

# REVELATION PODCAST NOTES

*Date: January 5, 2023*

## PRETERISM

The word Preterism comes the Latin word *preter*, meaning “past”. In the Preterist interpretation of Revelation, everything except for the Second Coming has already happened. Some say that these things happened before 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem.

A Roman Catholic Jesuit named Alcazar developed the theory. It was published posthumously in 1614. It has been accepted by most Roman Catholics ever since. The main draw for Catholics, besides being developed by a Roman Catholic, is that it shows how the Church triumphed over the Roman Empire with the official recognition of Christianity by Constantine in 313 AD.

The greatest thing about the Preterist interpretation is that Revelation means absolutely nothing for the present or future. Everything is in the past. The worst thing about the Preterist interpretation is that Revelation means absolutely nothing for the present or the future. Everything is in the past.

Aside from Alcazar, the most prominent Preterist commentator is R.H. Charles.

## CONTINUOUS-HISTORICAL

The Continuous-historical, or historicist, interpretation of Revelation is focused on two historical termini mentioned in Revelation: John's day and Judgment Day. The process must be continuous because no other point in time in Revelation can be pinpointed to any particular historical event.

This has been the common Protestant interpretation of Revelation. This viewpoint looks at Revelation as a blueprint of the history of Western Europe from the time of John to Judgment Day. The concentration on Western Europe expresses the importance of the Roman Catholic Church.

The continuous-historical interpretation typically includes Constantine, the fall of Rome, Mohammed, the Protestant Reformation, Napoleon, Hitler, atomic weapons, Blackhawk helicopters, etc.

The greatest thing about the Continuous-historical interpretation is that you can place certain historical people and events within the framework of the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments in Revelation 6-16. The worst thing about the Continuous-historical interpretation is that it is constantly changing. It is reading Revelation alongside the newspaper. Each commentator places their generation in the last days, presenting their interpretation as the final interpretation.

Prominent continuous-historical commentators are Albert Barnes and Adam Clark.

## IDEALIST

The Idealist interpretation of Revelation views the book as a source of inspiration for courage within the Church. The symbols throughout the book are used to show the battle between good and evil in this world.

The major issue with the idealist interpretation is that it completely denies Revelation as a prophecy. Jesus says, “Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this” (Revelation 1:19). Another great issue with this interpretation is the extreme reactionary tone it has to any historical components in the other interpretations.

Prominent Idealist commentators are William Hendricksen’s *More Than Conquerors* and R.C.H. Lenski.

*Date: January 12, 2023*

## **FUTURIST**

The Futurist interpretation is one of the most prominent interpretations among Evangelicals today. This is where the bulk of the jargon for Revelation is found: chiliasm, millennium, rapture, premillennialism, dispensationalism, postmillennialism, great tribulation.

Millennium and chiliasm come from the Latin and Greek for “one thousand.” It is the focus on the thousand-year reign of Christ in Revelation 20:1-6. The focus on this one passage in Revelation paints the entirety of the futurist interpretation.

In every variation of the futurist interpretation, the Rapture is one of the key events in human history. Even with the importance of the Rapture in the futurist interpretation of Revelation, there is such great difference as to **when** the Rapture will happen. There are six different times in the Revelation timeline that are proposed for the Rapture:

1. Pre-trib, pre-millennial – The Rapture happens first in the grand scheme of Revelation. This is the belief in the Left Behind series.
2. Pre-millennial, post-trib – The seven years of the Great Tribulation happen before Jesus takes the Christians out of the world in order to have a large following when He returns for the Millennium.
3. Post-millennial, pre-trib – Christ reigns on earth for 1000 before taking the Christians out of the world before the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation serves as the time when Satan is released from prison (Revelation 20:7-10).
4. Post-millennial, post-trib – Everything in Revelation happens with the Rapture being the final event before Christians enter Heaven for eternity.
5. Pre-millennial or post-millennial, mid-trib – The final two points in the timeline require the

Rapture to happen at the absolute mid-point of the Great Tribulation. This is taken from Revelation 11:12 when the two witnesses were taken up into Heaven after being raised from the dead.

Premillennialism is the belief that Christ will come again to reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years. He will reign with the risen martyrs and faithful Christians being His assistants, very much like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Babylon. This reign will be “a reign of righteousness and universal peace” followed by the Great White Throne Judgment. According to Eusebius the church historian, Papias originated the concept of premillennialism around 125 AD. It can also be found in the writings of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian. Today, it is widely considered to be the proper interpretation of Revelation among Evangelicals.

Dispensational Premillennialism was originated by John Darby. In this view, there are seven ages, or dispensations, in human history: innocence, conscience, human government, promise, the Law of Moses, Church and Kingdom. C.I. Scofield popularized dispensationalism through his study bible. In dispensationalism, the land of Israel is the central focus of all human history. The biggest problem with dispensationalism is the idea that Jesus set up the Church as a “Plan B” because the Jews refused to listen to Him.

The major problems with any variety of premillennialism are numerous:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:23-25 teaches that Jesus is reigning over His kingdom right now.
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teaches that Jesus will not come back to earth at all. The faithful Christians will join Him, the dead and the living, will meet Him in the air. This is the original passage for the idea of the Rapture.
3. Acts 2 and Ephesians 1 show that Christ began reigning at His ascension.
4. Jerusalem is not mentioned in Revelation 20.
5. David’s throne and God’s throne are one and the same. “So Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established” (1 Kings 2:12). In the

- parallel account, “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father. And he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him” (1 Chronicles 29:23).
6. The Law of Moses, especially the civil and ceremonial portions, was abolished when Christ shed His blood on the cross.
  7. God purposed the Church from the very beginning. St. Paul tells the Ephesians, “This grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him” (Ephesians 3:8-12).
  8. If the Church is not God’s kingdom from all eternity, why does Jesus say, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18)?
  9. The idea of a second chance after the Rapture contradicts Hebrews 9:27-28, “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.”

Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ will reign on earth through the Church before the Great Tribulation. Postmillennialism is likely the least popular interpretation of Revelation today. The major doctrinal foci of postmillennialism are Social Gospel doctrines to establish the millennium. Postmillennialism can be found in the writings of John Calvin and C.H. Spurgeon, but their writings disagree with themselves. The primary commentator in favor of postmillennialism is B.B. Warfield.

In every millennialist interpretation, the Great Tribulation is a literal seven-year period where the Antichrist reigns on earth. During these seven years, Christianity will be outlawed. Everything that

can be against Christ is celebrated. Depending on which flavor of millennialism, the outcome of the Great Tribulation differs. The greatest issue with this understanding of the Great Tribulation is that it gives everyone on earth a second chance with a definite timeline.

The greatest issue with all of the Futurist interpretations is the idea that there will be a major event that will mark the beginning of the time of Revelation. Revelation is seen as simply a timeline of what will happen in the last seven years of this age.

**Date: January 19, 2023**

***1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,***

“The revelation of Jesus Christ” spawns two questions: What is being revealed? Who is giving the revelation?

**1 Peter 1:7** so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 4:13** But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

**Brighton (p. 38):** “There is, then, a clear sequence of mediation through which John and his audience received the revelation: God, Jesus Christ, his angel, John, and the seven churches. The source of the revelation is God. The mediator of the revelation is Jesus Christ, who uses an angel to give it to John and the churches. Angels play an important role throughout the book of Revelation. They help in the mediation by leading or attending John through the visions. They help in the interpretation of the visions. They also help John to focus on what is important in a particular vision. And they answer John’s questions concerning something within a vision.”

**RHBC (p. 21-22):** “The challenge for modern readers is to interpret these symbols and metaphors as John intended. ... We must always investigate the meaning of these pictures and metaphors from John’s perspective. ... These images were written by a Judean disciple and apostle of Christ who lived in the first century Roman Empire. They should be interpreted from his perspective. Some images and symbols reflect the culture and events of his Greco-Roman world, but the vast majority of them have been introduced before in the Old Testament.”

***1:2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.***

μαρτυριαν – “eyewitness”

**John 3:11** Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

**John 5:32** There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

**John 19:35** He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.

**John 21:24** This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

***1:3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.***

7 Beatitudes in Revelation - 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14

Revelation is the only NT prophecy.

**Brighton (p. 38-39):** “Finally, these verses speak a blessing upon ‘the one who reads [aloud] and those who hear ... and who keep’ this prophetic message (1:3). The blessing is not here defined, but when the six other instances in Revelation of a pronounced blessing ... are examined, it becomes clear that the blessing bestowed is the participation in the heavenly banquet of the bride and the Lamb (19:9). It is a blessing which is also now received by the washing of the Christians’ robes (22:14) in the blood of the Lamb (7:13-14) and is a participation now in the first resurrection (20:6). At both the beginning and the end of the prophecy this blessing is spoken upon the hearers (1:3; 22:7). It is also the present gift of God to the faithful recipients of the Gospel as it comes in the word of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection and in Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Thus it is spoken over the Christians assembled for corporate worship, where the Scriptures are read aloud to the assembly and the Sacraments instituted by the Lord Jesus are cherished and followed.”

**Date: January 26, 2023**

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

Oecumenius and Andreas (6<sup>th</sup> century) interprets “Is ... Was ... Coming” as Triune God.

Better to view “Is ... Was ... Coming” as the Father with 7 spirits = Holy Spirit  
7 Spirits = 7 Archangels?

**1 Enoch 20:1-7** And these are names of the holy angels who watch:

Suru’el, one of the holy angels—for (he is) of eternity and of trembling.



Raphael, one of the holy angels, for (he is) of the spirits of man. Raguel, one of the holy angels who take vengeance for the world and for the luminaries. Michael, one of the holy angels, for (he is) obedient in his benevolence over the people and the nations. Saraqa'el, one of the hoysl angels who are (set) over the spirit of mankind who sin in the spirit. Gabriel, one of the holy angels who oversee the Garden of Eden, and the serpents, and the cherubim.

Victorinus (3<sup>rd</sup> century) – Holy Spirit's gifts

**Isaiah 11:2-3** And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

**Zechariah 3:9-4:10** For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree." And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."

7 = 3 (God) + 4 (Creation) -> God of creation/perfection/holiness

**Genesis 18:1-2** And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him.

**Isaiah 6:3** And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

**Ezekiel 37:9** Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of

man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”

**Genesis 2:2-3** And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

**Apringius of Beja (mid-6<sup>th</sup> century), *Tractate on the Apocalypse 1.4*:** “The number seven, therefore, signifies the period of the present life, so that the apostle is not merely writing to seven churches and to that world in which he was then present, but it is understood that he is giving these writings to all future ages, even to the consummation of the world. Therefore, he mentions the number in a most holy manner, and he names ‘Asia,’ which means ‘elevated’ or ‘walking,’ indicating that celestial fatherland which we call the ‘catholic church.’ For exalted by the Lord and always moving toward the things which are above, it is the church which advances by spiritual exercises and is always desirous of the things of heaven.”

***1:5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood***

πρωτοτοκος (“firstborn”) vs μονογενης (“only-begotten”)

Only child

**Luke 7:12** As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

**Judges 11:34** Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

Jesus’ divine Sonship

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 1:18** No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

“firstborn of the dead”

**Colossians 1:18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

**Colossians 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-27** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead,

the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

**John 11:25-26** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

**Athanasius, *Discourses Against the Arians* 2.61:** “Although it was after us that he was made man for us and became our brother by likeness of body, still he is called and is the firstborn of us. Since all people were lost through the transgression of Adam, Christ’s Flesh was saved first of all and was liberated, because it was the Word’s body. Henceforth also we, having become joined together with his body, are saved through it. For in his body the Lord becomes our guide to the kingdom of heaven and to his own Father, saying, ‘I am the way’ and ‘the door,’ and ‘through me all must enter.’ Wherefore he is also said to be ‘firstborn from the dead,’ not because he died before us, since we died first, but because he suffered death for us and abolished it, and therefore, as man, was the first to rise, raising his own body for our sakes. Therefore, since he has risen, we too shall rise from the dead from him and through him.”

**Oecumenius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.5:** “Paul also ascribes to him this phrase, saying, ‘Who is the firstfruits, the firstborn from the dead.’ They call him the ‘firstborn from the dead’ since he initiated the general resurrection and ‘has renewed for us a new and living way (namely, the resurrection of the dead) through the veil, that is, through his flesh,’ as it is written. For all of those who rose again from the dead before the coming of the Lord were again handed over to death, for that was not the true resurrection but merely a reprieve from the time of death. Therefore, none of them is named the ‘firstborn from the dead,’ but the Lord is indeed called this, since he is become the source and cause of the true resurrection and, as it were, has become a certain firstfruits of the resurrection of men, becoming such as they were and going forth as from a certain as they were and going forth as from a certain bridal chamber out of death unto life.”

“ruler of kings”

**Romans 13:1** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been

instituted by God.  
**4<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

*1:6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Date: February 2, 2023

**1:7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.**

“those who pierced Him”

**Zechariah 12:10** “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

**John 19:33-37** But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

**1 John 5:6** This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

**1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

Lord God = YHWH Elohim

**Genesis 2:8** And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

**Isaiah 17:6** Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten—two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, declares the LORD God of Israel.

παντοκρατωρ = “Almighty”

**2 Corinthians 6:18** and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

Satan as κοσμοκρατωρ

**Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Caesar as αυτοκρατωρ

Date: February 9, 2023

***1:9 I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.***

**1 Peter 4:12-13** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Patmos is 40 miles southwest of Miletus.

**Bede, *Explanation of the Apocalypse* 1.9:** “History notes that John had been banished to this island by the emperor Domitian on account of the gospel, and that then he was, appropriately, allowed to penetrate the secrets of heaven while [at the same time] prohibited from leaving a small space of the earth.”

***1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet***

“Lord's day”

**Didache 14:1** Come together each Lord's day to break bread and give thanks. Confess before each other your transgressions. Your offering should be clean.

**Ignatius to Magnesia 9:1** If then those who walked in the ancient practices attained to the newness of hope, no longer celebrating Sabbaths, but living according to the Lord's day, on which our life also arose through Him and through His death, which some deny, a mystery whereby we receive faith, and through which we endure patiently, so that we may be found to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our only teacher.

**Isaiah 30:21** And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

***1:11 saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”***

Ephesus listed first possibly because it is the mother church of the rest.

*Date: February 16, 2023*

*1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,*

**Matthew 5:14-16** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

**Matthew 18:20** For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

**Exodus 25:31** “You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it.

**1 Kings 7:48-50** So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the LORD: the golden altar, the golden table for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north, before the inner sanctuary; the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, of gold; the cups, snuffers, basins, dishes for incense, and fire pans, of pure gold; and the sockets of gold, for the doors of the innermost part of the house, the Most Holy Place, and for the doors of the nave of the temple.

**Zechariah 4:2** And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.

**Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse 1.12-16:** “He calls them ‘lampstands’ since they carry in themselves the ‘illumination of the glory of Christ.’ He did not call them ‘lamps’ but ‘lampstands,’ for a lampstand itself does not possess the capacity to shine, but it bears that which is capable of illumination.”

*1:13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.*

“Son of Man”

**1 Enoch 46:1-8** At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, and there was with him another individual, whose face was like that of a human being. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels. And I asked the one—from among the angels—who was going with me, and who had revealed to me all the secrets regarding the One who was born of human beings, “Who is this, and from when is he who is going as the prototype of the Before-Time?” And he answered me and said to me, “This is the Son of Man, to whom belongs righteousness, and with whom

righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness. This Son of Man whom you have seen is the One who would remove the kings and the mighty ones from their comfortable seats and the strong ones from their thrones. He shall loosen the reins of the strong and crush the teeth of sinners. He shall depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms. For they do not extol and glorify Him, and neither do they obey Him, the source of their kingship. The faces of the strong will be slapped and be filled with shame and gloom. Their dwelling places and their beds will be worms. They shall have no hope to rise from their beds, for they do not extol the name of the Lord of the Spirits. And they have become the judges of the stars of Heaven; they raise their hands (to reach) the Most High while walking upon the earth and dwelling in her. They manifest all their deeds in oppression; all their deeds are oppression. Their power (depends) upon their wealth. And their devotion is to the gods which they have fashioned with their own hands. But they deny the name of the Lord of the Spirits. Yet they like to congregate in His houses and (with) the faithful ones who cling to the Lord of the Spirits.”

“long flowing robe”

**Zechariah 3:4** And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”

**Exodus 28:4** These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.

“golden belt”

**1 Maccabees 10:89** And sent him a buckle of gold, as the use is to be given to such as are of the king's blood: he gave him also Accaron with the borders thereof in possession.

**1 Maccabees 14:44** Also that it should be lawful for none of the people or priests to break any of these things, or to gainsay his words, or to gather an assembly in the country without him, or to be clothed in purple, or wear a buckle of gold;

**Daniel 10:5** I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.

**Jerome, Homilies on Mark 75:** “In the Law, John had a leather girdle because the Jews thought that to sin in act was the only sin. ... In the Apocalypse of John, our Lord Jesus, who is seen in the middle of the seven lampstands, also wore a girdle, a golden girdle, not about his loins but



about the breasts. The law is girdled about the loins, but Christ, that is, the Gospel and the fortitude of the monks, binds not only wanton passion but also mind and heart. In the Gospel, one is not even supposed to think anything evil; in the Law, the fornicator is accused for judgment. ... 'It is written,' He says, 'in the law, "You shall not commit adultery."' This is the leather girdle clinging about the loins. 'I say to you, anyone who even looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' This is the golden girdle that is wrapped around the mind and heart."

**Date: February 23, 2023**

***1:14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,***

White hair = infinite wisdom

"like white wool"

**Leviticus 19:32** "You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

**Proverbs 16:31** Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.

**Proverbs 20:29** The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair.

**Daniel 7:9-14** "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

"eyes like fire"

**Exodus 19:10-19** The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for

the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman." On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

**Isaiah 6:1-7** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

**Malachi 3:1-4** "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**Hebrews 4:13** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**Malachi 4:1-3** "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming

shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

**Hebrews 12:18-24** For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

*1:15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.*

Feet = victory

**1 Corinthians 15:27** For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

**Psalms 110:1-7** The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

“burnished bronze”

**Daniel 2:32-33** The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

**Daniel 10:6** His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

**1:16** *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*

Right hand

**Isaiah 49:16** Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

“like the sun”

**Isaiah 60:1-3, 20** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

**Psalms 84:11** For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

**Numbers 6:22-27** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

**Malachi 4:2** But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

Sword

**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**Matthew 10:34** “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

**John 12:48** The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

**Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse 1.3:** “The brightness of the sun was in his face.’ His face was his appearance by which he conversed with man face to face. For, although the glory of the sun is less than the glory of the Lord, yet because of the rising and setting [of the sun] and its rising again, the Scripture says that his face was like the glory of the sun, because he was born and suffered and rose again.”

*Date: March 2, 2023*

*1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,*

As though dead

**Exodus 19:9-25** And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments. And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman." On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.'" And the LORD said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them." So Moses went down to the people and told them.

**Exodus 33:18-20** Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you

cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

**Exodus 34:29-30** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Comfort

**Genesis 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

**Daniel 10:7-11** And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

**Matthew 28:5** But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

**Luke 1:13** But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

**Luke 1:30** And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

“first and last”

**Isaiah 44:6-8** Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

**Isaiah 48:12-17** “Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last. My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together. “Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he shall perform his purpose on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans. I, even I, have

spoken and called him; I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way. Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.” And now the Lord GOD has sent me, and his Spirit. Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.

***1:18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.***

"living One"

**Deuteronomy 32:40** For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever,

**Joshua 3:10** And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

**Isaiah 49:18** Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, declares the LORD, you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does.

**Jeremiah 5:2** Though they say, “As the LORD lives,” yet they swear falsely.

**Daniel 12:7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

αδης = “realm of all the dead”

**1 Samuel 2:6** The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

**Psalms 16:10** For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

***1:19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.***

Dispensationalism: chapters 2-3 (now) – rapture – chapters 4-19 (Last Days)

**RHBC (p. 37):** “Some interpreters think that the ‘things which are’ refer to the Church age, believing that John will address specifically issues in the Church in chs. 2 and 3. They then suppose that this period will come to an end with the ‘rapture,’ and that the ‘things that are to take place after this’ refer to the events of the latter days when God once again turns His attention to Israel; a seven-year period of tribulation and the establishment of an earthly Jewish and millennial kingdom. They think that these events

are the focus from ch. 4 onwards.”

