Even convents were corrupted and became like brothels.

The papacy reached its zenith of power in the eleventh and twelfth Century under Pope Gregory VII and Pope Innocent III. The reign of Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303 A.D.) marked the decline of the power and glory of the papacy. One of the most notorious popes was Pope John XII (955-964 A.D.). He was an immoral man and the Lateran Palace was spoken of as a brothel. Pope Sergius III (897-911 A.D.) was the only pope known to have ordered the murder of another pope; and the only pope known to have fathered an illegitimate son who also became pope. The pontificate of Sergius III (known by papal historians as the pornocracy – rule of the

harlots) saw the rise of corrupt women to power in the papacy. Theodora, who was characterized as a 'shameless whore' and her daughter, Maroiza, the mother of Pope John XI (931-935 A.D.) exercised influence and power over the papacy (Revelation 2:20 – similar to Jezebel in the Bible). Sometime in the twelfth Century, to counter the spread of what the church saw to be heresy, bishops and councils were charged to established inquisitions. In the thirteenth Century, the pope assigned the full authority to carry out inquisitions to the Dominican order carried out in the name of the pope. Thus began a new phase where the church, formerly the persecuted, began to persecute and kill the innocent.

5. Sardis the dead church

There were four different manifestations of inquisitions: the medieval inquisition (started around 1184 A.D. including the Episcopal inquisition 1184-1230s A.D. and the later Papal inquisition from 1230s A.D.), the Spanish inquisition (set up in 1478 A.D.), the Portuguese inquisition (set up in 1536 A.D.), and the Roman inquisition (set up in 1542 A.D.). Many innocent people died in the inquisition and ungodly methods of torture were invented by the inquisitors to solicit forced confessions of guilt. The church tried to exercise authority over freedom of thought and freedom of will and choice. One of the most famous cases was the trial of Galileo Galilei in 1633 A.D. The great scientist clothed in sackcloth, fell on his knees with his hands on the Bible, and forced to recant all his scientific discoveries. Groups like the Waldensians were hunted and slaughtered for hundreds of years. Hundreds of thousands were killed in the Spanish inquisition and millions driven from their homes.

Other well known people killed by the inquisition were as follows:

1. Joan of Arc (1412-1431 A.D.)
2. John Hus (1369-1415 A.D.)
3. Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498 A.D.)
4. Robert Barnes (1495-1540 A.D.)
5. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600 A.D.)
6. Patrick Hamilton (1504-1528 A.D.)

The period of the Inquisitions was the worst blight of church history that should put every Christian to shame and repentance. We should resolve that such should never occur again in any shape or form. Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D.) would have been killed as a heretic if not for his benefactor Frederick III who protected him at Wartburg Castle. With the rise of the Reformation, the church was finally coming out of its worst nightmares.

6. Philadelphia the faithful church

The beginning of the Reformation took place when Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church on 31 October 1517 in Saxony. Luther's predecessors John Wycliffe and John Hus had laid the groundwork for the Reformation. While the spiritual renewal was taking place in the Reformation, there was also a cultural and scientific revolution taking place in Western society through the Renaissance (14th to 17th Century). The root of the Industrial Revolution (18th and 19th Century) was also being laid through the expanded use of the printing press (Gutenberg 1440 A.D.).

The Protestant Reformation was soon led by Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli. The separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church beginning in 1529 A.D. and completed in 1536 A.D. further weakened the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Reformation led to a series of religious wars, the last of which was the Thirty Year War (1618-1648 A.D.) between the Catholic Habsburgs and the Protestant princes of Germany supported by Denmark and Sweden.

The resultant Peace of Westphalia signed on May 15 and October 24, 1648 involved treaties between the Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III (Habsburg), the Kingdoms of Spain, France and Sweden, the Dutch Republic, and their respective allies among the princes of the Holy Roman Empire. It recognised the Peace of Augsburg (1555 A.D.) by which each prince had the right to determine the religion of his state (at that time Lutheranism, Catholicism and Calvinism). It also recognised the right of Christians, living in principalities where their denomination was not the established church, to practice their faith in public during allotted hours and in private at their will. This treaty effectively ended the Pope's power over all of Europe.