**1:20** *As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*

Stars = pastors

**Malachi 2:7** For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

**Daniel 12:3** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

**Date: March 9, 2023**

## **CHAPTER 2**

**Brighton (p. 57):** “Each of the seven letters has a similar literary pattern. First, the addressee or recipient is mentioned, ‘to the angel of the church in [city],’ followed by a descriptive phrase that identifies Christ as the author and sender. Each letter then continues with an acknowledgment of the particular historical circumstances of the church addressed and of the work that the church is doing for Christ. The sender then also mentions and describes a danger or dangers that the particular church faces because of the sin of its members and some flaw or weakness in their Christian faith and character. The author of the letter then urges the recipient to repent lest the sender take away the recipient’s place with him. This is followed by a promised blessing to the one who repents, trusts, and conquers. Each letter concludes with an urgent appeal to whomever has an ear to ‘listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.’ That plural (‘churches’) implies that these are ‘open letters’ since their author intends all hearers (or readers) to listen to all seven of the letters.”

**Brighton (p. 62):** “The seven sins and failings mentioned in the letters ... are also addressed to all churches and all Christians. Though the sins are specific to particular churches, all churches and all Christians are tempted by—and may easily fall prey to—any or all of these attitudes and behaviors. The sins or failings seem to suggest a pattern or sequence. That is, each sin, when encountered in temptation and then in commission, leads to the following temptation or sin.”

**RHBC (p. 40-41):** Dispensationalists “think John here describes the age of the Church until the time of the ‘rapture.’ ... One common way to express this scheme is as follows:

Letter to Ephesus: The church at Ephesus is said to represent the Church in the apostolic age to about the year 100. This was a time of testing false apostles and also a time when many lost their ‘first love.’



Letter to Smyrna: The church at Smyrna is said to represent the Church under persecution from 100 to the edict of toleration in 313 when the Roman Empire made it legal for a person to be a Christian. Jesus calls these future Christians to not be afraid but rather stand in faith.

Letter to Pergamum: The church at Pergamum represents the Church during the rise of the papacy, from 313 to 500. This is thought to be a time of false doctrine and ‘carnality,’ presented to these future Christians as the teaching of Balaam.

Letter to Thyatira: The church at Thyatira represents the Church during the time of idolatry, from 500 to 1500. During these centuries papal abuse increased and the worship of Mary spread. This view claims that John prophesies about these future sins by connecting them to the teaching of Jezebel, who seduces the people of God to sexual immorality and idolatry.

Letter to Sardis: The church at Sardis represents the Church during the Reformation period, from about 1500 to 1800. This was a time when a few were alive in the faith, but many had only a reputation of being alive. They were said to be Christian, but they had no faith. Moreover, the work of God’s people is said to be ‘incomplete,’ perhaps due to a lack of significant missionary activity.

Letter to Philadelphia: The church at Philadelphia represents the church from 1800 to the ‘rapture.’ ... This is a time of resurgent missionary movement which was thought to be lacking in Sardis.

Letter to Laodicea: The church at Laodicea also is said to represent the Church until the time of the ‘rapture.’ But whereas some Christians are energetically evangelizing for Christ (Philadelphia), others have become infected by lukewarm, liberal Protestant theology.”

**Date: March 16, 2023**

***2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.***

The city of Ephesus had a population of approximately 250,000. Because of its importance in the Empire, the imperial cult was very prominent in Ephesus. The Great Temple of Diana was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens.

***2:2 “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.***

**Oecumenius, *Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.1-7*:** And he says, ... “You have tested those who have called themselves apostles but are not, and you have found them to be false.” Those in Ephesus fulfilled the divine command that they should not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Therefore, they tested those who preached the Gospel among them, and through

this testing they found some to be false apostles who were proclaiming counterfeit doctrines.”

**Didache 11:** Therefore, receive whoever comes teaching you all these things that have been taught before. If the teacher himself adheres to another teaching for the teaching's destruction, do not listen to him. If he applies the Lord's righteousness and knowledge, receive him as the Lord.

But concerning the Apostles and prophets, do so according to the doctrine of the Gospel. And all the Apostles are coming to you. He will not remain one day, except there be a need. If he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when he departs, let the Apostle take nothing except bread, until he finds shelter, and if he asks for silver, he is a false prophet.

Do not attempt to discern every prophet speaking in the Spirit, for every sin will be forgiven, but their sin will not be forgiven. Not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he walks in the Lord's direction. Therefore from his direction you will know the false prophet from the true prophet. And do not eat with any prophet who divides the table in the Spirit, for he is a false prophet. And every prophet who teaches the truth, but if he does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. And every prophet having been tested, is truthful, doing in the mysteries of the Church outwardly, and teaching you not to do, he will not be judged by you, for his judgment is with God, for in like manner the previous prophets did also. And whoever says in the Spirit, “Give me silver or something else,” do not listen to him, and if on behalf of others he says to give, let no one judge him.

***2:3 I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary.***

***2:4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.***

**Brighton (p. 68):** What the Lord finds wrong in the church at Ephesus—and it is, of course, a danger for all Christians—is that God's people have left their “first love” (2:4). John is known as the disciple of love not only because of his nearness to Jesus Christ (John 19:26) but also because he testifies so abundantly to God's love in Christ toward the world. Jesus told his disciples to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34) and that there is no greater love than that someone should lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). It is this love that moved God to give His own Son for the life of the world (John 3:16). This is the “first love” (Revelation 2:4), the original love: the love of God in Christ. It is the genesis of all other love and of all of love's works.

**Terullian, *On Penitence 7-8:*** You have sinned, yet you still can be reconciled. You have someone to whom you can make satisfaction, yes, and one who wills it. If you doubt that this is true, consider what the Spirit says to the churches. ... He would not threaten the impenitent if He failed to pardon the penitent.

**2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**

**Brighton (p. 68):** “Remembrance of that first love and how she now has fallen from it is a prerequisite for repentance.”

**RHBC (p. 44):** “Christian love is not primarily an emotion but rather an activity. It includes self-sacrifice, forgiveness, and faithfulness. The New Testament contains many exhortations for the faithful to remain zealous to good works until the day of Christ’s appearing (cf. Titus 2:11-14).”

**2:6 Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

**Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.1:** “Works of the Nicolaitans” refer to the fact that before that time there were factious and troublesome men who as ministers made for themselves a heresy in the name of Nicolaus, so that what had been offered to idols could be exorcised and eaten, and that anyone who had committed fornication might receive the peace on the eighth day.

**2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’**

παρδεισω - Persian for “pleasure garden”. It is used in Genesis 2:8-9 for *gan* (“garden”).

**1 Enoch 70:4:** And there I saw the first (human) ancestors and the righteous ones of old, dwelling in that place.

**2 Enoch 9:1:** This place, Enoch, has been prepared for the righteous, who suffer every kind of calamity in their life and who afflict their souls, and who avert their eyes from injustice, and who carry out righteous judgment, and who give bread to the hungry, and who cover the naked with clothing, and who lift up the fallen, and who help the injured and the orphans, and who walk without a defect before the face of the LORD, and who worship Him only—even for them this place has been prepared as an eternal inheritance.

**Tertullian, On Flight in Time of Persecution 1.5:** In still another sense, a persecution can be considered a contest. Who sets the terms of any contest if not the one who provides the crown and the prizes? You will find the terms of this contest decreed in the Apocalypse, where He proclaims the rewards of victory, especially for those who really come through persecution victorious, and in their victorious struggle have not merely fought against flesh and blood but against the spirits of wickedness. Obviously, then, the superintendent of the games and the one who sets the prize is the one who decides who is the winner of the contest. The essence, then, of a persecution is the glory of God, whether He approves or condemns, raises up or casts down.

**Methodius, Banquet of the Ten Virgins 9.3:** Learning and charity and discretion

are imparted in due time to those who come to the waters of redemption. One who has not believed in Christ nor understood that He is the first principle and the tree of life, since he cannot show to God his tabernacle adorned with the best of fruits, how shall [this person] celebrate the feast? How shall he rejoice? Do you desire to know good fruit of the tree? Consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how pleasant they are beyond mere human words. Good fruit came by Moses, that is the Law, but not as good as the Gospel. For the Law is a kind of figure and shadow of things to come, but the Gospel is truth and the grace of life. The fruit of the prophets was pleasant, but not so pleasant as the fruit of immortality which is plucked from the Gospel.

**Date: March 23, 2023**

**2:8** *“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.’*

The ancient city of Smyrna is where modern Izmir. Smyrna had a population of approximately 200,000. It was the first city to build a temple to *Dea Roma*. There were large temples dedicated to Cybele, the mother goddess and patron god of the city. Revelation was possibly written at the beginning of Polycarp’s time as Bishop of Smyrna.

**Brighton (p. 72):** The Lord Christ is the First and the Last because He died and rose again. He thus is the first, the cause of the Christian’s faith and life because of His death and resurrection, and He is the last, the goal and object of the believer’s faith and life because He is the Lord and giver of eternal life with the Father (cf. also 22:13; Hebrews 12:2).

**2:9** *“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

σατανα - “Satan, slanderer, accuser, adversary”

**Zechariah 3:1-5** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.

**Martyrdom of Polycarp 13** This, then, was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken, the multitudes immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to custom,

eagerly assisting them in it. And when the funeral pile was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his garments, and loosing his girdle, sought also to take off his sandals,— a thing he was not accustomed to do, inasmuch as every one of the faithful was always eager who should first touch his skin. For, on account of his holy life, he was, even before his martyrdom, adorned with every kind of good. Immediately then they surrounded him with those substances which had been prepared for the funeral pile. But when they were about also to fix him with nails, he said, “Leave me as I am; for He that giveth me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to remain without moving in the pile.”

**RHBC (p. 47-48):** “God’s blessings never come to people by virtue of ethnicity. They only come through faith in the only begotten Son of God. These Biblical statements will also be relevant below when we will focus upon the dispensational idea that God yet has a distinct plan of blessing for the Jewish people. ... Here the point is rather forcefully made by the exalted Lord Himself that those who reject Christ, no matter what their claims are about being the children of God, are truly and finally only part of the kingdom of Satan.”

**2:10** *Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

**Brighton (p. 73):** “Faith-threatening fear of suffering violence at the hands of people is a temptation for any Christian. God’s people are open to this sin if they have left their “first love” (2:4). Fear then follows because the heart no longer looks to the love of God in Christ but to other things (see Matthew 14:28-31). The Lord Christ, in His love and concern for His people, tells them not to be afraid for He has overcome the world (John 16:33). The remedy for fear, then, is to repent and look with faith to Jesus Christ.”

**James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

The “ten days” in this verse could be similar to Daniel 1:11-14: “Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ‘Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king’s food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.’ So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.”

**Apringius of Beja (Tractate on the Apocalypse 2.10):** But he says, “You will have tribulation for ten days.” This is to say, should you consider the present evils which you suffer in comparison to the perpetuity of the future blessedness, you will regard these without doubt as small and as quickly transient as though of ten days duration. And therefore, the apostle said: “I consider that the sufferings of

this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (citing Romans 8:18)

**McGee:** “There were ten intense periods of persecution by ten Roman emperors (these dates are approximate):

1. Nero – 64-68 (Paul and Peter)
2. Domitian – 95-96 (John exiled)
3. Trajan – 104-117 (Ignatius of Antioch)
4. Marcus Aurelius – 161-180 (Polycarp of Smyrna)
5. Severus – 200-211
6. Maximinius – 235-237
7. Decius – 250-253
8. Valerian – 257-260
9. Aurelian – 270-275
10. Diocletian – 303-313

### ***second death***

Dwight L. Moody: “He who is born once will die twice; he who is born twice will die once.”

***2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’***

**RHBC (p. 48-49):** The “second death” is “described as a lake of fire (20:14). This is a place reserved for Satan, his evil servants, and all those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life (19:20; 20:15). It is a place of unending suffering and torment. Paul defines this as ‘the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might’ (2 Thessalonians 1:9).”

**Primasius, Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.11:** “He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death.” Having eating of the forbidden tree, [Adam] procured this [death] for posterity. However, watering the tree of the cross by the water and blood which flowed from the holy place of His side, Christ caused the firstfruits of salvation to sprout up where He knew the original evil had arisen, saying, “Rejoice, I have overcome the world.” Thus, if anyone conquers, he will conquer in Him.

**Date: March 30, 2023**

***2:12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.***

The ancient city of Pergamum had a population of approximately 200,000. It was the capital of the province of Asia before Ephesus took its prominence. Parchment was invented there. It has a school of medicine and a library with about 200,000 volumes. In comparison, the library in Alexandria had about 400,000 volumes at

its height. There were four important cults: Zeus, Athena, Dionysius, and Asklepios. Pergamum was a popular place for pilgrimages to Asklepios' temple for healing.

**McGee:** Pergamum has “a library of over two hundred thousand volumes. ... This great library was the one which Mark Antony gave to his girlfriend, Cleopatra. She lugged it off to Alexandria in Egypt, and that library was considered the greatest library the world has ever seen—and it originally came from Pergamum.”

**2:13** *“I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*”

**2:14** *But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.*

**RHBC (p. 51):** “These words allude to the shameful incident related in Numbers 25:1-9. Balak, the king of Moab, tried repeatedly with money and honors to induce Balaam to curse the Israelites. Though God clearly commanded Balaam not to do so, Balaam repeatedly asked God if he could do this because he wanted the king’s reward. Balaam’s sin was the desire to depart from God’s Word for earthly wealth and honor. In Peter’s words, he desired ‘gain from wrongdoing’ (2 Peter 2:15). God taught Balaam a lesson through his donkey and then directed Balaam to pronounce numerous blessings upon the Israelites. But apparently Balak learned from Balaam a different way to place them under a curse: by enticing them to worship Baal. The allusion here perhaps points to those at Pergamum who tempt Christ’s people to compromise their allegiance to Christ and worship at the pagan temples for the sake of material gain and societal prestige.”

**Numbers 31:13-17** Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the chiefs of the congregation went to meet them outside the camp. And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. Moses said to them, “Have you let all the women live? Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD. Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him.

**2:15** *So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*

**Brighton (p. 78):** “In the pagan society in which the Pergamum Christians lived the temptation was to compromise their faith and witness to gain earthly honor (and perhaps also material wealth) and security, as well as the freedom to engage

in illicit relationships. Many might have thought they could remain faithful to God but also worship another god and so gain earthly ease. When they fell into this temptation and sin, they not only lost their faith but also encouraged other Christians to engage in syncretistic idolatry. What the Lord of the church had against them was twofold: their sin of compromising their faith for the sake of worldly gain and pleasure, and the sin of doing nothing to correct it (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).”

**Bede, Explanation of the Apocalypse 2.16:** The Nicolaitans receive their name from the deacon, Nicolaus, of whom Clement [of Alexandria] reports that, when he was reproached for jealousy of his very beautiful wife, he responded that whoever wanted might take her as wife. On account of this, the faithless taught that the apostles had permitted to everyone a promiscuous and communal intercourse with women. In addition, the Nicolaitans are said to have proclaimed certain fabulous and virtually pagan ideas concerning the beginning of the world and not to have kept their foods separate from those which had been offered to idols.

***2:16 Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.***

***2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’***

“hidden manna”

**Brighton (p. 76):** “A pot of manna was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 16:32-34; cf. Hebrews 9:4). Later Jewish tradition ... claimed that Jeremiah carried the Ark ... from Jerusalem at the time of its destruction and hid the Ark in a cave on Mt. Nebo (2 Maccabees 2:4-8). The Ark would not be recovered until the age of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel. At that time manna would come down from heaven (2 Baruch 29:8).”

**Brighton (p. 79):** “The promises are phrased in language that recalls Baptism (the new name’) ... and the Lord’s Supper (‘the manna which has been hidden’). In the Lord’s Supper, Christians receive ‘a foretaste of the feast to come.’ That ‘feast to come’ is the wedding supper of the Lamb (19:6-9). The Lord’s Supper is hidden manna (2:17) because the future banquet is now hidden from view, and the presence of Christ in the Supper is also hidden, not visible, but nevertheless real and as certain as Christ’s own promise: ‘This is My body ... This is My blood’ (Matthew 26:26, 28). In proleptic anticipation the church can hymn, ‘At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing’ even now, affirming ‘eat we manna from above.’”

**RHBC (p. 51-52):** “Some commentators think the reference here is to a



legend about Jeremiah and how he hid the Ark of the Covenant, which contained some manna. Some rabbis taught that at the dawn of the messianic age Jeremiah would return, bringing the Ark, and the people would once again feast upon manna. Perhaps this is why, after he fed thousands in the wilderness, some Jews thought Jesus was Jeremiah (Matthew 16:14). Other interpreters associate this reference to John 6:35, where, debating with the Jews about manna in the wilderness, Jesus states that He is the bread of life. This latter reference seems more likely. In contrast to feasting at idols' temples, which only leads to death, Jesus invites His faithful people to eat at His table, where He promises them eternal life in His body and blood. Paul places eating in an idol's temple in direct contrast to participating in the Lord's Supper. 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons' (1 Corinthians 10:21). Christ offers Himself at His table for our forgiveness and as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet."

"white stone"

**Caesarius of Arles, Exposition on the Apocalypse 2.17:** "And I shall give him a white stone," that is, the body made white by Baptism. "And on the stone is written a new name," that is, the knowledge of the Son of Man. "Which no one knows except him who receives it." That is, no one knows it except through revelation, and for that reason it is said of the Jews, "For had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Corinthians 2:8)

**Date: April 6, 2023**

***2:18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze.***

Thyatira was known for its trades. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) was a dyer of purple cloth from Thyatira. There is no record of a major religious life in Thyatira, but there were temples erected to Artemis, Apollo, and Tyrimnos (sun god and patron god of Thyatira).

The phrase "Son of God" is only used in this verse throughout the entire book of Revelation.

***2:19 "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.***

***2:20 But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.***

Jezebel was Ahab's wife and daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon (1 Kings 16:31). Her name doesn't appear in later Jewish writings. John uses her name to point towards any sort of idolatry, which she brought into Samaria.

Sexual immorality is often used as a sign of idolatry. In the same way, sexual purity is used as a sign for proper worship of YHWH.

**Amos 5:2** "Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel; forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up."

**Jeremiah 31:3-4** I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.

**2 Corinthians 11:2** For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

*2:21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.*

*2:22 Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works,*

*2:23 and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.*  
"thoughts and hearts"

**Brighton (p. 81):** "νεφρος literally means 'kidney,' but in Semitic usage the 'kidneys' were considered a seat (organ or center) of emotions (see Job 19:27; Psalm 73:21; Proverbs 23:16). The 'heart' was the seat of thoughts, wisdom, and volition as well as emotions. The two words together cover the full range of thoughts and emotions as does the English translation 'the innermost thoughts and the hearts.'"

*2:24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden.*

*2:25 Only hold fast what you have until I come.*

*2:26 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations,*

*2:27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.*

**Psalm 2:7-9** I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,

and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

**2:28** *And I will give him the morning star.*

**Brighton (p. 82):** “‘The morning star’ was the last star to fade away with the rising of the sun; it was the most brilliant of the heavenly stars. ... Jesus Christ is called ‘the star, the bright morning one’ in Revelation 22:16. Lucifer, the devil, claimed to be such but now has fallen (Isaiah 14:12, prophetically proclaimed in reference to Babylon but also as a symbol of Satan’s judgment).”

**Numbers 24:17** I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

**Matthew 2:1-12** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

**Andrew of Caesarea, Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.28-29:** By morning star he means either that one of whom Isaiah spoke: “How have you fallen from Heaven, O Day Star, O Morning Star?” [Isaiah 14:12] and of whom it is promised that he will be “crushed under the feet of the saints,” [Romans 16:20] or the Lord means that one of whom the blessed Peter speaks, of the “morning star who rises in the hearts of the faithful,” [2 Peter 1:19] clearly meaning the illumination of Christ.

**2:29** *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’*

*Date: April 13, 2023*

**3:1** *“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*

At one time, Sardis was the most powerful city in the Mediterranean world. It was the capital of the Lydian Empire, and the seat of the Persian governor’s power. It was located fifty miles northeast of Ephesus.

The letter to Sardis shows Jesus’ watchfulness concerning the Church. He also encourages us to be watchful through the kingdom parables in Matthew.

**Matthew 24:42-44** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

**Matthew 25:1-13** “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**3:2** *Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.*

This is the second harshest condemnation among the seven letters to the congregations. Only Laodicea (3:14-22) is harsher.

**3:3** *Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*

The acropolis of Sardis towered more than 1500 feet over the surrounding valley with sheer walls thought to be impregnable. However, this did not prove to be the

case. Sardis was captured by Cyrus II (547 BC) and Antiochus III (214 BC) because of negligent watchmen.

The “day of the Lord” is seen as a thief.

**Matthew 25:1-12** Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

**Mark 13:32-37** But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.

**1 Thessalonians 5:4-8** But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

**3:4** *Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

**Zechariah 3:1-7** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from

him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.

**Galatians 3:27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

**Colossians 3:9-10** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

*3:5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

*3:6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’*

*Date: April 20, 2023*

*3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.*

The city of Philadelphia was the “gateway to the East.” It was located in such a place where it had frequent earthquakes. It was severely damaged by an earthquake in 17 AD.

“Key of David”

**Isaiah 22:15-24** Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, “Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is over the household, and say to him: What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a dwelling for yourself in the rock? Behold, the LORD will hurl you away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you and whirl you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you shall die, and there shall be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master's house. I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station. In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the

inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house.

And they will hang on him the whole honor of his father's house, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.

**Brighton (p. 91-92):** “Though ‘the key of David’ is not identical with ‘the keys of death and the grave,’ the link is apparent. The expression ‘key of David’ in Isaiah 22:22 is used with the same words as here in Revelation 3:7, ‘what He opens no one can close, and what He closes no one opens.’ In Isaiah these words were spoken by the Lord to the chief steward of Hezekiah. The steward was directed to exercise complete control over the household of the king (Isaiah 22:15-24). As possessor of ‘the key of David’ only he could open locked doors, and no one else could lock doors he opened. Jesus uses the words of Isaiah to proclaim that he is over the household of God, and that he alone has the authority to control entrance into it. He earned this authority over entrance into the kingdom by his death and resurrection. The keys of death and the grave symbolize his victory. His opened tomb shows that he has the key to open the grave for His followers to be raised. And He has shut forever the door of eternal death (‘the second death,’ Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8) and the grave for those raised with Him.”

**3:8** *“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.*

Philadelphia’s “little power” came from the fact that they recognized the “open door” in front of them, but they were not taking full advantage of the opportunity Christ was presenting them.

**1 Corinthians 16:8-9** But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

**2 Corinthians 2:12-13** When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

**3:9** *Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.*

Jesus promises His followers protection from “the synagogue of Satan,” just as He does from all His enemies.

**Mark 13:20** And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being

would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

**John 17:14-17** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

**Revelation 7:13-17** Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

***3:10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.***

This is a common prooftext for the pre-tribulation rapture among dispensationalists. Jesus promise to "keep you from the hour of trial" is said to prove the Rapture, that Jesus does not want Christians to face the Great Tribulation.

"The Word of My endurance" = held fast in adverse conditions

**McGee:** "It has been in the [20<sup>th</sup>] century that the doctrines of eschatology have been developed more than in all previous centuries combined. ... Christ's final word of encouragement to His church is that it will not pass through the Great Tribulation. The church is to be removed from the world ... which is its comfort and hope. ... When He says, 'keep thee from the hour,' I have translated it, 'keep thee out of the hour of trial.' By any stretch of the imagination, you could not say that this church is going through the Great Tribulation Period. I believe that the period of the Philadelphian church continues right on through to the rapture of the church. This is the church which will go out at the time of the Rapture. ... There is a church that goes through the Great Tribulation Period, and that is the apostate church, the church of Laodicea."

***3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.***

**Brighton (p. 94):** "The fact that this promise of the imminent coming of Christ at



his Parousia is given in this letter to the Christians of Philadelphia—a letter that deals with the mission of the church and the end of this world—indicates the close relationship between the church’s mission and the nearness of the End. The completion of that mission and the Lord’s return are linked, that is, when God decides that the mission is completed, then the Lord will come (Matthew 24:14; 28:16-20).”

***3:12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.***

***3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’***

**Date: April 27, 2023**

***3:14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.***

Laodicea was located ten miles away from Colossae. It was the wealthiest city in the province of Phrygia. It was noted for its medical school and the production of black wool.

This is the only time in Revelation where “Amen” is not used in prayer or doxology.

**Brighton (p. 99):** “In Revelation, in the final vision of Christ’s second coming, he is called ‘the Word’ (Revelation 19:13) in order to carry forward the idea that since ‘the Word’ was the agent of God’s original creation, He is now coming as its judge. The final vision also includes the truth that because of His suffering and death at the hands of His creatures, He has earned the right to be their judge (19:11-16).”

***3:15 “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!***

***3:16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.***

**Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse 3.14-22:** “I know your works,” the Lord says, “you are neither cold nor hot.” He who is fervent in the Spirit is “hot,” for the holy apostle speaks of those who are “fervent in the Spirit.” [Romans 12:11] Likewise, he who lacks the power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is “cold.” But you, he says, “are lukewarm.” He calls that person “lukewarm” who in Baptism received the communion of the Holy Spirit but has quenched that grace through sloth and attention to temporal matters. And so, this

divine directive: “Do not quench the Spirit.” [1 Thessalonians 5:19] Would that you would be either “hot,” aglow by the work of the Spirit, or totally “cold,” unbaptized and utterly void of the Spirit’s grace, but not “lukewarm”! For the person who has the mental fire of the Spirit comes to maturity, since the senses have been trained to distinguish that which is good from that which is evil, and that person is spiritual. And that person who has never received the grace of the Spirit, yet may hope at some time to receive it, and so is not counted among the hopeless. But that person who is “lukewarm” is moribund and moving toward death, and risks losing both Baptism and the previous zeal.

**3:17** *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

**3:18** *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.*

**RHBC (p. 66):** “These statements are rich in irony. The Laodicean Christians thought they were healthy as a congregation. They were affluent, wealthy, well clothed, and free from persecution. But in reality the opposite was true. *I am rich.* A Laodicean’s material abundance made it easy for him to imagine that he had little need for spiritual things. Luther wrote:

He is wretched because he does not have mercy himself, and miserable because he cannot have mercy on others either, but is only miserable. But the Lord is neither wretched nor miserable, indeed, pitying the wretched and making the miserable one able to have mercy on others, so that He is not only rich toward His own, but also abounding, causing them also to make others rich. (LW 11:379)

*Blind.* Living in a city famous for the production of eye salve, the Christians at Laodicea were becoming spiritually blind. They were unable to see their Savior with eyes of repentance and faith. Only Jesus could restore their sight.

*Naked.* Living in a city famous for its garments, the Christians at Laodicea were in danger of losing the garments of righteousness that only Christ can provide.

*Gold.* In a city famous for banking, the Christians in Laodicea were actually poor. True spiritual riches come from an active faith, one that is purified by the fires of trial and persecution (1 Peter 1:6-7).

**3:19** *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.*

**3:20** *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*

**RHBC (p. 67):** Banqueting is a theological motif that looks both backward and forward. As a metaphor of God’s blessings in His heavenly kingdom, the idea is

clearly expressed in Isaiah 25:6-9. There Isaiah pictures the blessings of the messianic kingdom as a great banquet, where God Himself swallows up death forever and dries the tears from the faces of all peoples. Jesus referred to this image when celebrating the Last Supper with the disciples (Matthew 26:26). But then with the bread and wine He gave His own body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. So to dine with Christ would remind the Christians at Laodicea of His invitation to celebrate the forgiveness of sin He provides in the Eucharist, and remind them also of the blessings of the heavenly kingdom.

**Oecumenius, Commentary on the Apocalypse 3.14-22:** “Behold,” He says, “I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come to him and dine with him and he with Me.” Here the Lord reveals His own humble and peaceful nature. The devil with axe and hammer smashes the doors of those who do not receive him, as the prophet said, [Psalm 74:6] but the Lord even now in the Song of Songs [5:2] says to the bride, “Open to me, my sister, my bride.” And should someone open to Him, He will come in, but if not, He goes away. That supper which is with the Lord signifies the reception of the holy mysteries.

**Bede, Homilies on the Gospels 1.21:** The Lord stands at the doorway and knocks when He pours into our heart the memory of His will, either through the mouth of a man who is teaching [us] or through His own internal inspiration. When His voice is heard, we open the gate to receive [Him] when we willingly present our assent to [His] counsels, whether secret or open, and devote ourselves to accomplishing those things that we recognize are to be done. He comes in order to eat with us and we with Him. For He dwells in the hearts of His elect through the grace of His love in order to restore them always by the light of His presence. He lives there so that they may advance more and more to heavenly desires, and so that He Himself may feed their zeal for Heaven, as it were, with a most pleasing banquet.

***3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.***

***3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’’***

**Date: May 4, 2023**

***4:1 After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”***

According to Dispensationalists, the Rapture occurs with this “Come up here.”

**McGee (p. 927):** The Rapture takes place during the Philadelphian period, and the so-called church which continues on the earth is just an

organization. It will go through the Great Tribulation Period, and we are finally going to hear it called a great harlot.

**Why is there no Church after chapter 3? McGee (p. 928):** The judgments beginning at chapter 6 would not be in harmony with the gracious provision and promise that God has made to the church. If the church remained in the world, it would frustrate the grace of God because He has promised to deliver us from judgment.

There are four extended visions of God on the throne recorded in the Scriptures. Aside from Revelation 4-5, you also have Ezekiel 1, Isaiah 6, and Daniel 7.

**Ezekiel 1:4-28** As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose

from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

**Isaiah 6:1-8** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

**Daniel 7:9-14** "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned

with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

The “door standing open” reminds us of the letter to Philadelphia (3:8). It is also referenced in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the Pseudepigrapha:

**Ezekiel 1:1** In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

**John 1:51** And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

**1 Enoch 14:15-18** And behold there was an opening before me and a second house which is greater than the former and everything was built with tongues of fire. And in every respect it excelled the other—in glory and great honor—to the extent that it is impossible for me to recount to you concerning its glory and greatness. As for its floor, it was of fire and above it was lightning and the path of the stars; and as for the ceiling, it was flaming fire. And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun.

**Testament of Levi 5:1** At this moment the angel opened for me the gates of Heaven and I saw the Holy Most High sitting on the throne.

**Morris [Tyndale] (p. 81):** The word must is important. The concern of this book is not with things which, as it happens, will take place, as though the future were of absorbing interest in itself. It is rather taken up with things which must happen, the outworking of the divine will.

**4:2** *At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.*

**4:3** *And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.*

“Rainbow” comes from the Greek word *ῥίς*, meaning “circle of light” or “halo.” The rainbow is only mentioned twice in the Scriptures: Revelation 4:3 and Genesis 9:13-16. In Genesis 9, the rainbow is a sign of God’s promise never to destroy the world again by a flood.

**Brighton (p. 115):** “Yet the rainbow was more than a sign of God’s promise of the physical well-being of the earth and human life. It was also a sign of God’s

salvation by grace for humankind. In Isaiah 54:8-9 the promise and covenant made to Noah reminded the prophet of God's saving mercy. ... Thus the rainbow promised to Noah was a sign (Genesis 9:12, 13, 17) of God's covenant with His entire creation. In particular it became a sign that reminded God's people of His mercy, which covered their sins. ... In Jewish theology the rainbow was a reflection of God's glory and was holy and sacred. Whenever the rainbow appeared, God's people should be moved to praise Him as their Creator (Sirach 43:11-12)."

**Sirach 43:11-12** Look upon the rainbow and praise Him who made it, exceedingly beautiful in its brightness. It encircles the heavens with its glorious arc; the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

**Morris (p. 86):** There may be significance in the fact that the sardius and the jasper are the first and last of the twelve precious stones in the high priest's breastplate, each of which was inscribed with the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

**Exodus 28:15-21** You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. It shall be square and doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth. You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.

***4:4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.***

Who are the twenty-four elders sitting on thrones before God on His throne? That is a question that has had many different answers throughout history:

Victorinus (third century) and Andreas (sixth century) declare the twenty-four to be the Twelve Patriarchs and the Twelve Apostles. Oecumenius seeks to name the twenty-four elders as OT martyrs:

God alone, who knows every mystery, and that person to whom He might reveal it, might know the identity of the twenty-four elders who are seated upon the thrones. But in my own opinion there was Abel, and Enoch and Noah, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, Melchizedek and Job, Moses and Aaron, Joshua the son of Nun and Samuel, David, Elijah and Elisha, the twelve minor prophets who are accounted as one, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, Zachariah and John, James the son of Joseph and Stephen, the two martyrs of the New Testament. One might have mentioned Peter and Paul and

James, the brother of John whom Herod killed with the sword, and the rest of the choir of the holy apostles, had not the Lord promised them that not at the present time but at the regeneration they would sit upon twelve thrones, these clearly being different thrones than the ones mentioned above.

**Brighton (p. 119-120):** The number twenty-four is best explained as the elders (patriarchs) of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, who represent before God's heavenly throne saints from the Israel of old, and the Twelve Apostles, who represent saints from the Israel of the NT period. In the OT the number twelve was often used to represent Israel before God and Moses. ... This use of the number twelve to represent Israel of the OT is carried over into the NT. Jesus tell the Twelve Apostles that in the new age they will sit on twelve thrones as judges of the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). "The new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of Heaven" (Revelation 3:12), has twelve gates with the twelve names of the sons of Israel written on them, and there are twelve foundation stones upon which the names of the Twelve Apostles are written (21:12-14).

*Date: May 11, 2023*

*4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,*

**Brighton (p. 120):** The "lightning flashes and noises and thunders" (4:5a) that come out of God's throne are reminiscent of the thunder and lightning that accompanied God when He met Moses and the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:16). These demonstrations of natural forces are symbolic of and a part of God's majestic and creative power. Although he does not explicitly mention these natural forces, Isaiah became fearful when he was in the presence of God's heavenly glory and the Temple was shaken and filled with smoke (Isaiah 6:4-5). Ezekiel saw lightning flashes in his vision of God's heavenly glory (Ezekiel 1:3). Elsewhere in the OT God reveals His awesome creative power and majesty through the natural forces of creation (Psalm 18:12-15; 77:16-19). In Revelation these theophany-like indicators of God's creative power and majesty appear at various places in the prophecy as a reminder of God's awesome and fearful presence (8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

*4:6 and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:*

**RHBC (p. 74-75):** In ancient Near Eastern mythology the sea is associated with chaos. Revelation appears to build upon this association. Later on in the book the



dragon will summon a beast from the sea to make war against the people of God upon earth (13:1). Further, John will later make a point in his description of the new heavens that there is no longer any sea (21:1). This is not a piece of geographical trivia but a statement that all the forces of evil have been eliminated. **Brighton (p. 121-122):** In Exodus 24:9-10, when Moses and the elders of Israel went up Mt. Sinai and appeared before God, they saw under His feet something that looked like a firmament or pavement made of sapphire and clear as the sky. In the Pseudepigrapha, a celestial sea is found in Heaven. . . . Its crystal-like stillness reminded John that what had separated him from the glory of God's presence, the turmoil of his sin and God's judgment, is now stilled and quiet. Though the sea reminds John of his separation from God, he is no longer afraid, for the sea is quiet; he knows that Christ has conquered Satan and taken away the raging torment of his guilt and the fearsome wrath of God's judgment (cf. Matthew 8:26-27; 14:25-29). Now all is peaceful between himself and God, despite the fact that the sea reminds him he is not yet in that glory while still on earth.

**1 Enoch 54:7-10** And in those days, the punishment of the Lord of the Spirits shall be carried out, and they shall open all the storerooms of water in the heavens above, in addition to the fountains of water which are on earth. And all the waters shall be united with all other waters. . . . And they shall obliterate all those that dwell upon the earth as well as those that dwell underneath the ultimate ends of heaven. On account of the fact that they did not recognize their oppressive deeds which they carried out on the earth, they shall be destroyed.

**2 Enoch 3:1-3** And it came about, when I had spoken to my sons, those men called me. And they took me up onto their wings, and carried me up to the first heaven, and placed me on the clouds. And behold, they were moving. And there I perceived the air higher up, and higher still I saw the ether. And they placed me on the first heaven. And they showed me a vast ocean, much bigger than the earthly ocean.

**Testament of Levi 2:7-8** And I entered the first heaven, and saw there much water suspended. And again I saw a second heaven much brighter and more lustrous, for there was a measureless height in it.

***4:7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight.***

**Brighton (p. 123-124):** John does not identify these winged creatures as angels, nor does he call them cherubim or seraphim. He refers to them simply as "winged creatures." But it is quite apparent they are similar to or identical with the winged creatures that both Isaiah (6:1-3) and Ezekiel (1:5-26; 10:3-22) saw in their visions of God's heavenly glory. Isaiah calls them "seraphim" (6:2) and Ezekiel

“cherubim” (10:3-5, 11, 15). In Isaiah they are above or before God and his throne. In Ezekiel they seem to bear the throne of God.

John mentions that each winged creature had one particular appearance or face, that of a lion, an ox, a man, or an eagle. Isaiah does not mention facial appearances. Ezekiel says that each creature had four faces, the face of a man, on the right side the face of a lion, on the left side the face of an ox, and then also each had the face of an eagle.

**Interpretations of the four faces**

Interpreter	Lion	Man	Ox	Eagle
Victorinus (3 <sup>rd</sup> century) – Gospels	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Irenaeus ( <i>Against Heresies</i> 3.11.8) – Aspects of Christ’s Work	Royal office	Human nature	Priestly office	Gift of the Spirit
Augustine – Gospels	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Oecumenius (6 <sup>th</sup> century) – Elements	Fire	Air	Earth	Water
Honorius Augustodunensis (12 <sup>th</sup> century) – Stages of Christ’s Life	Resurrection	Birth	Death	Ascension

**4:8** *And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*

**Victorinus:** The wings are the testimonies of the Old Testament, that is, of the twenty-four books, the same number of the elders upon the tribunals. For just as an animal cannot fly unless it has wings, neither can the preaching of the New Testament acquire faith unless its testimony is seen to correspond to those foretold in the Old Testament, through which it rises from the earth and flies.

**4:9** *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

**4:10** *the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and*

*worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,*

*4:11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*

**Date: May 18, 2023**

*5:1 Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.*

The fact that the scroll is in God’s right hand is important. God’s right hand works salvation for His people.

**Matthew 25:33-34** And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

**Brighton (p. 134):** “The Gospel of Peter (33), dated around AD 125-150 or earlier, says that the tomb of Jesus was sealed with seven seals. It was a practice in Roman civil law for a last will and testament to be sealed with seven seals.

Only the administrator or the legal heir could break the seals and read the will. Yigael Yadin found a scroll in the desert of Judea which was sealed with seven threads, each with a name of a witness, seven witnesses in all. The scroll found by Yadin is a deed dates around AD 100. It could not be read until all the seven threads were broken.”

**Origen:** Which book could no one read and loose its seals, except the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the root of David who has the key of David, and who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one will open? For the whole Scripture is what is revealed by the book that has writing on the front because its interpretation is easy, and on the back because it is hidden and spiritual.

**Apringius of Beja:** This book signifies the teaching of the Old Testament, which was given into the hands of our Lord, who accepted the judgment from the Father. The seven seals are these: First, incarnation; second, birth; third, passion; fourth, death; fifth, resurrection; sixth, glory; seventh, kingdom. These seals, therefore, are Christ. Since He completed all things through His humanity, He opened and unsealed everything which had been closed and sealed in the Scriptures.

**Primasius:** The book is in the right hand because it is in Christ, for He is the arm of God, He is the right hand of the Father, or it means that it was in the highest blessedness. The book written on the inside and the outside is both Testaments, the Old Testament on the outside because it was visible, and the New Testament on the inside because it lay hidden within the Old. ... [O]ne book is mentioned,

since the New Testament cannot be without the Old, nor the Old without the New. For the Old Testament is the messenger and the veil of the New, while the New is the fulfillment and revelation of the Old.