7. Laodicea the lukewarm church

The Reformation Period opened a door to the many spiritual revivals which followed. Many of the spiritual revivals were the result of a positive reaction to the apathy, worldliness, unbelief and coldness of people to spirituality. The first great awakening (1730-1760 A.D.) and the second great awakening (1800-1830 A.D.) brought forth renewal to the societies of their time. Since then many other revivals have constantly broke forth from time to time up to our present time. Yet in spite of all these revivals including the Pentecostal revival in the 20th Century, we see the world divided into those who are hot, those who are cold and those who are lukewarm.

Never before at any time in history has there been so much wealth handled by countries, multinational companies and individuals. Even the church and various ministries have tapped into the prosperity of the modern world. Yet the world and much of society is still spiritually poor; the spiritual growth of societies has not kept pace with the scientific and technological pace of knowledge growth. This lack of balance between spirit, soul and body of the human race will have to give way at some point. Revivals will continue to spring forth here and there keeping the flames hot for those who would yield to the call of the Spirit but free choice and a materialistic philosophy will keep many cold. Caught between the two, the majority remains lukewarm (Revelation 3:15-16 *cold or hot mentioned three times by Jesus*).

Alas, the hearts of many will wax cold when the time of the end comes upon them (Matthew 24:12). For as in the days of Noah, life for people will still seem normal even though the end draws near; they were still eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the Ark (Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:27). Although outwardly many seem to be wealthy and have need of nothing, spiritually they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked (Revelation 2:17). Only the precious gold of God's pure Word and the anointing of His Holy Spirit can enrich us and open our spiritual eyes (Revelation 2:18). The final revival for this age will be the revival of the Word and the Spirit.

The Rapture of the Church and the First Half of the Great Tribulation

As John was caught up to heaven in Revelation 4:1-2, the church will also be caught up in the Rapture before the beginning of the judgments falling upon the earth (Revelation Chapters 4-5). Everything that follows from Revelation chapter 6, is destruction and judgments:

1. The Seven seals release wars and conflicts, famine, plagues, persecution and martyrdom on the earth (Revelation Chapters 6-7).

The white horse in Revelation 6:2 is not the Christ but the Anti-Christ going forth to conquer during the first half of the Great Tribulation. In his wake are all manner of famines, death and disaster. The red horse symbolising war released upon the earth; the black horse, famine; and the pale horse, death. Thousands of martyrs die during this first half of the Tribulation but 144,000 are preserved by God to be His witnesses together with His two main witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 who prophesy for 3.5 years.

The beast from the sea (Revelation 13:1-10 *Anti-Christ*) and the false prophet (Revelation 13:11-18 *the beast from the earth*) work together;

the Anti-Christ killing many of the martyrs (Revelation 13:5-7) and the false prophet deceiving the whole earth and controlling the financial system through the mark of the Anti-Christ.

2. The Seven Trumpets deliver even more natural and cosmic disasters (Revelation Chapters 8-11).

The first four trumpets bring forth cosmic disaster upon the planet earth. The fifth and sixth trumpets are the release of demonic forces who were locked in dark places (bottomless pit and fallen angels held back from destroying the world since pre-Adamic times) but now find free reign upon the earth as the Anti-Christ and darkness rule the earth totally for a short period.

The two witnesses (most likely Elijah and Enoch; although some believe them to be Elijah and Moses because of the mention of their prophetic works – *power over rain and power over water turning it into blood* – Revelation 11:6; and *the appearance of Elijah and Moses on Mount Transfiguration* – Matthew 17:3; and *the Song of Moses being sung* – Revelation 15:3) were permitted to be killed like the other Tribulation martyrs before them (Daniel 9:25; Revelation 13:7) but they complete their 3.5 year witness before their martyrdom.

Their resurrection and rapture after three and a half days bring forth the completion of the second woe (Revelation 11:14). The three woes have to do with the release of very evil spiritual dark forces held back since pre-Adamic times but allowed to be released in the first half of the Great Tribulation. The first woe is the demon spirits from the bottomless pit with Abaddon as their leader. The second woe is the release of the four fallen angels bound since pre-Adamic times who are hell-bent to destroy all the earth. The third and final woe is the forcing of Satan out from the heavenly realms to the confines of the physical earth. He is hopping mad when that takes place. His coming down to the earth coincides with the middle of the Tribulation where the abomination of desolation takes place.