**5:2** *And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”*

**5:3** *And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,*

**Primasmus:** When it says that no one in Heaven was found worthy, it indicates that [opening the scroll] exceeded the capacities of the angels. This was not because they were ignorant of the future mystery of the Lord’s Incarnation and work but because this was not to be completed through an angelic creature. For the Son of God, who through the assumption of true humanity was going to redeem humanity, wishes to fulfill all things through Himself. Therefore Isaiah said, “Neither an angel nor a messenger but the Lord Himself saved them.” [Isaiah 63:9]

**Gregory the Great:** The Lion of the Tribe of Judah opened the book. This book can refer only to sacred Scriptures, for no one opened it but Christ our Redeemer, who became man, and by His death, resurrection and ascension opened the way to all the mysteries it contained. No one in Heaven opened it, because no angel could. No one on earth opened it, because no one living in the flesh had the power of doing so. No one under the earth was found worthy to open it, because souls separated from their bodies do not have such powers.

**5:4** *and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.*

**5:5** *And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”*

The differences in the content of the proclamations in Revelation are seen in the personage who helps John understand the proclamation. When it is a general proclamation, an angel attends to John. When it is a proclamation about the redemption of God’s people and Christ’s triumphant reign, one of the twenty-four elders attends to John. The angels don’t need redemption. They are already confirmed in their holiness. The saints who have been redeemed in this world are the best proclaimers of God’s gracious redemption.

***Lion of the Tribe of Judah***

**Genesis 49:8-12** “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped

down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

### ***Root of David***

**2 Samuel 7:12-16** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

**Isaiah 11:1-10** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

**Hippolytus:** Now, as our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also God, was prophesied under the figure of a lion, because of His royalty and glory, in the same way have the Scriptures also previously spoken of antichrist as a lion, because of his tyranny and violence. For the deceiver seeks to liken himself in all things to the Son of God. Christ is a lion, so antichrist is also a lion. Christ is a king, so antichrist is also a king. The Savior was manifested as a lamb; so he too, similarly, will appear as a lamb, though within he is a wolf.

*Date: May 25, 2023*

*5:6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

**Ezekiel 34:11-24** “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. “As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

*5:7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

**Brighton (p. 140):** The event of the Lamb receiving the scroll is the coronation of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is His exaltation to the right hand of God in order now to rule everything on behalf of His heavenly Father. It is the enthronement of God’s holy Son, who not long before hung on a cross. It is the beginning of the everlasting reign of God’s righteousness through His exalted Son, a reign that will be consummated at the resurrection and in the new Heaven and earth (20:11-21:7).

**Victorinus:** Therefore, He opens and unseals the testament, which He had sealed. And Moses the lawgiver knew that it was necessary for [the testament] to be sealed and hidden until the coming of His Passion, and so [he] covered his face and in that way spoke to the people, revealing that the words of preaching were veiled until the time of Christ's coming. ... Therefore, the diligent person ought to be attentive to the fact that the totality of preaching comes together into a unity. ... And therefore rightly it is unsealed by the Lamb slain who, as a lion, destroyed death and fulfilled that which had been foretold of Him, and had freed man, that is, flesh, from death, and had received as a possession the property of him who was dying, namely, of the human race. For as through one body all people had come into the debt of death, so through one body all who believe might rise to eternal life. Now the face of Moses is uncovered; now it is revealed, and therefore the apocalypse is called a "revelation"; now his book is unsealed; now the offerings and the duties of the Anointed, the building of the Temple and the prophecies are clearly understood.

**5:8** *And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

**Psalm 141:2** Let my prayer rise before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

**5:9** *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,*

**Morris (p. 96):** In so far as the Greek term *kainos* can be differentiated from the other word for new, *neos* (which does not occur in Revelation), it signifies 'fresh' as against 'recent'. It is concerned with quality rather than date.

**5:10** *and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

**Brighton (p. 133):** This future form ("shall reign") is supported by many manuscripts, including Sinaiticus. The present tense is also supported by a number of manuscripts. The manuscript evidence is fairly evenly divided, but the present tense is supported by Alexandrinus, the best witness for the text of Revelation, and it fits the context of Revelation as well.

**5:11** *Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,*

**5:12** *saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power*

*and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”*

**1 Chronicles 29:10-12** Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: “Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

*5:13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”*

**Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*5:14 And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

**Brighton (p. 144):** When did the enthronement of Jesus Christ, pictured in Revelation 4-5, take place? The best answer appears to be that it took place at the Ascension of the Lord Christ for the following reasons. It is certain that it took place after the suffering and death and resurrection of Jesus, for the victorious Lamb appears in the scene as one who has been slain but now is alive (5:6). The Scriptures reveal that Jesus Christ would come into His heavenly glory after His resurrection. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples (John 17), Jesus prays that finally they might be with Him to see His glory—a reference to His glory at the right hand of God in His heavenly majesty (John 17:24). In the accounts of the Transfiguration, the glory of the Christ which was displayed was the glory that He would come into after His death and resurrection (see especially Luke 9:31-32). Just before Stephen was led away to his martyrdom, he looked into Heaven by the Spirit and saw Jesus Christ in glory at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). According to Peter, the exaltation of Jesus at the right hand of God was after the resurrection and before the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that is, at His Ascension (Acts 2:32-35; cf. John 7:39; Acts 3:12-13).



*Date: June 1, 2023*

Chapters 6-16 serve as three overlapping visions of the time between Christ's Ascension and the end of the world. The first five of the seals, trumpets and censers cover the Ascension to the battle of Armageddon.

**Brighton (p. 150-151):** The events displayed in the three visions are not given for the purpose of predicting particular events in human history. Rather, they are presented so as to portray conditions, circumstances, situations, environments, and contexts in which people find themselves during the time period covered. ... The end result of the prophetic message, then, is not to give a predictable view of history, but rather to give a predictable view of the human condition in suffering and defeat because of human evil and rebellion against God ... The purpose is to move all people to repentance and faith before the End.

**RHBC (p. 85):** But these tribulations are not the events upon which John would have us focus our attention. John would rather have us focus on the interludes of the first two cycles. Between the sixth and the seventh seals, and likewise between the sixth and the seventh trumpets, John sees a segment of visions that are not properly part of the sequence of seven items. These visions thus stand out as "interludes" and therefore receive the emphasis. There we see how the Lamb brings to fulfillment God's plan of salvation.

**Brighton (p 153):** The purpose of each vision is to work repentance and give the encouragement of faith and hope. The hearer is meant to receive each vision in such a way that, as he fearfully heeds its sevenfold message, he is moved to repentance and faithful hope in the reigning Christ. If one takes lightly the first warning of the first sevenfold vision, he will be hit harder by the second warning of the second vision, and thus be given another opportunity to repent. Finally there is the dire third warning, in which the reader is impacted even harder. Thus the three sevenfold visions are three warning by God endeavors to bring home to his people on earth the seriousness of what he desires his church to hear and heed. God's people are to believe in the reigning Christ and to hope in his promise to come soon. Indeed, the ultimate purpose of Revelation is to inspire the church to pray with John (in response to the Lord's promise in 22:20, "Yes, I am coming quickly."): "Amen, come now, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

This follows the biblical precedent of threefold and sevenfold warnings like in Leviticus 26.

The first four seals are known as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

**Brighton (p. 160-161):** Whatever the four horsemen symbolize and represent, it is quite clear they introduce woes and tribulations of various kinds. The symbolism of the horsemen indicates that the tribulations are of the sort that humans frequently experience in this fallen world; they are common and natural, not of the supernatural. For in apocalyptic literature, whenever an author portray events or

personages common to human experience and senses, he would make use of symbols taken from human, earthly life. But when he wanted to portray supernatural events or personages which were beyond human experience and intelligence, he would create symbols which do not exist in empirical human knowledge.

Oecumenius, writing in the sixth century, has an interesting take on the scroll and the seals that hold the scroll together. He does not see the seals as moments of wrath but signs of mercy. We will look at his words as he writes about each of the seals, but we look at his introduction to this vision:

**Oecumenius:** The closing and sealing of the scroll signifies the fearful alienation of those inscribed in it and the closing of their mouths from making any plea for justice before God. Therefore, the gradual opening the seals reveals the gradual recovery of our free and open relationship with God, which the Only Begotten acquired for us when by his own righteousness he set aright our offenses.

**Morris (p. 100):** The first four seals form a unity. They show us the self-defeating character of sin. When the spirit of self-aggrandisement and conquest is abroad all God needs to do is to let events take their course and sinners will inevitably be punished. In the wake of conquest come for war and famine and pestilence. This is not the whole story and other aspects are brought out later (as in the first four trumpets, which show that God is not inactive: he sends his judgments on sinful people). But this is the aspect with which John is concerned here. After the first four seals comes a group of two dealing with things in heaven rather than on earth. The final seal stands apart from all the rest.

***6:1 Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!”***

Like Oecumenius, the earliest commentators (Irenaeus and Victorinus) link the first horseman with Christ, while modern commentators link him with military domination (R.H. Charles), the “angel of the Lord” (J.M. Ford), or the Antichrist (Franzmann). In all interpretations outside of Oecumenius, the seals are seen as moments of wrath.

Preterists and many historicists identify the first horseman as Titus, the Roman general—soon to be emperor—that destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

There are reasons not to link the first horseman with Christ.

1. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are presented as equals. In fact, the fourth horseman is seen as the dominant one of the four since death and the grave follow after him. The picture implied by the whole chapter is not that they ride behind each other but that all four ride together side by side, carrying out their assigned tasks.
2. How can bloodshed, famine, and death follow in Jesus’ train?
3. Jesus is never pictured with a battle bow. Jesus is typically seen having a

sword. The sword signifies the ability to execute judgment. The battle bow signifies earthly warfare and the destruction of your enemy.

**Brighton (p. 161-162):** The first horse is white. Its rider has a battle bow and wears a crown. ... He exists solely to conquer and be victorious in his effort. ... “The only mounted archers in the ancient world were the Parthians,” who were so fierce that Rome could never completely subject them. The Parthian military leaders also were said to ride white horses into battle. ... The white color of the horse indicates that the horseman believes it is his divine right so to conquer and be victorious. White is the color of God’s majesty and wisdom, holiness and righteousness, and those who act on God’s behalf can wear white. White is also the color for victory, for Christians who are victorious over sin and death can wear white.

**Daniel 7:9** “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

**Matthew 17:2** And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

**Revelation 1:14** The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

**Matthew 28:2-3** And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

**Revelation 19:14** And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

**Revelation 3:5** The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

**Revelation 6:11** Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

**Revelation 7:9-14** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the

great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**6:2** *And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.*

**Oecumenius:** The first good work of Christ our Savior toward our race, which loosed the first seal of the scroll, is the physical birth of our Lord. For his birth initiated our restoration from that exile that was occasioned by Adam's sin, and it began the recovery of that closeness of God with us which we had lost and the change of our fearful alienation into a confident freedom.

**Primasius:** This white horse can be understood as the church of truth, represented in the persons of the apostles and preachers, which was made whiter than snow by grace. The rider upon the horse is Christ. Therefore, it was said to him through the prophet, "For you mounted your horses and your army is salvation" [Habakkuk 3:8]. For the same reason he is said to hold an arrow. An arrow is aptly compared with the preaching of the Word of God, for when the hearts of people are pierced, they are able to bear the fruit of faith. And so we read, "Your sharp arrows are very powerful; people fall before you" [Psalm 45:5]. The crown indicates the reward rightly given to preachers.

**Caesarius of Arles:** The white horse is the church, and its rider is Christ. This horse of the Lord with the bow made ready for war was promised beforehand by Zechariah [10:3-4]. "The Lord God will visit his flock, the house of Israel, and he will arrange him as a formidable horse in war, and from him he looked, and from him he arranged [the battle order], and from him came the bow in anger, and from him will come out every oppressor."

**Andrew of Caesarea: (Taking a more historical view)** We understand the loosing of the first seal to signify the generation of the apostles. For, as though it were a bow, they stretch forth the Gospel message against the demons and led to Christ those wounded by the arrows of salvation. And because they conquered the leader of deceit through the truth, they received a crown, and in hope they await a second victory, namely, the confession of the name of the Master unto a violent death. Therefore, it is written, "he went out conquering and to conquer." For, the first victory is the conversion of the nations; the second is the willing departure from the body in persecution for the sake of that conversion.

**Brighton (p. 165):** The rider of the white horse symbolizes and represents every form of tyranny which is won and acquired by power and force, usually warfare or forms of it, and which then by a dictatorial rule exploits, enslaves, dominates, and terrorizes. ... The picture presented by this rider on the white horse is one of tyranny that will dominate and be the rule, not the exception, throughout the time period from the ascension of Christ up to the end of history. It gives a terrifying depiction of how human beings treat each other: people's inhumanity to other

people through fear and exploitation.

*Date: June 8, 2023*

*6:3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!”*

*6:4 And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.*

**Oecumenius:** The second good work of Christ toward us is the temptation of the Lord and his victory over the tempter. This loosed the second seal of the scroll and granted to us the loosing of our shame and the restoration of the vision of God. And this occurred not only that [Christ] might know victory but that the interloper, beaten down, might no longer “bite the heel of the horsemen” or trip us up in our spiritual walk, but rather that he might fall down and be sent away like a slave, and hear from man whom he had defeated, “Begone, Satan!”

**Victorinus:** [This passage] signifies those wars which will occur in the future, as we read in the Gospel: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be earthquakes on the earth” [Luke 21:10-11]. This is the red horse.

**Tyconius:** This red horse, gory not with its own blood but with the blood of others, it is sent in to take that peace from the earth that passes all understanding. For [the church] is taught both from deed and from the sword.

**Caesarius of Arles:** The red horse is an evil people whose rider is the devil. It is said to be red because it has been made red with the blood of multitudes. And a sharp sword was given to it to take peace from the earth. This means that the devil’s connivance and influence evil people join together and do not cease to incite among themselves strife and dissension, even unto death.

**Brighton (p. 166):** The horse is red, perhaps blood red, and the one sitting on it has permission to take peace from the earth by human beings slaughtering one another. The “great sword” that was given to him symbolizes this role of destroyer of peace.

The fact that the “great sword” is given to him indicates that he is acting under someone’s permission. It is not stated by whose permissive will he is thus acting, but the fact that it is the Lamb who ushers in the rider on the red horse with the opening of the second seal suggests that it is by the permissive will of the exalted Lord Christ.

**Morris (p. 103):** God uses history for history’s judgment and in this way works out his purpose. As distinct from the wars of conquest of the first rider this one is concerned with civil war. Barclay says that between 67 and 37 BC 100,000 men perished in rebellions in Palestine, while the revolt in Britain in AD 61, associated with Boadicea, saw the deaths of 150,000. Such happenings form a sombre background to Revelation. While this rider is given a large sword he is not said to

kill anyone. Men kill one another. He takes peace away and men proceed to do all the damage. The word rendered slay is not the usual one, it has a meaning like 'slaughter' (NEB) or 'butcher' (Berkeley).

*Date: June 15, 2023*

*6:5 When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand.*

*6:6 And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!"*

**Oecumenius:** The third mercy of Christ toward us opened the third seal and restored us, who had been condemned, to the Father. This is his salvific teaching and the benefits of his miracles, for these contributed to the dissolution of the devil. For, through these we know who is truly God by nature, so that we may "no longer be children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine" [Ephesians 4:14] nor honor that which our hands have made but that we might exchange the corrupting demons for the glory of God. ... The black horse is indicative of shame and sorrow, for the destruction of the devil has received increased intensity by the divine teaching, and therefore he laments his dissolution which lasted for such a long time. The balance ... is a figure of equity and righteousness sat upon his throne and rebuked the nations of demons, and the impious One who led them was destroyed" [Psalm 9:4-5]. The balance is, therefore, a symbol of the righteous judgment of the Lord on our behalf, so that we may speak boldly to him, "You have executed my right and my cause" [Psalm 9:4], and so that we nations might know that we are men, and that we may not be pulled about like beasts with bit and bridle or allowed to be led astray by destructive tyrants.

The word of teaching is figuratively called "seed" in the holy Scriptures. In Matthew it is written, "A sower went out to sow," and his most devoted servants say to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in the field? Then why are there weeds?" [Matthew 13:3, 27] From the seed comes the wheat, that is, the preaching of the Gospel, which as a food fit for mature persons trains the mind to distinguish between good and evil. And what is the barley? It is the teaching according to the Law of Moses, for barley is less expensive than wheat and when ripe it is food fit for cattle, and so represents that which nourished the child of Israel.

**Bede:** The black horse is the troop of false brothers, who have the balance of the right confession but harm their fellows through works of darkness. For, when it is said in the midst of the living creatures, "Do not harm," it is clear that there is someone who is doing harm. And, concerning the running horse, the apostle says,

“Outside there are wars, inside there are fears” [2 Corinthians 7:15].

**Brighton (p. 166):** The opening of the third seal introduces the next horseman. His steed is black, the color of death, which in the ancient world often resulted from famine (cf. Jer 14:1-2; Lam 5:10). He has in his hand a “weighing scale”, a balance scale, that is a pair of scales attached and suspended from a beam or yoke.

**Brighton (p. 168):** The overall picture presented in 6:5-6 is a condition of both scarcity and plenty, that is, an economic imbalance in the supply of food and the daily necessities of life. And despite human attempts to adjust this imbalance economically, the end result, from place to place, will be hunger and even at times starvation. In such situations famine begins to stalk large portions of the human population. The horseman on the black horse, then, suggests that throughout the entire period from the Lord’s ascension until the End, there will always be present, at various times and places, hunger and famine.

**Matthew 26:11** For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

**2 Kings 7:1** But Elisha said, “Hear the word of the LORD: thus says the LORD, Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.”

**Lamentations 4:8-9** Now their face is blacker than soot; they are not recognized in the streets; their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become as dry as wood. Happier were the victims of the sword than the victims of hunger, who wasted away, pierced by lack of the fruits of the field.

**Caesarius of Arles:** The wine is to be interpreted as the blood of Christ, and the oil as the unction of chrismation.

*Date: June 22, 2023*

*6:7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!”*

*6:8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.*

**Oecumenius:** The loosing of the fourth and of the remaining seals is the beginning of the loosing of sin that was brought about by the transgression of Adam. For the loosing of this seal reveals our friendship with God. For if, as Isaiah says, “our sins have made us separated from God” [59:2], the removal of sins brings us close [to God]. And what is this loosing of the seal? It is the lashes that Christ received and through which we have been freed. For since we were condemned by the pleasure of taste, we have been healed through the opposites. Lashes are the opposite of pleasure, for they give a painful sensation. For Christ

has paid in full for us all things through which we were brought down into the corruption of death. And he paid this debt in full through opposites—disobedience through obedience, pleasure through a painful submission, and the hands which lay hold of the forbidden tree through those hands which were valiantly stretched out upon the cross.

**Brighton (p. 168):** This grim reaper fells his harvest, and as he is followed by his attendant, the grace receives the gleanings of this horseman and the three preceding. The rider on the ghostly green horse symbolically demonstrates that death is the result of the tyranny, the bloodshed, and the famine of the first three horsemen, and that death together with the grave reigns on this earth. Throughout the whole time period covered by this first sevenfold vision, at any given moment a fourth of the earth's population may be dying because of the sword, famine, diseases, and the wild animals of the earth.

Predation by wild animals often is divine punishment for sin.

**Numbers 21:4-9** From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

**Ezekiel 5:17** I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will rob you of your children. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword upon you. I am the LORD; I have spoken."

**Ezekiel 14:15-16** "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, 16 even if these three men [Noah, Daniel, and Job] were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.

**Mark 1:12-13** The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Zechariah has two visions similar to John's visions of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse:

**Zechariah 1:7-17** On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD



came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, “I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. Then I said, ‘What are these, my lord?’ The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, ‘These are they whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth.’ And they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’ Then the angel of the LORD said, ‘O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?’ And the LORD answered gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. So the angel who talked with me said to me, ‘Cry out, Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little, they furthered the disaster. Therefore, thus says the LORD, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the LORD of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Cry out again, Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’”

**Zechariah 6:1-8** Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country.” When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth.” So they patrolled the earth. Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”

**Brighton (p. 169):** There is a similarity between the purpose of the chariots and the horsemen and horses in Zechariah, and the role of Satan in Job 1-2. Satan is among those who stand ... before the face of Yahweh (1:6; 2:1), and he reports that he has been roving about the earth (1:7; 2:2). Then Satan goes out (1:12; 2:7) from Yahweh’s presence to afflict Job.

Date: June 29, 2023

**6:9** *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.*

**Oecumenius:** The fifth work of salvation that the Lord gave to the human race and that loosed the fifth seal of the Lord and offered to us freedom from sin and friendship with God was the chains and beatings to which the Lord was subjected before he was brought to Pilate and to those that he suffered from Pilate himself because of his timidity. ... For although within the lawless Sanhedrin he had been spit upon, slapped and beaten, this had occurred in secrecy and only the testimony of servants and others summoned to the trial. But when they saw the Lord bound and whipped publicly by Pilate before the crowd of the Jews, [the martyrs] altogether rose up, and regarding that which was happening against their Master as intolerable, remembered also what had happened to them.

**Brighton (p. 158):** While both εσφαγμενων here in 6:9 and πεπελεκισμενων in 20:4 refer to Christians as those who have been put to death for their faith, the reader should not think that only those Christians who die in a specific way are included among those in Heaven (6:9) and among those who reign with Christ (20:4). These two terms characterize all Christians as people who are persecuted by the devil and the world and who are willing to die for the faith; they may be called upon to die a martyr's death, or they may actually die from other causes (e.g., illness or old age).

**Brighton (p. 159):** At the time of the writing of Revelation, μαρτυς and μαρτυρεω were not yet technical terms meaning that the person was put to death for the sake of the Gospel. At John's time the word "martyr(dom)" referred to the whole life of the Christian. His whole life (and not just his death) was to be a witness (μαρτυρια) to and a confirmation of God's Word and his faith in that Word, though the Christian's death would be the last witness to his faith.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-11** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

**6:10** *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

**Psalms 13:1-2** How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**Priasmus:** This ought not be understood in a carnal manner, as though they were

inflamed by animosity and wished revenge. We know that we are to love our enemies through an abundance of love, but it is manifest that they prayed against the kingdom of sin and were praying out of a desire for that kind of kingdom for which we say, “Thy kingdom come!”

**Bede:** They do not pray for these things out of hatred of their enemies, for whom they intercede in this world. Rather, they pray out of love of equity, in which as those placed near to the Judge himself and in agreement with him they pray that the day of judgment, in which the kingdom of sin is destroyed and the resurrection of their dead bodies may come. For, also we in the present time, when we are commanded to pray for our enemies, nevertheless say when we pray to the Lord, “May your kingdom come!”

**6:11** *Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** In this passage the saints are shown praying for the consummation of the world. Therefore, they are told to have patience until the completion of their brothers, so that “apart from them they would not be made perfect,” as the apostle says [Hebrews 11:40]. The white robes reveal the brightness that appears on them because of their virtues, in which they are clothed, although, they “had not yet received the promises” [Hebrews 11:39]. And so, putting away ever dullness, in the hope for these things, which they see in the spirit, they rightly rejoice, resting in the bosom of Abraham. For to many of the saints it is said that each receives a play worth of the doer of virtue through which they are judged of their future glory.

**Brighton (p. 171):** Whether one understands, “should be fulfilled,” numerically, that is until the full number of their fellow believers is filled up and completed, or whether it refers to the completion of the mission of their fellow Christians, that is, until the mission of their fellow Christians on earth is fulfilled and completed by their martyrdom, it refers to the time when God would avenge their blood in the great judgment at the end of this world’s existence and history. Perhaps it is best to receive both interpretations. When the mission that the Lord Christ has given to His followers on earth is complete, then the full number of the elect chosen by God will have entered his kingdom, and then at that time God will avenge their blood.

**Brighton (p. 172):** The martyred saints of God, then, portray a picture of the suffering church all during the time period that the four horsemen are ravaging the earth, from the time of the ascension of Christ to the End. For all Christians are martyrs in the sense that they all give witness by their faith, their mouths, and their lives to the victorious Lamb, who died and rose again. And because all Christians give that testimony, they all suffer because of it.

Date: July 6, 2023

**6:12** *When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood,*

**Oecumenius:** The loosing of the sixth seal effects the completion of our salvation. It dissolves death and brings back life. It dethrones humanity's conqueror and is openly triumphant in accordance with that which is written: "The Only Begotten ascended on high and led captivity captive and received gifts among men." And what is this loosing of the sixth seal? It is the cross and death of the Lord. The resurrection and the ascension follow after these, and for these every spiritual and physical creature has prayed.

**Psalms 68:18** You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there.

**Ephesians 4:8** Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

**Haggai 2:6-7** For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.

**Hebrews 12:26-29** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

**McGee (p. 945):** This is evidently the beginning of the last half of the Great Tribulation Period. The great day of His wrath is before us. The Great Tribulation opens and closes with these upheavals in the natural universe: (1) the beginning of the Tribulation (compare Joel 2:30-31 with Acts 2:20) and (2) the end of the Tribulation (see Joel 3:9-17; Isaiah 13:9-13; 34:1-4; Matthew 24:29).

**Joel 2:30-31** "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes."

**Joel 3:9-17** Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD. Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for

there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.

**Isaiah 13:9-13** Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless. I will make people more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

**Isaiah 34:1-4** Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter. Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.

**Matthew 24:29-31** “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

***6:13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.***

**Mark 13:24-27** “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man

coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

**Mark 13:28-31** “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

**6:14** *The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.*

**Nahum 1:5** The mountains quake before Him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before Him, the world and all who dwell in it.

**2 Peter 3:11-13** Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

**6:15** *Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains,*

**Isaiah 2:10-22** Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty. The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

**Hosea 10:8** The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn

and thistle shall grow up on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, “Cover us,” and to the hills, “Fall on us.”

**6:16 calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,**

**Luke 23:28-31** But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

**Brighton (p. 173-174):** While mercy and forgiveness might be expected from “the Lamb,” here there is only “wrath”—anger and judgment. The fact that God has given the execution of his judgment to Jesus Christ is usually expressed with reference to Christ as “the Son of Man” (e.g., John 5:27; cf. Matthew 26:64) and not as “the Lamb.” However, it is because Jesus was the Lamb of God that he not only earned the right to save God’s people from God’s judgment against their sin, he also earned the right to judge those who do not repent of their sins.

While in 19:11-16 the title “Son of Man” is not used, the rider on the white horse has “eyes ... like a flame of fire” (19:12), just as “the Son of Man” does in 1:13-14. Therefore it is quite clear that the rider in 19:11-16 appears as the Son of Man and not as the Lamb.

**6:17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”**

**Brighton (p. 174):** While this “day of the Lord” is dies irae, “a day of wrath,” to the world, it is to the people of God a day of vindication and deliverance. Nonetheless, it is still called a “day of wrath” for its purpose is the judgment of God. In 2 Peter 3:10 “the day of the Lord” will come suddenly as a thief, and it is the day in which the present heaven and earth will be destroyed (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:2).

**2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2** For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

**Brighton (p. 174):** The opening of the sixth seal introduces to John and the reader the first view in Revelation of the end of this world, and thus it concludes the first vision of events taking place on earth. The first sevenfold vision is one of horror, tribulation, suffering, and fear, from the time of the Lord’s resurrection and ascension up to the End. The whole vision is nothing but woe and lament, even for God’s own people. One can imagine that as John mystically experienced the

horrors and sufferings depicted and saw at their conclusion only death and the grave and then finally the terrifying judgment of God, he might have been tempted to fall into a hopeless despair. “Oh, Lord, is this all that there is from now to the End? Even your own people will suffer all this?”

**Date: July 13, 2023**

**Brighton (p. 180):** Between the sixth and seventh seals (6:12-17 and 8:1-5, respectively) there is an interlude in which John sees two scenes. In the first scene he sees the 144,000 sealed (7:1-8), and in the second scene he sees the glorious picture of the saints before God’s throne in Heaven (7:9-17). The 144,000 represent God’s people on earth in perfect order and thus ready to march. This is interpreted to be the church militant, poised and ready to carry out the marching orders—the missions—that her Lord has given to her. In the second scene John sees the great multitude of people before God’s heavenly throne. Their number is so great that it cannot be counted. This is the most beautiful picture in the entire Bible of the saints of God in Heaven: the church triumphant.

What John sees in this interlude comforts him. After the horrifying scenes introduced by the first six seals, scenes that could have melted John’s heart like wax in awe and terror, he is now lifted up by what he sees next. The two scenes, of the church militant and the church triumphant, would at any time and place appear beautiful, instilling peace and hope in the Christian heart. But here in this setting, in sharp contrast to the horrors of suffering and despair and darkness and death depicted by the first six seals, these scenes appear even more beautiful to John.

**McGee (p. 947-949):** We are now in a section that the Lord Jesus labeled the Great Tribulation. This period takes place after the church leaves the earth, after the church concludes its mission and is taken to be with the Lord. ... John is going into detail now concerning the Great Tribulation Period, a period that has not been elaborated upon in any other place in Scripture except in the Olivet Discourse which the Lord Jesus gave (see Matt. 24-25). John is merely widening that out and giving us additional information. ... There is actually a moral and theological problem if the church were to enter even one phase of the Tribulation Period. ... How are people going to get saved during the period of the Great Tribulation if the Holy Spirit will not be restraining evil? The Great Tribulation is the Devil’s holiday. That is the day when he is going to have freedom to do as he pleases. We will see why God is going to grant that: it is a period of the judgment of God upon a Christ-rejecting world. Then, does anybody get saved in the Great Tribulation Period? My friend, I believe that there will be a greater company saved in that period than in any other seven-year period in the history of the world. Chapter 7 is going to tell us how that will take place. The Holy Spirit is in the world after the church is removed just as He was in the world before Pentecost. In reading the



Old Testament, you will find the Spirit of God working in the hearts and lives of men and women. Many multitudes were brought to God, but He was not restraining evil in the world, and He was not baptizing believers into the body of the church in the Old Testament. That is what He is doing today, but that ministry will cease. However, He will still be in the business of getting men and women to Christ. He will continue His ministry which has always been one of taking God's creation and renovating it. We are told in the beginning, "... the spirit of God moved [brooded] upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). The Spirit of God broods over this earth today and has from the very beginning and will continue doing so after the church is removed from the earth. He will have to have an unusual, special program during this period, and John is now going to tell us what that program is going to be.

*What gets me about the Dispensational view of Revelation* is the undue focus upon the dual, and now triple, covenants God has with people. As we will see from other quotations from McGee, God has one plan of salvation for the Jews (based on the Old Testament), another plan for the Church (based on the New Testament), and now a third plan for the Gentiles who will come to faith during the Great Tribulation. As we discussed a few months ago, in the beginning of our study of Revelation, this is nothing new for Dispensationalists. They believe that God has always worked salvation in different ways with different people in different times. Salvation was different under Adam than under Noah or Moses or in the Church. Why would we not have yet another way after the Church leaves the world? However, we will also see that salvation in the Great Tribulation Period (according to McGee) has very little to do with Jesus.

**7:1** *After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.*

**Isaiah 11:12** He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

**Brighton (p. 181):** In Jewish thought the angels under God's providence controlled and thus were the keepers or custodians of the elements and forces of nature. For example, in the Book of Jubilees (2:2), the angels of the elements and forces of nature are listed: "the angels of the spirit of fire, the angels of the spirit of the winds, and the angels of the spirit of the clouds and darkness and snow and hail and frost, and the angels of resoundings and thunder and lightning, and the angels of the spirits of cold and heat and winter and springtime and harvest and summer."

**Jeremiah 49:36-38** And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come. I will terrify Elam

before their enemies and before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger, declares the LORD. I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them, and I will set my throne in Elam and destroy their king and officials, declares the LORD.

**Daniel 7:2-3** Daniel declared, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.

**Zechariah 6:1-8** Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country.” When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth.” So they patrolled the earth. Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”

**McGee (p. 949):** The winds of judgment are now to be held back. Nothing can move until God accomplishes His purpose. What is His purpose going to be? I do not think that God would permit any period to continue on this earth in which there were not some of the human family turning to God, because that is His purpose. I do not think He would continue to keep this world running; I think He would shut it down, turn it off, and speak it out of existence if there were not folk turning to Him. Therefore, this will be a period when multitudes will turn to Him. A great company is going to be saved, and this reveals that these judgments will accomplish a purpose for God. It will cause multitudes to turn to Him in this period, and it will cause another multitude to turn against Him.

Again, McGee relies upon the Dispensationalist idea that God is always working salvation throughout history. It simply takes a different form in different ages. Yet again, he shows the problem with Decision Theology: people are turning to God or away from God of their own accord.

**7:2** *Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea,*

**Ezekiel 43:1-4** Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my

face. As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, **Malachi 4:2-3** But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

### *Seal as signet ring*

**Genesis 41:41-42** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.

**Esther 3:10** So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews.

**Daniel 6:6-9** Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

### *Seal as Baptism*

**Shepherd, Similitudes 9.16.3-4** Therefore these who had fallen asleep also received the Son of God's seal and enter into God's kingdom; for," He said, "before the man bears the Son of God's name, he is dead; but when he receives the seal, he puts away the deadness and receives life again. Therefore the seal is the water: into the wather therefore the dead were cast and were raised alive. And those, therefore, also preached this seal and made use of it, so that they might enter into God's kingdom."

**Ezekiel 9:1-6** Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Bring near the executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist. And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young

men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the house.

**In our Baptismal rite**, after announcing the name of the person seeking Baptism, The pastor makes the sign of the cross upon the forehead and the heart while saying, “NAME, receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your forehead and upon your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified” (LSB p. 268).

**Brighton (p. 186):** Through these signs, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the Spirit works according to those words and promises of God, and the Spirit thereby seals God’s people and confirms that they are indeed his people. Thus the Spirit of God, in His gracious activity through God’s Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, seals God’s people so that they know they belong to God and that He will protect them in their faith in the midst of all the tribulations they endure.

**Revelation 9:1-6** And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

**Brighton (p. 187):** Throughout the time period covered by the prophetic message of Revelation, from Christ’s ascension to His return, the slaves of God and the slaves of Satan each have a mark that identifies them as belonging to their respective masters. And there are no “neutral” or independent people who serve no one; every person is a slave, either of God or of Satan.

The sealing of God’s people in 7:2-8 does not refer to their initial sealing ... for the slaves of God are already His people when John sees them as the 144,000. Rather, the sealing here in Revelation 7 refers to the ongoing work of the Spirit through God’s Word and Sacraments by which the Christian is kept in faith and protected in godly hope through all the tribulations and sufferings and persecutions illustrated by the four horsemen.

**RHBC (p. 96):** It also brings to mind the tenth plague in Egypt, when the angel of death passed over the houses marked with the blood of the lamb.

*7:3 saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”*

**Philemon 8-16** Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

**Brighton (p. 188):** They are restrained so that Christians may grow in grace and knowledge for the faith and steadfastness needed in the activity of God's kingdom on earth in the midst of their suffering (cf. 2 Cor 4:7-15). The horsemen may be let loose on Christian who have been matured and made ready to take their place in the mission of Christ's church despite the persecution and sufferings inflicted by the opposition. For once Christians are sent out into the world, they will be hit by all the forces of the opposition and all the evils perpetrated by humanity (the four horsemen). They would be overwhelmed unless sealed by God.

**Bede:** This is the Lord born in the flesh, who is the “angel of great counsel,” that is, the messenger of the Father's will, “who has visited us as the dayspring from on high,” carrying the standard of the cross, by which he seals the foreheads of his own. . . . The great voice of the Lord is that exalted proclamation, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near.” . . . For this purpose was the rule of the nations destroyed, that the face of the saints might in freedom be marked by the sign of faith which they had resisted. For even the figure of the cross itself indicates that the kingdom of the Lord is everywhere intended, as the ancient distich shows: “Behold, the four-squared world, in distinct parts, that you might show the sigh of faith to encompass all things.” Not in vain was the four-lettered name of the Lord written upon the forehead of the high priest, since this is the sign upon the foreheads of the faithful, about which the psalm “for the wine-vats” sings: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth,” and so on, until he says, “that you may destroy the enemy and the defender.”

**McGee (p. 950):** This is an indication that frightful and fearful judgment is getting ready to break upon the earth, and it is therefore necessary to secure the servants of God. If He does not seal them, they are not going to make it through. However, they are going to be preserved in this day of wrath that is coming on the earth.

Another issue with the Dispensationalist interpretation: it also leads to the promotion of the “once saved, always saved” doctrine. McGee speaks about this sealing of the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude in verses 9-17 as

being kept from falling from the faith. That they have been especially chosen by God to endure to the End without any chance of forsaking God. He points to Matthew 24:21-22 to prove his case: “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” The 144,000 from Israel and the Tribulation saints are those who have been predestined to be faithful to God.

***7:4 And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:***

**Brighton (p. 189-190):** The 144,000 are described in OT terms, as the twelve tribes of Israel. But it is not uncommon for NT authors to refer to the church of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, in OT language. For example, Jesus promised the disciples that they would “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:28-30). Paul says that the believes in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles, are the true Israel of God and the true sons of Abraham. James (1:1) addresses his epistle to “the twelve tribes in the diaspora” ... “The church has quite naturally appropriated the title [‘the twelve tribes’], for it was the work of the Messiah to reestablish the twelve tribes (Jer 3:18; Ezek 37:19-24; Psalms of Solomon 17:28), and Christians recognize themselves as the true heirs of the Christian faith (Romans 4; Gal 4:21-31; Phil 3:3).” ... To most adherents of Judaism, the restoration of the twelve tribes was an apocalyptic hope; to the Christians ... that restoration was already a theological reality in Jesus Christ and His followers. ... In the context of the entire book of Revelation, the use of this designation would have to be interpreted in light of other descriptions of God’s people, such as the twenty-four elders (4:4), the seven churches (2:1-3:22), the great multitude of saints in Heaven (7:9), the woman and her seed (12:13-18), the 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mt Zion (14:1), and the bride of the Lamb (19:5-10).

***7:5 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad,***

***7:6 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,***

***7:7 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,***

***7:8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.***

***Why does this listing of the tribes not jive with any other listing?***

**Brighton (p. 192):** John gives no explanation for these differences ...

However, certain conclusions can be surmised. Judah is probably mentioned first because the Messiah came from his tribe. Dan is missing probably because it was in this tribe that graven images were erected, so that Dan became associated with idolatry (Judges 18:1-31; cf. Gen 49:17). ... In the pseudepigrapha, Dan was thus associated with apostasy and idolatry. Testament of Dan 5:6 says that the prince of Dan was Satan. The church father Irenaeus states that Dan was left out of the list in Revelation 7 because the Antichrist will come from Dan [*Against Heresies* 5.30.2]. Hippolytus also says, “For just as from the tribe of Judah the Christ is born, so also from the tribe of Dan the Antichrist will be born” [*De Antichristo* 14] ... Ephraim was connected with this apostasy and idolatry because it was in league with Dan (Judges 17:1-13; cf. Judg 18:1-7, 18). ... It is clear that a redefined list of the twelve tribes of Israel is used in Rev 7:5-8: a list that has been cleansed of any association of apostasy and idolatry; a list that emphasizes faithfulness to God, hence the inclusion of Joseph and Levi; and in particular a list that focuses on the Messiah because of the placement of Judah.

**Bede:** It is fitting that he begins with Judah, for from that tribe our Lord came, and he omits the tribe of Dan, from which it is said that the antichrist will come, as it is written: “Let Dan be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse’s heels so that his rider falls” [Genesis 49:17]. For he does not intend to give the order of earthly generations but to expound the virtues of the church by way of the interpretation of the names, for by its present confession and worship [the church] hastens to the right hand of eternal life—for this is the meaning of the name Judah, which is placed first, and of Benjamin, which is placed last.

**Bede (7<sup>th</sup> century) and Andrew (6<sup>th</sup> century)** illustrate the names of the tribes to show the virtues which the church should have. Andrew makes reference to Philo’s books *On Dreams* and *On the Change of Names*.