The Abomination of Desolation

When Satan sees that he has been cast down to earth, he persecutes the woman with the male child (Revelation 12:13). The woman (representative of Israel) is protected by God throughout the second half of the Great Tribulation. Enraged at his inability to afflict her, he makes war against all those Jews not sheltered in the wilderness. By that time and through the testimony of the two witnesses and the 144,000, the gospel of Jesus Christ would have been successfully preached to Israel, and the true elect would be

those who accept Him as their Messiah and Saviour; thus obtaining the grace of His protection over them (Revelation 12:17).

Just before the devil is cast down to the earth, the two witnesses and the 144,000 are taken in a rapture just prior to war in heaven between Satan and Michael (Revelation 11:11-13; Revelation 14). In Revelation chapter 14 we find the 144,000 taken into the presence of Jesus where they worship before the Throne of God (Revelation 14:1-4).

The Second Half of the Great Tribulation

In the second half of the Great Tribulation, the planet earth's fullness of time has come (Revelation 14:14-20). The seven bowls (Revelation chapters 15-16) are a total annihilation of all of the earth: every living creature in the earth dies (even this did not take place in Noah's flood), the sun is destabilized and scorches the earth, all the earth, the sea, the rivers, the air are destroyed. Mystery Babylon is revealed, representing all the empires of the planet earth at its peak. Some would like to limit the representation of Mystery Babylon to just a particular organisation or country but from Genesis 11, Babylon has always represented the totality of men's rebellion against God. All empires and political rule of men are outflows of this Babylonian spirit. No doubt many evil nations and organisations can be said to have this same Babylonian spirit.

The woman represents the culmination of the best of human evil and rebellion personified in the empire of the Anti-Christ and the beast she sits on represents the spirit of Anti-Christ and the personification of all the fullness of that self-same spirit in the latter day Anti-Christ. He is the beast who was, who is not, and who will ascend out of the bottomless pit (Revelation 17:8). The seven kings, five which have fallen, one is and the other is yet to come represent the various kingdoms: Egyptian Empire, Assyrian Empire, Babylonian Empire, Medo-Persian Empire, Greek Empire which have fallen, the Roman Empire which still was existing at the time of the reception of the book of Revelation by John, and the future Revised Roman Empire which was yet to come (Revelation 17:10).

The beast, who is also the eighth, and is of the seven is indicative of the conquest by the Anti-Christ (the little horn of Daniel 7:24) of the three kingdoms. He would have reduced the ten horns to seven in his conquest and formed together with the remaining horns the eighth empire; while yet being part of the seven (Revelation 17:11). At the time of the writing of John the apostle, the ten kingdoms had not been formed yet (Revelation 17:12). At the time of the writing of this book (Foundational Truth Volume

14), there are some indications towards the resolution of the geographical area of the old Roman Empire into ten loose blocks.

The end of the Great Tribulation is indicated by the total and complete collapse of all the kingdoms and rule and reign of man – the fall of Babylon and all that it represents (Revelation 18-19), and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the whole earth (Revelation 19:11-21).

The Millennium and the New Heaven and New Earth

The Second Coming of Christ to the earth is followed by the Millennium (Revelation chapter 20); which in turn is followed by the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11). The size of the New Jerusalem (meaning City of Peace, we probably should have translated its city name meaning over to English so that we don't mistake it for the earthly Jerusalem in Israel) is twelve thousand stadia through its length, breadth and height. This would be roughly about 1,500 miles or 2,414 kilometres for each side. Placing it on a geographical scale, that would be a city covering more than half the distance between Sydney and Perth (more than half the Australian or the USA country length coast to coast). And this is just the size of one city called New Jerusalem that we know of in our part of the Universe!

The fact that there is also a transformation of heaven and earth (the first heaven and the first earth passing away – Revelation 21:1) shows forth that even all the visions that we have presently of heaven and the Spiritual World, are nothing compared to the greater glory of what is in store for us in the new heaven and new earth.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with us all. Amen.