**Judah** – confession or praise

**Reuben** – seeing the son

**Gad** – temptation

**Asher** – blessed

**Naphtali** – breadth (Bede) or prayer (Andrew)

**Manasseh** – forgetting

**Simeon** – he has heard sorrow (Bede) or obedience (Andrew)

**Levi** – having been taken up (Andrew) or addition (Bede)

**Issachar** – there is a reward

**Zebulun** – habitation of strength

**Joseph** – gifts of grace to be added

**Benjamin** – son of the right hand

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The exact equality of each tribe seems to be to show the utter fruitfulness of the apostolic seed, since twelve multiplied by twelve and multiplied by the perfect number of a thousand yields the thousands here indicated. For these were the disciples of that seed that out of love for humankind fell upon the earth and brought forth the various fruits of universal salvation.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Levi is listed eighth, since by the eighth day of the resurrection the true priesthood is made known.

**RHBC (p. 98):** Although some commentators suggest that this is a picture of Jewish believers in the end times, the Jewish people of John’s day would not typically have identified themselves as people from “a tribe of Israel.” ... Paul uses the terms “Israel” and “Israelite” rather primarily to emphasize Jewish religious heritage and identity as the people of God, not ethnicity or place of origin (Rm 9:4-6).

**Romans 9:4-6** They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

**Date: July 20, 2023**

***7:9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,  
The difference between the 144,000 and the great multitude***

**Brighton (p. 193):** The church militant on earth appeared as the 144,000. Though symbolic, this number suggests a much smaller crowd of people than the great host in Heaven that is too numerous to count (7:9). In addition, the church militant on earth ... was prepared to march out in mission. In contrast, the great multitude of people before the heavenly throne of God is at rest and peace, celebrating the results of the mission of the church on earth. ...

The crowd of people before the throne of God is countless. This may have reminded John of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would be beyond counting—as numerous as the sand of the seashore and as the stars in the heavens. And this crowd standing before God’s throne is not only from the ethnic people of Israel, but from every ethnic group of people on earth.

**Caesarius of Arles (6<sup>th</sup> century):** He did not say, “After this I saw another



people,” but “I saw a people,” that is, the same people that he had seen in the mystery of the 144,000, which he now sees as without number from every tribe and tongue and nation. For by believing, all nations have been engrafted into the root. In the Gospel the Lord showed forth the [figure of the] twelve tribes the whole church both from the Jews and from the Gentiles. He said, “You will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” [Matthew 19:28]

**McGee (p. 954):** “Out of every nation and out of tribes, and peoples, and tongues.” These are Gentiles, people from every tribe and nation under the sun. This means that in the Great Tribulation the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world. I want to repeat this: the 144,000 witnesses in the Great Tribulation Period are going to do in seven years what the church up to the present has not done in over nineteen hundred years. Do not boast about your missionary program. None of us are reaching very many. But, during the Great Tribulation, there will be a great company of people who will be saved.

It is my own private judgment—I don’t think that Scripture says this anywhere, because nothing has yet to be fulfilled before the Lord removes the church—but it looks to me now as if He is going to let the world hear the gospel before the Rapture of the church. I believe that radio is one of the media that will be used. I think there are other media that will be used: the tape ministry, the printed page, and evangelism. Many evangelists are reaching multitudes of people today. Other radio programs are doing a much bigger job that we are doing, but if you put us all together, we are making quite an impact on this world in which we live.

This is one of the great Dispensationalist paradoxes. People don’t want to be left behind, but the Tribulation saints receive the greatest commendations almost as the most faithful people ever to live on earth. Even greater than the Church that our Lord Jesus Christ has established on earth. They believe this because the Church was God’s “Plan B” after Jesus was rejected by the Jews.

### ***Palm Branches***

**Brighton (p. 194):** The heavenly crowd is also carrying palm branches in their hands. Palm branches appear only twice in the entire NT, here in Rev 7:9 and in Jn 12:13. This is the first time that John sees heavenly figures with palms, though Jewish tradition about palm branches goes back to the OT. ...

**John 12:13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”

The city of Jericho is frequently described as the “city of palms.” Deborah held court underneath a palm tree (Judg 4:5). Solomon’s temple had palm

trees carved on the walls and doors.

**Deuteronomy 34:1-3** Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land, Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negeb, and the Plain, that is, the Valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

**Judges 1:16** And the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad, and they went and settled with the people.

**Judges 3:12-13** And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD. He gathered to himself the Ammonites and the Amalekites, and went and defeated Israel. And they took possession of the city of palms.

**2 Chronicles 28:15** And the men who have been mentioned by name rose and took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them. They clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them, and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kinsfolk at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

**1 Kings 6:29-35** Around all the walls of the house he carved engraved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms. The floor of the house he overlaid with gold in the inner and outer rooms. For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of olivewood; the lintel and the doorposts were five-sided. He covered the two doors of olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He overlaid them with gold and spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. So also he made for the entrance to the nave doorposts of olivewood, in the form of a square, and two doors of cypress wood. The two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied on the carved work.

**Judges 4:4-5** Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.

***7:10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”***

***7:11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,***

***7:12 saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”***

**Primasius (6<sup>th</sup> century):** Through the naming of these seven virtues, we are exhorted to inquire after the reason why he named those things here in which God desires his church to participate. It is for this reason, that when these [virtues] are given to God in praise, they might confess that they have received each of them from him. For we ought not consider that God alone is capable of the [virtues] named here, but that he has found them worthy also to give to the faithful. We rejoice that the church of Christ is allowed to participate in all of these good things: blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power and might. It does not mention omnipotence or majesty or eternity, for God alone always rightly possesses these things. But in these seven we recognize all those virtues that could be granted to the faithful from him who gave them power to become sons of God. And so, if we have acquired any of these good things, we shall know with certainty that we have them by the generosity of God.

***Date: July 27, 2023***

***7:13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?”***

***7:14 I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

**Brighton (p. 199):** The picture of eternal glory of Rev 7:14 is for the comfort of all Christians of all times as they experience whatever tribulations sorely test their faith and patience. Some tribulations and sufferings will be so piercing and poignant that the very faith and foundation of the believer’s hope will be severely tried, almost to the point of despair and defeat. For that Christian at that moment, his sufferings and trials are his great tribulation. And every Christian will experience tribulation.

**Oecumenius:** And, it says, “they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” To be sure, one might think that robes dipped in blood

would be red, not white. And so, how is it that they have become white? Because, according to the opinion of the all-wise Paul, baptism is completed in the death of the Lord and wipes clean from every filth of sin, so that those baptized in him are made white and clean. However, the reception of the life-giving blood of Christ also gives the same grace, for the Lord said concerning his own blood that it was poured out “for many” and “for the sake of many” and “for the forgiveness of sins.”

**McGee (p. 955):** “And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation.” If these people gathered here were the church, John would have known it. John wrote to the believers in his day. He knew about the church, he knew about the body of believers, and he wrote to them about love, that great unifying cement that holds them together. But John doesn’t know who this company is. The elder, who is a representative of the church now in heaven, knows that this company is not the church. It is an altogether different company. It is those who came out of the Great Tribulation. Doesn’t that tell you that the church is not going through the Great Tribulation? This is a special company, out of all tribes and tongues and nations, who have come out of the Great Tribulation.

McGee further refers to John 10:16 to prove that the Tribulation saints are not the Jews or the Church. Yet this passage speaks about the unity of all believers under Jesus.

**John 10:16** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one Shepherd.

### ***Great Tribulation***

**Matthew 24:15-31** “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**Brighton (p. 199-200):** The people in the great crowd which John sees before the throne of God in heaven have already experienced “the great tribulation” (7:14) and have come out of it. The present participle in the phrase οἱ ἐρχομενοι εκ, “those who are coming out” (7:14), suggests that Christians are continually emerging from this tribulation, adding to the crowd in heaven. John is looking at the whole people of God entering and becoming the church triumphant. The crowd that John sees represents the whole church as if it were already triumphant, as if it were already complete, as it will be at the resurrection at the End.

**Acts 2:46-47** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

### ***Abomination of Desolation***

**Daniel 9:24-27** “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

**Daniel 11:29-35** “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn

back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

**Daniel 12:9-13** He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

**1 Maccabees 1:54-57** Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.

**1 Maccabees 6:1-9** About that time king Antiochus travelling through the high countries heard say, that Elymais in the country of Persia was a city greatly renowned for riches, silver, and gold; And that there was in it a very rich temple, wherein were coverings of gold, and breastplates, and shields, which Alexander, son of Philip, the Macedonian king, who reigned first among the Grecians, had left there. Wherefore he came and sought to take the city, and to spoil it; but he was not able, because they of the city, having had warning thereof, Rose up against him in battle: so he fled, and departed thence with great heaviness, and returned to Babylon. Moreover there came one who brought him tidings into Persia, that the armies, which went against the land of Judea, were put to flight: And that Lysias, who went forth first with a great power was driven away of the Jews; and that they were made strong by the armour, and power, and store of spoils, which they had gotten of the armies, whom they had destroyed: Also that they had

pulled down the abomination, which he had set up upon the altar in Jerusalem, and that they had compassed about the sanctuary with high walls, as before, and his city Bethsura. Now when the king heard these words, he was astonished and sore moved: whereupon he laid him down upon his bed, and fell sick for grief, because it had not befallen him as he looked for. And there he continued many days: for his grief was ever more and more, and he made account that he should die.

**Matthew 24:15-16** “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

**7:15** *“Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

**Brighton (p. 179):** λατρευουσιν - This verb bears the idea of carrying out a religious duty as worship or as prescribed religious activities. In the NT it is used for service before the altar (Heb 9:6-10), service in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:9), and the service of a Christian’s whole life with a good conscience (2 Tim 1:3). In Revelation it is used only twice, here and 22:3. In 22:3 it refers to the worship of God’s saints (slaves) before Him in the “new heaven” and “new earth” (21:1). In 22:3, and also here in 7:15, it connotes that the whole being and life of the saints is an act of worship, that is, a worship service of praise to God.

**Brighton (p. 179):** σκηνοω appears only five times in the NT, four of which are in Revelation (7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3). The other occurrence (Jn 1:14) refers to the incarnation of the Word as the fulfillment and replacement of the tabernacle/temple ... Twice in Revelation (7:15; 21:3) the subject is God. Here God dwells among His people in Heaven now and serves as the protective tent over them (7:15). And after the End in the new heaven and new earth, God will dwell among His people (21:3). The other two times (12:12; 13:6), the subject is all the saints and angels who dwell now in Heaven before God’s presence.

**7:16** *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.*

**Tyconius (4<sup>th</sup> century):** They will not hunger because they are fed by the living Bread. He said, “I am the living Bread who comes down from heaven” [John 6:51]. Nor will they thirst, for they will drink from a cup so excellent that it will be for them what the Truth said, “Whoever believes in Me will never thirst” [John 6:35], and again, “Whoever drinks from the water that I shall give him, it will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” [John 4:14]. Nor will the sun strike them, nor will they be burned by the deadly heat of its fire. God promised something similar to his church through Isaiah, “A shelter from the storm, shade from the heat” [Isaiah 25:4]. He proclaims that the strength of His

sacraments will be strong in those who belong to Him and that they will not be vexed by the heat of temptation.

**Isaiah 49:8-10** Thus says the LORD: “In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture; they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.

**John 4:7-15** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”

**John 6:35** Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

**7:17** *For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*”

**Ezekiel 34:11-16** “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed



them in justice.

**Jeremiah 31:10-11** “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

**Isaiah 40:9-11** Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

**Mark 12:35-37** And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’” David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.

**Psalms 23** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

**Titus 2:11-14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

**Date: August 3, 2023**

**NOTE:** I have said before that Revelation is the one book which references all of the other books of the Scriptures. As we have gone through the first seven chapters, we have referenced forty-nine of the sixty-five other canonical books. We have also referenced ten extra-biblical sources.

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

**Brighton (p. 210):** One should see the two used synonymously in this section of

Revelation, because *οτε* is used ... in connection with the opening of the first six seals and now suddenly *οταν* appears ... in the opening of the seventh seal. But the shift to *οταν* probably suggests a change in the way in which the time element is viewed. Swete may be correct when he says, “*Οταν* is substituted for *οτε*, ... perhaps with the view of emphasizing the uncertainty of the time of the end.”

**Oecumenius:** The loosing of the seventh seal effects the most perfect and complete glory for us. No longer is there as before the loosing of sin and our turning to God or God’s turning to us. Rather there is now the most unspeakable blessings: to be called “sons of God,” To be inheritors of God, to be co-heirs with Christ, to be brother and friends and children of Christ, also to rule with Him and to be glorified with Him, and those blessings that “eye has not seen nor has ear heard nor has come into the heart of man” [1 Corinthians 2:9]. And what is the loosing of the seventh seal? It is the second coming of Christ and the giving of blessings as rewards. For although some are handed over to the punishment of sinners, nonetheless it is the aim of Christ and the intention of the Incarnation that everyone become an heir of His kingdom. Therefore, when the seventh seal was loosed, “there was,” it says, “silence for about half an hour,” since the king of creation was coming and every angelic and supernatural power, astounded at the exceeding greatness of the glory of Him who was coming, for that reason became silent.

**Tyconius:** “In Heaven” means in the church. The silence for half an hour shows the beginning of eternal rest.

**Brighton (p. 212):** Perhaps Rev 8:1 does not refer directly to the eternal heavenly rest to be initiated at the end of the present world, but it is, nevertheless, similar to the silence which preceded God’s original creation according to an intertestamental Jewish tradition. According to this tradition there was a silence before God spoke and thus created light (Gen 1:3). 4 Ezra 6:39 says that darkness and silence covered everything before God commanded light to appear.

According to 2 Baruch 3:7, at the original creation there was silence. ... 4 Ezra 7:30-36 states that there will be a “primeval silence,” like that of the first creation, which will precede the resurrection and the judgment at the End (cf. 2 Baruch 3:5-9). ... In the Wisdom of Solomon (18:14-19), a silence and peaceful rest preceded the angel of death’s descent from Heaven to strike the doomed land.

**4 Ezra 6:38-40** I said, “O Lord, you spoke at the beginning of creation, and said on the first day, ‘Let heaven and earth be made,’ and your word accomplished the work. And then the Spirit was hovering, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of man’s voice was not yet there. Then you commanded that a ray of light be brought forth from your treasuries, so that your works might then appear.

**2 Baruch 3:5-9** For if you destroy your city and deliver up your country to those who hate us, how will the name of Israel be remembered again? Or

how shall we speak again about your glorious deeds? Or to whom again will that which is in your Law be explained? Or will the universe return to its nature and the world go back to its original silence? And will the multitude of the souls be taken away and will not the nature of man be mentioned again? And where is all that which you said to Moses about us? **4 Ezra 7:30-35** And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left. And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall give up those who are asleep in it; and the chambers shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and comparison shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn; but judgment alone shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. And recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep.

**Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-19** For while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, Thine Almighty word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, And brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth. Then suddenly visions of horrible dreams troubled them sore, and terrors came upon them unlooked for. And one thrown here, and another there, half dead, shewed the cause of his death. For the dreams that troubled them did foreshew this, lest they should perish, and not know why they were afflicted.

**Habakkuk 2:20** But the LORD is in His holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.

**Zephaniah 1:7** Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated His guests.

**Exodus 14:10-14** When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

**Psalms 46:10** "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the

nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

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

**Brighton (p. 211):** The article before “seven angels” indicates that this group of angels is well known to John and his readers, either from their common religious background or from a previous reference in Revelation to a group of seven angels.

**Brighton (p. 214):** John sees seven angels before the presence of God. Because of the article these seven angels are a definite group. John evidently assumes that they are known and recognized by his hearers and readers. . . . A Jewish tradition holds that there are seven archangels. This tradition goes back at least to the second century BC. In Tobit 12:12-15 Raphael identifies himself as one of the “seven holy angels” who enter into the presence of God and offer up the prayers of God’s people. In 1 Enoch 20:1-7 the names of six of these seven “holy angels” are given together with their respective duties. Only two archangels are known from the Bible: Michael and Gabriel.

Apparently “archangel” appears for the first time in literary form in the NT. In Jude 9 Michael is called an “archangel,” and in 1 Thess 4:16 Paul speaks of the “voice of an archangel” which will announce the second coming of the Lord.

**Tobit 12:12-15** Now therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter in law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One: and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise. And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner, to go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me: but I was with thee. And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter in law. I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.

**1 Enoch 20:1-7** And these are names of the holy angels who watch: Suru’el, one of the holy angels—for (he is) of eternity and of trembling. Raphael, one of the holy angels, for (he is) of the spirits of man. Raguel, one of the holy angels who take vengeance for the world and for the luminaries. Michael, one of the holy angels, for (he is) obedient in his benevolence over the people and the nations. Saraqa’el, one of the holy angels who are (set) over the spirit of mankind who sin in the spirit. Gabriel, one of the holy angels who oversee the Garden of Eden, and the serpents, and the cherubim.

**Jude 9** But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

### *Angel of the Presence*

**Isaiah 63:9** In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

**Exodus 33:14** My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.

**Jubilees 1:27-29** And He said to the angel of the presence: Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity. And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all, and all shall know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King on Mount Zion for all eternity. And Zion and Jerusalem shall be holy.' And the angel of the presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years -from the time of the creation- of the law and of the testimony of the weeks of the jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the jubilees [according, to the individual years], from the day of the [new] creation when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth.

### **Trumpets**

***Trumpets signal for battle and announcements but not entertainment.***

**Numbers 10:1-10** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp. And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. But if they blow only one, then the chiefs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. When you blow an alarm, the camps that are on the east side shall set out. And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall set out. An alarm is to be blown whenever they are to set out. But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow a long blast, but you shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. The trumpets shall be to you for a perpetual statute throughout your generations. And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I

am the LORD your God.”

**1 Kings 1:34** And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the priest there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’

**Joshua 6:4-9** Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.” So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.” And he said to the people, “Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.” And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD following them. The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually.

**Zephaniah 1:14-16** The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

**Matthew 24:29-31** “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-52** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

**McGee (p. 961):** The seven trumpets of Revelation will likewise have the positive effect of moving Israel into the land of Palestine. I believe that it will take these seven trumpets to get all of Israel back into that land. This is another reason I do not believe their present return to the land is a

fulfillment of prophecy. Rather, it will be fulfilled in the Great Tribulation with the blowing of the seven trumpets as they were on the wilderness march. After the seventh trumpet, Israel is identified for us in chapter 12 as the special object of God's protection.

**8:3** *And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne,*

**8:4** *and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.*

**8:5** *Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.*

**Brighton (p. 211):** βαλλω literally means “to throw, cast.” Here it seems to bear the sense of “pour out,” hence the translation “emptied.”

**Brighton (p. 220):** The angel takes fire from the altar and pours it out on the earth, and the results of this action continue after the angels sound their trumpets and initiate the scenes of the second earthly vision. The angel fills his censer with the fire and pours it out upon the earth. The trumpet-angels then begin their mediation of the scenes while the other angel, bit by bit, continues to pour out the fire on earth. He continues to pour out his censer, having filled it once from the altar, while the seven angels, one after the other, blow their trumpets.

**Date: August 10, 2023**

**8:6** *Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.*

**Brighton (p. 224):** The prayers of the saints have been offered as sweet incense, and now God will answer the pleadings of his people as each angel blows his trumpet.

**Micah 5:5-6** And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border. [Victorinus]

**Ecclesiastes 12:1-8** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, and the doors on

the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

**Bede:** Made zealous by the sevenfold Spirit, the Church prepared herself to preach with faithfulness and to cast down the pomp of the world by the heavenly trumpets, even as happened to the walls of Jericho. For even that walking around them for seven days is indicative of the entire time of the Church.

**Joshua 6:1-7** Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. And the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him.” So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.” And he said to the people, “Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the LORD.”

### ***What is Gehenna?***

This week we have Gehenna mentioned often. Gehenna is an afterlife in rabbinic Judaism where unrighteous souls are punished for a short time (3-12 months). It became an important part of the Jewish eschatology and represented divine judgment in the afterlife.

***8:7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.***

[7<sup>th</sup> Plague] **Exodus 9:13-33** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with



pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.””” Then whoever feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his slaves and his livestock in the field. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail. Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Plead with the LORD, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the LORD's. But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the LORD God.” (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Some have interpreted these things to depict the punishment of sinners in Gehenna, which is symbolically described as various kinds of physical torment. However, we think it more likely that the third portion is not of those from the totality of people who will be punished in the coming age, but rather—“for the way which leads to destruction is broad” [Matthew 7:13]—this passage shows the plagues that will occur before the consummation. The hail indicates the scourgings that will come from Heaven for righteous judgment, and the fire mixed with blood indicates the destruction by fire and slaughter at the hands of the barbarians that will occur daily.

**Bede:** The first trumpet of [the Church's] preaching reveals the universal

destruction of the impious by fire and hail. ... The foretelling of these plagues is rightly compared with a trumpet, which is the signal for battle. For, the Scripture says, "Lift up your voice as a trumpet; declare to My people their transgressions" [Isaiah 58:1], and elsewhere, "Set the trumpet to your lips, as an eagle over the house of the Lord" [Hosea 8:1]. That the punishment of Gehenna is the reward for the works that spill blood is indicated by the voice of the preachers who say, "He will pass from the waters of the snow to very great heat" [Job 24:19]. It is possible that by the word blood the spiritual death of the soul is intended.

**Tyconius:** One third consists of the false brothers who are mixed in among the good within the Church, and another third that is separated by the error of the Gentiles or by heretical depravity or by open schism. And so the Church (namely, the one third) must struggle against a double evil, as though it were simplicity resisting duplicity.

**Zechariah 13:8-9** In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

**Joel 2:30-31** "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

**Date: August 17, 2023**

**8:8** *The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.*

**Tyconius:** He speaks of the devil as a burning mountain, for he consumed those near to him as though he were a fire. He is called "great" because he is one angel among others and is himself a creature. ... He calls the world a "sea," in which he saw the devil who had been cast down from Heaven as a burning fire.

**Bede:** The second trumpet indicates the expulsion of the devil from the Church that he might burn more hotly in the sea of the world. ... As the Christian religion increased, the devil, puffed up with pride and burning with the fire of his own anger, was cast into the sea of the world, as the Lord said: "If you should say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast yourself into the sea,' it will be done" [Matthew 21:21], not because he was not there before but because, thrown out of the Church, he began to rage even more against his own followers, inflicting upon them spiritual death by the arrogance of fleshly wisdom. For to be wise according to the flesh is death [Romans 8:6]. For flesh and blood did not teach the Apostles, but the Father who is in Heaven [Matthew 16:17]. For they guided the ship of faith upon that sea that had proven itself suitable for walking to the feet of the

Lord.

**Psalms 46:1-3** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

**8:9** *A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

**[1<sup>st</sup> Plague] Exodus 7:14-24** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. And you shall say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.” But so far, you have not obeyed. Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”’” And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’” Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

### **Jonah 1**

**RHBC (p. 110):** If we are rather to see in this image an allusion or metaphor, we might note how in the Old Testament a mountain was sometimes used as a metaphor for a kingdom. Jeremiah, in particular, spoke of condemned Babylon as a burnt mountain (51:25) which would be buried by the sea (51:42). ... John's readers may have also thought of Mt. Vesuvius, which erupted in AD 79, an unprecedented natural disaster in the Roman Empire. This eruption did not turn waters to blood, though it did destroy much life.

**McGee (p. 964):** I do not know what this [mountain] could possibly be, and there were two reasons for that. First of all, John didn't tell me; he didn't tell anyone, and therefore, I do not think that anyone has the answer. The second reason is that

I don't expect to be here at that time to be reading the evening papers. The bad news that we get in the papers and on television today will continue, only more so, during the Great Tribulation. I won't be here to see it. Therefore, this does not concern me too much, other than it is an awful tragedy that is coming on a Christ-rejecting world which actually ridicules the Word of God today. This is something that certainly makes the believer sorrowful in his heart—but it ought to do more than that. It not only ought to affect our hearts; it ought also to affect our wills and our feet to start us moving to get the Word of God out to the world. That is our responsibility, and I believe it is a very solemn responsibility. We cannot keep this judgment from coming on the earth, but we can get the Word of God out and reduce the population that will be left on the earth so that fewer people will go through that terrible time.

**Date: August 24, 2023**

***8:10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.***

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Some say that the bitterness revealed through the wormwood is symbolic of the torment that comes to those sinners being punished in Gehenna, who, on account of their number, are reasonably called “waters.” But we think that these depictions signify the sufferings at the time, which has been shown. The star indicates either that these things come upon people from Heaven, or it refers to the devil, of whom Isaiah says, “How as the Day Star, which rose in the morning, fallen from Heaven” [14:12] For, through pleasure he gives people a foul and bitter destruction to drink and through this allows punishing torments to come upon them, although not to everyone, but by the longsuffering of God to a third part. ... It is necessary, therefore, that we examine ourselves lest we be judged. As the holy apostle says, “For if we judged ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened” [1 Corinthians 11:31-32], and we receive the sufferings that come upon us with thanksgiving. For those who are concerned about sicknesses in the body bear patiently the cuts and cauteries of the physician, for they desire to be healed. Therefore, [we should examine ourselves] so that being spiritually healthy and bringing no wood to fuel the fire of Gehenna, we might not be condemned with the world but eternally rule with Christ, to whom be glory, honor, and worship, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

***8:11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.***

**Primasius:** Since the ruin of those who are great often confuses many, it says that the star fell upon part of the rivers and fountains, and that its name was Wormwood. We know that many are weakened by the fall of such persons and are

corrupted by an evil imitation of their teaching. [The star] is rightly compared with wormwood, since a small amount of bitterness, when mixed with that which is sweet, will make the whole bitter.

**Isaiah 5:1-4** Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

**Ruth 1:20** She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

**Deuteronomy 29:18-19** Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.

**Jeremiah 9:15** Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.

**Jeremiah 23:15** Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: “Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land.”

**Amos 5:7** O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!

**Amos 6:12-13** Do horses run on rocks? Does one plow there with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood—you who rejoice in Lo-debar, who say, “Have we not by our own strength captured Karnaim for ourselves?”

**Proverbs 5:3-4** For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

**Lamentations 3:15-19** He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, “My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD.” Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!

**Mark 13:24-27** “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man

coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

**Date: August 31, 2023**

***8:12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.***

[9<sup>th</sup> Plague] **Exodus 10:21-23** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.” So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the people of Israel had light where they lived.

**Brighton (p. 228):** For here in 8:12 the heavenly bodies are not totally destroyed or made incapable of producing their light—as they will be in the End (see 6:12-14; cf. Joel 2:31). Perhaps even more important, the plague that hits the heavenly lights is not so much a symbol of the darkness of God’s judgment as it is a sign of his judgment. The actual heavenly bodies are being struck, and, because they are no longer able to give their full light on earth, life in general and mankind in particular will suffer accordingly.

**2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

***8:13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”***

**Brighton (p. 228-229):** The partial darkness of the plague of the heavenly bodies, together with the plagues of the first three trumpet-angels, “anticipates the transition from divine warnings” by way of these natural disasters “to demonic woes” which will be shown to John in the scenes of the remaining three trumpet-angels. To emphasize this transition from natural calamities to those that are demonic, and then to the End itself, an eagle flying in the highest point of heaven cries out in a loud voice for all to hear, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwelling upon the earth because of the remaining” three trumpet-angels and what they will cause. So terrible and horrifying (in comparison to the scenes of the first four trumpet-angels) will be the scenes which the last three angels will introduce that they are called woes.

**Bede:** The voice of this eagle each day flies through the mouth of the eminent teachers in the Church when they announce the evil of the heretics and the rage of

the Antichrist and the day of judgment, which with all severity will come to those who love the earth, saying, “In the last days there will come perilous times, and there will be men who are lovers of self” [2 Timothy 3:1-2], and later in the same writing, “Men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith” [2 Timothy 3:8], and elsewhere, “Then that evil one will be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself over everything which is called ‘god’ or is the object of worship” [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4]. And again: “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; when people say, ‘Peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them” [1 Thessalonians 5:2-3].

### ***Bird of prey***

**Brighton (p. 223):** αετος is a bird of prey like a vulture or an eagle. ...

Here, because the bird of prey is announcing for God the coming woes, it is probably better to view it as an eagle (see 4:7; 12:14). However, if the woes causing death are emphasized, then it would be better to understand it as a vulture, which feeds on carrion (cf. Ezek 39:4).

**Brighton (p. 229):** This eagle is the only earthly creature in Revelation which God uses to speak a word. In all other instances where God speaks through an intermediary, an angel speaks.

In Mt 24:28 Jesus refers to an αετος, an “eagle” or “vulture,” in connection with the finality of God’s judgment.

### ***Directly overhead***

**Brighton (p. 223-224):** The “middle of heaven” in the astronomy of the classical world was the “meridian,” that is, that time of the day when the sun had reached its zenith, the highest point in the sky, noonday. ... The eagle flies directly overhead, where the course of its flight can be seen by all.

### ***Woe***

#### **Tripled for the most grievous woe.**

**McGee (p. 966):** These woes mark the deepest darkness and most painful intensity of the Great Tribulation Period. They are generally associated with the last three and one-half years of the Seventieth Week of Daniel, which is the Great Tribulation Period. These will be the blackest days in human history.

Woe is used 46 times in the NT: 30 times by Jesus, 14 times in Revelation; 1 Corinthians 9:16; Jude 11.

The most obvious allusion for the eagle flying in the darkness at noon would be Jesus and His Passion. “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour” (Matthew 27:45).

*Date: September 7, 2023*

**NOTE:** Keeping up with the tally of references in our studies, through eight chapters, we have referenced fifty-eight of the sixty-five other canonical books. We have also referenced fifteen extra-biblical sources. So, we are eight chapters in and we only have ten books of the Holy Scriptures that we have not referenced.

***9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.***

**Brighton (p. 235-236):** The star, as a stand-in for the one who has the key of the abyss and who is a ruler, has a personal name ... and is identified as the “angel of the abyss.” The identity of this star is unmistakable, for it is the same personality that is embodied by the dragon in 12:3 and who is identified as the devil and Satan (12:9).

**RHBC (p. 114):** This star is not as a natural calamity, nor an image of war, but Satan. For this star has the key to the abyss, which he unlocks to loose upon earth an otherworldly plague.

**Ezekiel 28:11-19** Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”

**Luke 10:17-20** The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing



shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.”

Jewish tradition sometimes depicts the fallen angels as fallen stars.

**Judges 5:20** From heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera.

**Isaiah 14:11-15** Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

**1 Enoch 86:1-6** And again I saw with mine eyes as I slept, and I saw the heaven above, and behold a star fell from heaven, and it arose and eat and pastured amongst those oxen. And after that I saw the large and the black oxen, and behold they all changed their stalls and pastures and their cattle, and began to live with each other. And again I saw in the vision, and looked towards the heaven, and behold I saw many stars descend and cast themselves down from heaven to that first star, and they became bulls amongst those cattle and pastured with them [amongst them]. And I looked at them and saw, and behold they all let out their privy members, like horses, and began to cover the cows of the oxen, and they all became pregnant and bare elephants, camels, and asses. And all the oxen feared them and were affrighted at them, and began to bite with their teeth and to devour, and to gore with their horns. And they began, moreover, to devour those oxen; and behold all the children of the earth began to tremble and quake before them and to flee from them.

**1 Enoch 88:1** And I saw one of those four who had come forth first, and he seized that first star which had fallen from the heaven, and bound it hand and foot and cast it into an abyss: now that abyss was narrow and deep, and horrible and dark.

**Brighton (p. 232):** In Revelation the word for hell, the place of the demons and the unrighteous, is *αβυσσος*. John will use the graphic description *η λιμνη του πυρος* (“the lake of fire”) when he wishes to emphasize the judgment of punishment in hell (Rev 19:20; 20:14). He also calls “the lake of fire” *ο θανατος ο δευτερος* (20:14). He does not use *αδης*, the common word for hell in the NT ... to depict this place of torment. Instead he uses *αδης* in the sense of the “grave,” In all the dead enter (1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14). ... Elsewhere in the NT *αβυσσος* appears only two times. In Lk 8:31 it is used for “hell” in connection

with the legion of demons Jesus cast out of a man. In Rom 10:7 it is used with νεκρός, from which Christ arose.

**RHBC (p. 115):** The key would symbolize his authority to unloose those who had been previously limited or confined in their activity. The bottomless pit is a realm forsaken by God—the realm of the demons, previously referred to as Hades (6:8). Since a key was given to Satan, John in this way emphasizes that Satan can do nothing apart from the permissive will of God.

Early commentaries (Tyconius, Primasius, Oecumenius) relate these demons to heretics and false teachers in the Church, focusing on Song of Solomon 1:5-6 as their proof text: “I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has looked upon me. My mother’s sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept!”

**McGee (p. 966):** We believe that this star is Satan. Some have identified this star as Antichrist; if this is so, it lends support to the view that Antichrist is Satan incarnate, but I do not accept that. My point is the Antichrist is exactly that: he is everything Christ is not, and he is motivated by Satan. The reasons for interpreting this star as Satan are abundant. The prophet Isaiah writes: “How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12) ...

If we have established the fact that the “star” is Satan being cast out of Heaven, then what does he do? He goes down and takes the key to the abyss, which apparently means that God is permitting him to do so. A key denotes authority and power, and this is given to him of God; it is the permissive will of God. ... During the last part of the Great Tribulation Period, the key to the abyss is given to Satan, and he is given a freedom that he never has had before. I believe this explains why men cannot die during this period. Satan wants to keep them alive; he does not want his army decimated at all.

**9:2** *He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.*

**RHBC (p. 115):** The image of smoke may evoke the description of the smoldering remains of Sodom and Gomorrah and thus symbolizes God’s wrath against evil. The bottomless pit, hell, is a place of utter devastation.

**Genesis 19:23-28** The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward

all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.

**9:3** *Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.*

**Primasius:** The “locusts” signify those who come forth from the smoke. For, like smoke, the heretics desire to rise high, since by their teachings they strive for positions of eminence, yet, again like smoke, they are dissipated. We read of this smoke, for in the person of those who are evil it was said, “Smoke is the breath in our nostrils, and reason is the sparks for moving our heart” [Wisdom 2:2]. When the impious are said to strive by sin against wisdom, that is, against the Lord Jesus Christ, they are also described as fighting against His Church, harming it by their malicious mouth, while they are hindered from harming the green grass and trees.

**Matthew 24:24** For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

**Isaiah 9:13-17** The people did not turn to him who struck them, nor inquire of the LORD of hosts. So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail; for those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up. Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

**9:4** *They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

**Joel 1:2-4, 13-15** Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation. What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. . . . Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD. Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

**Joel 2:1-2, 11** Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like

blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations. ... The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

**[Eighth Plague] Exodus 10:1-20** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.” So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.’” Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh’s servants said to him, “How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?” So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, “Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?” Moses said, “We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD.” But he said to them, “The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.” So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me.” So he went out from Pharaoh and

pleaded with the LORD. And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

**Brighton (p. 237):** In Joel [the locusts] are a frightening phenomenon of nature to portray the terror of God's coming judgment. Here in Revelation 9 they portray the hordes of demons from hell which fall upon the human race.

These demons from the abyss afflict only those of the human race who do not belong to God, who have not been sealed as his own (see 7:1-8). In the same way that the children of Israel were protected from the plagues that hit the Egyptians (Ex 8:20-23; 9:1-7, 25-26; 10:21-23), so now in this scene John hears the word that these locust-like scorpions are not to touch God's own people. ... God permits this to happen in order to move people to repentance (9:21).

Consequently, Satan and his demons cannot kill but only injure.

**Brighton (p. 238):** As in the case of Job (1:6-12; 2:1-6), it is God who permits these demons to strike, in this case those who lack God's name. The demons and their king can go so far and no farther, for it is God's will that no sinner should die but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth (Ezek 18:23; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).

**RHBC (p. 115-116):** From ch. 7 we have seen that the people thus protected from demonic torment are the 144,000 who bear the name of the Father and of the Lamb. Just as the Israelites were protected from the plagues of Egypt in the land of Goshen (Ex 8:22), so the followers of the Lamb are preserved from demonic torment in the latter days.

**9:5** *They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.*

**9:6** *And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.*

**Brighton (p. 239):** These demon-like creatures here in Revelation 9 will be ferocious and savage in their attack, though they will not physically tear asunder their victims. However, the ferociousness of their attack in the mental and spiritual dimensions, which could affect one's physical health as well, will be as if the victim were being torn apart, but not fatally so.

**Job 3:20-26** "Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they find the grave? Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? For my sighing comes instead of my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no

rest, but trouble comes.”

*Date: September 14, 2023*

*9:7 In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces,*

*9:8 their hair like women’s hair, and their teeth like lions’ teeth;*

*9:9 they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.*

*9:10 They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.*

*9:11 They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.*

*Abaddon vs Apollyon*

**Brighton (p. 233-234):** Both these names mean “Destroyer.” The first, Αβαδδων, is a transliteration of the Hebrew *abaddon*, an abstract noun that approaches the mean of a proper name: “Destruction, Ruin.”

The LXX translates *abaddon* with απολλυω (Job 31:12), “to destroy,” and by απωλεια (LXX Ps 87:12; Prov 15:11; Job 26:6; 28:22), which means “destruction.” When John personifies this “Destroyer” in Greek in Rev 9:11 he does not use the noun απωλεια from the LXX, but instead uses Απολλυων, “the one who destroys, ruins,” which could be the participle of απολλυω.

The personification (Απολλυων) thus becomes the name of the locusts’ king, the angel of the abyss. It has been suggested that John personified this “destruction” with Απολλυων because of its possible allusion to the pagan Greco-Roman god Apollo (Απολλων), whose symbols included the locust, together with the mouse and lizard. The Roman emperor “Augustus was devoted to Apollo” and built a temple to him in Rome, and the cult of Apollo was widespread through the empire.

**Esther 8:5-6** And she said, “If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?”

**Esther 9:5** The Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them.

**Luther (Lectures on Hebrews):** The Lord “exalted His only One” (Ps 4:3) and is “wonderful among all His saints” (Ps 68:35) that He destroyed the devil, not by a work of God but by a work of the devil himself [the cross]. For this is the most glorious kind of victory, namely, to pierce the adversary with his own weapon and to slay him with his own sword, saying: “He fell prostrate on his own darts.” For in this way God promotes and completes His work by means of an alien deed, and by His wonderful wisdom He compels the devil to work through death nothing else than life, so that in this way, while he acts most of all against the work of God, he acts for the work of God and against his own work with his own deed. For thus he worked death in Christ, but Christ completely swallowed up death in Himself through the immortality of His divinity and rose again in glory.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** It follows that the devil is to be regarded as their king, for he certainly destroys those who obey him.

**9:12** *The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.*

**Brighton (p. 234):** Literally, the first woe “went away,” but to convey the idea that the woe was in fact carried out, the translation renders this verb as “the first woe has come and gone.”

**Luther (Preface to Revelation):** The first woe, the fifth angel, is the great heretic Arius and his companions, who tormented Christendom so terribly in all the world that the text well says the pious people would rather have died than to have witnessed all of it; and yet they had to see it all, and could not die. He even says that an angel out of hell, called the Destroyer, is their king. ... For not only in a spiritual manner, but also bodily, with the sword, they persecuted the true Christians.

**Date: September 21, 2023**

**9:13** *Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,*

**Brighton (p. 241):** “From the four horns” indicates that the voice comes from the altar, that is, it is a voice that is associated with the altar of incense. It could be the voice of the angel of the altar who has a censer of incense which represented the prayers of God’s saints (8:3-5). Or the voice could be that of the souls of God’s saints who are beneath the incense altar, that is, the collective voice of their prayers to God (6:9-11). Most likely it is both. The voice of the angel of the altar now speaks for the collective voice of the saints. These two sources of the voice are in harmony, so united they comprise “one voice” (9:13). For the prayers of the

saints implore God to judge the people on earth who had caused their suffering (6:10), and the smoke from the censer of the angel at the altar, together with the prayers of the saints, rises to God as he is about to show his anger and judgment on the inhabitants of the earth by way of the trumpet-angels (8:4-5). The voice speaks under the authority of God and for the sake of his people.

***9:14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”***

**Brighton (p. 241-242):** The voice instructs the sixth trumpet-angel, who has already sounded his horn, to “release the four angels who have been bound at the great river Euphrates” (9:14). The first five trumpet-angels blew their horns and thus introduced the respective scenes of the second earthly vision. But they had no part in the action that each scene depicted. Here in the sixth scene the trumpet-angel not only introduces the scene by the blast of his horn, he is also part of the action that is displayed. If the seven trumpet-angels are the angels of the seven churches, then the angel of the sixth church is also this sixth trumpet-angel. This angel not only is the herald of the second woe of God’s pending judgment, the sixth scene of the second earthly vision, but he is also a participant, acting on behalf of God’s people and acting for God in his answer to their prayers.

The sixth church is the church in Philadelphia In the letter to the angel of that congregation (3:7-13), the exalted Son of Man says that he has the key of David, which opens doors—opportunities for service (3:7-8). ... The contents of that sixth letter fit and relate to what is now to be revealed to John by way of the sixth trumpet-angel. For in the sixth scene John will see intense testing of the inhabitants of the whole earth as the four angels are let loose, the “trial” (3:10) that will take place just before the End at Christ’s return. Rev 9:13-21 does not speak specifically of God’s people, but when this “trial” envelopes the earth, they too will experience it (see 20:7-10), and (according to 3:10-11) they will be kept safe no matter how much they suffer.

### ***The Great River Euphrates***

**Genesis 15:18-21** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

**Isaiah 8:5-10** The LORD spoke to me again: “Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O



Immanuel.” Be broken, you peoples, and be shattered; give ear, all you far countries; strap on your armor and be shattered; strap on your armor and be shattered. Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

**Jeremiah 25:8-11** “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

**Brighton (p. 243):** At the time of John, the River Euphrates was also the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire; on the other side of it were the dreaded Parthians.

Though Rome attempted to enter Parthia more than once between the years 53 BC and AD 116, under Hadrian (ruled 117-38) they finally recognized that they could never conquer the Parthians. In fact, the Parthians several times crossed the Euphrates and invaded the eastern parts of the Roman Empire. They even once invaded Jerusalem after occupying Syria (40-37 BC).

**McGee (p. 970):** If you take the peoples of the East, of the Orient, beyond the Euphrates River, you have most of the population of the world. Suppose they start moving? My friend, they are going to move someday. From the time of Alexander the Great, the white man has had his day. Colonialism, as far as the white man is concerned, is over now, but communism’s colonialism is still on the march. The dark races are awakening. They have been held back, and apparently these four angels had something to do with holding them back.

Somewhat surprising what racist comments McGee makes here.

Even on his nationally syndicated radio program, he professes the distinction of the races. He promotes the rising of “the dark races” as a work of Satan!

***9:15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.***

**Brighton (p. 245):** The human race was tormented by the demonic spirits from the abyss (as revealed in the fifth trumpet-angel, 9:1-11). However, no one of the human race was killed by such natural and demonic assaults (cf. 9:5). But now a

large portion—one-third—of the human race is killed. When in the fifth scene John saw the locust-like demons tormenting mankind, people sought death but it eluded them (9:6). Now death seeks them out and grasps them as a result of the evil forces released on the earth.

**Luther (Preface to Revelation):** The second woe is the sixth angel, the shameful Mohammed, with his companions, the Saracens, who inflicted a great plague on the Church, with their doctrines and with the sword.

**Kretzmann (p. 619):** This false prophet, a descendant of Ishmael, set himself the task of finding a system of doctrines that would please all men. From the Jews he accepted circumcision and many other ceremonies; to the heathen he catered with his carnal license and polygamy; from the Arians he learned the little he knows about Christ; from other heretics he borrowed the doctrine of works by which men would merit heaven in the sight of God. At first the progress of this false prophet was slow, but after he had once gotten a foothold, his followers, in hordes of fanatics numbering countless thousands, overran large parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe.

***9:16 The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.***

**McGee (p. 970):** The size of the army is stupendous. It is numbered at 200 million. China and India and Japan could easily put that many in the field tomorrow. The great population is in the East today. God help the white man, my friend, when these angels are removed—he will not stand a chance.

McGee continues his racist talk about the sixth trumpet, but he does a bit of an about-face a few sentences later: “Are these 200 million human beings? I have so far indicated that they could be, but frankly, I believe that what we have here is the invasion by the demon world, which is a further result of Satan’s opening the door of the shaft of the bottomless pit.”

On the one hand, McGee warns us of an Asian invasion. On the other, he doesn’t see them as human but demons. Which is it? You can’t have it both ways. He, and other premillennial dispensationalists like him, talk about how easy Revelation is to read and interpret literally. He is having a bit of a hiccup on the Sixth Trumpet.

***9:17 And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions’ heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths.***

***9:18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths.***

**9:19** *For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.*

**9:20** *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk,*

**9:21** *nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

**Brighton (p. 234-235):** φαρμακων and its variant, both meaning “witchcraft, magic, the use of drugs and spells,” suggest many modern applications. ... Modern equivalents to these evils certainly include witchcraft; both “good,” or “white,” and evil, or “black,” magic; all kinds of occult practices and spiritism, including attempts to divine the future, for example, by horoscopes and psychics; and the abuse of drugs. Luther’s explanation of the Second Commandment in the Small and Large Catechisms refer to practices that would be included in the term for “witchcraft, magic” in 9:21.

From this word, we also receive the word “pharmacy.” Interesting that one of the most practical occupations in the medical field comes from a Greek word meaning “witchcraft.”

**Bede:** Since he had described the false Christians and the heretics, now that he might fully describe the whole body of the devil, he mentions also the error of the pagans. For it in no way profited them not to be killed by these plagues, since it is clear that they continue in their pagan wickedness. Nor in that persecution will the pagans be coerced to consent by those things mentioned above, but rather they will die in their unbelief.

**2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

**Date: September 28, 2023**

**10:1** *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.*

**Brighton (p. 274):** From the earliest commentaries of the church fathers to modern commentators, interest in the identity of this angel is prevalent. While the earliest extant Greek commentaries, those of Oecumenius (6<sup>th</sup> century) and Andreas (6<sup>th</sup> century), interpreted the angel to be a created heavenly messenger

enveloped with godly and Christlike symbols, the majority of the Latin fathers identified this mighty angel with Jesus Christ.

***What is the main difference?*** The translation of Isaiah 9:6 that the church fathers used. The Hebrew is what we have in our major English translations. The LXX changes “Mighty God” to “the angel of the great council.” Both sets of church fathers relied on the LXX version, but the Latin fathers align it with Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His Temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts.”

**Brighton (p. 252):** In the second earthly vision, the interlude (10:1-11:14), placed between the sixth and seventh trumpet-angels, pictures the church in mission and God’s protection of her in that mission.

### ***Mighty angel***

**Brighton (p. 253):** Only three angels in Revelation are designated as “mighty”: (1) the angel who cried out asking whether there was anyone worthy to receive the scroll and open its seals and by this action introduced the victorious Lamb in the heavenly vision of God’s throne (5:2); (2) the angel here in Revelation 10; and (3) the angel who demonstrates the judgment of Babylon (18:21).

**Brighton (p. 254-255):** Because the angel here in 10:1 is called “mighty,” some have conjectured that this is a cryptic way of identifying this angel as Gabriel. Gabriel in Hebrew does mean “mighty one of God.” Both the angels Gabriel and Michael appear in Daniel, and some have suggested that as Michael has a role in Revelation (12:7), so also Gabriel appears in a role as the “mighty” angel from Heaven here in 10:1. However, John does not recognize this angel as Gabriel. When John does recognize the angel Michael, he will identify him in 12:7. Since Gabriel is well known not only from the book of Daniel but also from the role he played in the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:19, 26), most likely John would have recognized him as Gabriel, and even if not, the angel would have identified himself as such. But since John does not recognize him and since the angel does not identify himself as Gabriel, most likely this “mighty” angel is not that particular archangel.

### ***Clothed in a cloud***

**Brighton (p. 256):** In the OT a cloud is often associated with God, in particular with His presence among His people. In the form of a pillar the cloud indicated God’s presence by which He led and protected Israel in the wilderness (Ex 13:21; 14:19-20; Num 9:17-21). It was through a cloud that God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai and at the entrance of the Tabernacle (Ex 24:15-18; Deut 31:15-16). The cloud was also a demonstration of God’s glory (Ex 16:10), in particular with the cloud covered the Tabernacle (Ex

40:34-35).

**Lamentations 3:42-44** “We have transgressed and rebelled, and you have not forgiven. “You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us, killing without pity; you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through.

### *Rainbow*

**Brighton (p. 259):** John’s use of the word ἰρις might have led some of his hearers to think of a messenger of the gods in Greek mythology. Iris was the name of a messenger of the gods. In particular this messenger was known as the goddess of the rainbow and was the attendant and messenger of Juno, the wife and queen of Jupiter. When Iris acted as a messenger, she wore a garment of many colors—the colors of the rainbow. When a rainbow appeared in the skies, those familiar with Greek mythology might think of this goddess messenger and wonder whether the gods were sending some kind of message to human beings on earth. . . . If John used ἰρις with knowledge of its pagan mythological background, he did so to make a point. There is a real and true messenger, not of the former false gods, but of the one true God. That messenger is not the pagan goddess Iris, but rather this angel, who represents the true God and Creator of all life, the God who has bound Himself with His creation in a covenant.

### *Face like the Sun*

**Matthew 17:2** He was transfigured before them, and His face shown like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.

**Numbers 6:24-26** The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

**Malachi 4:1-2** “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

**Exodus 34:29-35** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the

LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

**10:2** *He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land,*

**Brighton (p. 263):** First John was instructed to proclaim the revelation of Jesus Christ to the seven churches, that is, to all of God's people on earth (1:4, 11). The revelation is encapsulated in the seven-sealed scroll (Revelation 5). Now in Revelation 10 John is also to proclaim this same prophetic message, symbolized now by the angel's scroll, to the entire population of the earth (10:11). The scroll of the seven seals at first was unopened; its message was secret until the victorious Lamb received it from God (5:1-5). The scroll of this angel is already opened (10:2, 8), signifying that its message is known to John, for it is the same message as that of the seven-sealed scroll. Its contents need not be identified here, for the purpose of the angel's small scroll is not to give a further explanation of nor to repeat the same message of the seven-sealed scroll, but rather to act as a symbol of the seven-sealed scroll's message. That is, John's eating of the scroll symbolizes the action of John to take the one prophetic message, to make it first a part of himself, and then to proclaim it to the world.

We pray similarly in the **Collect of the Word**: "Blessed Lord, You have caused Your holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by the patience of comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life."

**Victorinus:** That he "received the little scroll and ate it" indicates that he committed to memory what had been shown [to him]. "And it was sweet in the mouth." The fruit of preaching is very sweet to the speaker and to those who hear, but through suffering it becomes very bitter to the preacher and to those who persevere in the commandments.

#### ***Little scroll vs seven-sealed scroll***

**Primasius:** If earlier the deep secrets of the Old Testament were recognized to have been hidden in the sealed book, it is appropriate that the revealed grace of the New Testament is believed to be disclosed here in the opened book. Therefore, the apostle confidently says, "And we, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from glory to glory, as though by the Spirit of the Lord" [2 Corinthians 3:18].

**Oecumenius:** It was the little scroll in which were written both the names and the transgressions of the severely wicked who are going to be punished.

## *Land and sea*

**Brighton (p. 263-264):** In the OT, “sea” and “land” are elements in a formula that expresses the totality of all things created: the heavens and earth and sea. ... By straddling the entire earth the angel demonstrates that he—and the mission on which God sent him—will dominate the earth, its history, its people, its present and future—everything. ... God the Creator has subjected all terrestrial life to the angel for the sake of the mission he has given to the angel. God, however, still retains ownership and remains in control. In particular, the angel and his mission dominate the two beasts that come out of the sea and land as pictured in Revelation 13. These two beasts under the direction of the dragon (12:17-13:3) are the great enemies of God’s people and their mission on earth. But for the sake of that mission the angel places his feet on the sea and land, that is, on the two beasts (cf. Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20).

**Morris (p. 134):** His posture is also an indication of gigantic size. The world despised Christians as members of a little, insignificant church. It held all that they stood for as of no account. But their faith was based on the Word of God and that Word is in the hands of this colossal figure, who, though only dimly seen through the enveloping cloud, spans both land and sea. God’s Word is supremely significant. It towers above all the affairs of men.

**McGee (p. 974):** This is the book of the title deed of the earth, and it contains the judgments of the Great Tribulation by which the Lord Jesus is coming to power. The book is now open, and the judgments are on display. This book is the angel’s authority for claiming both the sea and the earth for Christ.

*10:3 and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded.*

### *Voice like a Lion*

**Hosea 11:10** They shall go after the LORD; He will roar like a lion; when He roars, His children shall come trembling from the west.

### *Seven Thunders*

**2 Corinthians 12:1-4** I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

**Psalms 29** Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship

the LORD in the splendor of holiness. The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

*10:4 And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down."*

*10:5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven*

*10:6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay,*

*10:7 but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.*

#### *Oath*

**Brighton (p. 269):** The angel takes an oath in order to assure John and all Christians that there will be a fulfillment, a completion of those things revealed by the seven trumpet-angels, as well as of the whole prophetic message of Revelation. In particular, when the events dramatized by the seventh trumpet-angel come to pass, all things will have been fulfilled and completed. For when the seventh trumpet-angel blows his trumpet, then the mystery of God will have been brought to its end, finished.

#### *Mystery*

**Brighton (p. 269):** The "mystery" is qualified and interpreted by the following words, "graciously promised to his own slaves, the prophets" (10:7). That is, whatever were the contents of the mystery, the mystery itself and its completion had been "graciously promised" to the prophets. In 1:20 the seven stars in the Son of Man's right hand and the seven golden lamps are called a "mystery," the meaning of which the Lord Christ revealed to John. ... Here in 10:7 the "mystery" itself is not explained to



John in so many words. But by the way it is used in reference to the seventh and last scene in the second vision of events on earth, its interpretation becomes evident. Just as Paul uses the word to refer to the entire plan of God's saving grace in Christ and the Gospel message which proclaims it, so here in Rev 10:7 the "mystery" is the prophetic message of Revelation, which shows and announces to John the culmination of that Gospel message as it reveals the goal and end result of that saving grace of God in Christ.

εὐαγγελισεν is used in the Gospels to speak about evangelizing and sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This has been announced even in the OT prophets.

**Date: October 5, 2023**

***10:8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."***

***10:9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."***

***10:10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.***

**Isaiah 29:11** And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

**Zechariah 5:1-4** Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll! And he said to me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits." Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side. I will send it out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones."

**Ezekiel 3:1-3** And he said to me, "Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.

**Caesarius of Arles:** "It will be sweet in your mouth but bitter in your stomach."

By the mouth we are to understand the good and spiritual Christians, while by the stomach we understand the carnal and dissolute. And so it is that when the Word of God is preached, it is sweet to the spiritual, but to the carnal, whose “god is the belly” as the apostle says [Philippians 3:19], it seems bitter and harsh.

***10:11 And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”***

Many of the ancient commentaries believe that this statement is a promise that John would not die on the island of Patmos. He was being called to proclaim God’s Word to the nations after Emperor Domitian’s death.

**Date: October 12, 2023**

**RHBC (p. 128):** We come to another part of Revelation where dispensationalists will see in Revelation indicators that Christ intends to establish a glorious kingdom in geographical Israel, centered in Jerusalem with a rebuilt temple. For them the measuring of the temple here points to its restoration in the future. ... Though some dispensational interpreters of Revelation expect the temple to be rebuilt and the center of worship in the millennial kingdom, there is not the slightest indication among the apostolic authors that they expected this building to be rebuilt in the future.

**1 Peter 2:4-5** As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 3:16** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

**Revelation 21:22** And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

**BUT DISPENSATIONALISTS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO CANNOT AGREE ON THE INTERPRETATION IN CHAPTERS 11-12!**

**RHBC (p. 130-131):** Preterists commonly interpret it literally and say John is speaking about either the length of the Roman war against Jerusalem or the time of Nero’s persecution. The two witnesses are thought to be either historic individuals at this time, witnessing against the Jews, or as symbols of religious and civil entities in Israel. The woman is interpreted as the Church, which flees Jerusalem during the war. The beast from the sea is understood as Rome and the beast from the earth is an image either of idolatrous worship or some other religious persecution.

Historicists interpret the 1260 days as 1260 years, thought to be the approximate time of papal power at Rome before the time of the Reformation. The measuring of the Temple is thought to show how there is a faithful remnant, a true Church, in the midst of the Roman church. The two witnesses are understood as images of those who resist the

papacy prior to the Reformation, such as the Waldenses and Albigenes. The woman is interpreted to symbolize the visible Church, persecuted by Imperial Rome, and her child the true Church. The beasts represent the papacy in various forms, who persecute true believers.

Most dispensational commentators take this length of time literally, concluding that it presents events during the second half of the seven year period of tribulation, between the “rapture” and the millennial kingdom. The woman is thought to be faithful Israel, forced into the wilderness by the Antichrist during this period of tribulation. The first beast is said to be a world leader and the second his religious assistant. The two witnesses are interpreted as individuals, possibly Moses and Elijah come back to life, to oppose the Antichrist.

Idealists take the 1260 days as symbolic of the entire Church age. The woman is an image of the Church, protected by God in the “wilderness.” The two witnesses are also thought to be images of the Church, but now seen giving faithful testimony. The beast from the sea is commonly thought to represent civil and political entities, and the beast from the earth religious entities, both of which Satan uses to war against the Church.

***11:1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,***

**Brighton (p. 285):** John is given a “measuring rod” in the form of a “cane,” by which he is to “measure the temple of God” (11:1). The prophet Ezekiel had a similar experience (Ezek 40:1-5). In a vision he saw a heavenly figure with a measuring rod in his hand. The measuring of the temple (Ezekiel 40-42) was a promise that the temple would be rebuilt and the glory of Yahweh would return to the temple and Yahweh would live among his people (Ezek 43:1-7; 48:35). God’s promise for the future was so certain that even now it could be physically measured as a concrete reality.

**FN 9** The temple described in Ezekiel 40-48 is different in many ways from the Solomonic temple and from the second temple. These differences imply that the fulfillment of the promise was not the second temple, nor is it some future rebuilding of another earthly temple (as some Christian dispensationalists hold). Rather, the fulfillment is in the temple John sees—God’s people, the Church, on earth from the time of Christ’s ascension up to his second coming. This temple that John sees, the Church on earth, also is a type of the heavenly Jerusalem (the holy city) in which God will dwell forever with his people in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21).

**Ezekiel 40:1-5** In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city. In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south. When he brought me there, behold, there was a man

whose appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand. And he was standing in the gateway. And the man said to me, “Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel.” And behold, there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area, and the length of the measuring reed in the man's hand was six long cubits, each being a cubit and a handbreadth in length. So he measured the thickness of the wall, one reed; and the height, one reed.

**Ezekiel 43:1-7** Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, and he said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoring and by the dead bodies of their kings at their high places,

**Ezekiel 48:35** The circumference of the city shall be 18,000 cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD Is There.”

**Brighton (p. 285):** The incense altar is included in the prophetic and protective measuring. The incense altar represents the prayers of God’s saints ascending to his holy presence (see 5:8; 6:9-11; 8:3-4). The worship life of God’s people in prayer and praise is a part of their mission on earth, and it will also be protected and maintained.

**McGee** points us to Luke 21:20-24: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

***11:2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.***

**Brighton (p. 286):** In the rebuilt temple complex of Herod there was both an inner and an outer court around the temple proper. The inner court was divided into three sections: one for the priests, one for Israelite men, and a third for women. The outer court was for the Gentiles. ... Though the Church will be protected by God so that she can carry out her mission, she will suffer persecution and even death as a result of the pagan nations' opposition.

**Brighton (p. 287):** The outer appearance of the Church (the holy city) may well be destroyed. At times even the visible appearance of her worship (the outer court) may be trampled. But her inner soul of worship and faith (the altar and temple) will be nourished and kept by God through Word and Sacrament, so even in dying she will still witness and thus complete her godly mission.

**Brighton (p. 289):** It is possible that the well-known period of draught and famine during the prophetic ministry of Elijah established the type from which the expression of three and a half years might have been derived. Another period of three and a half years that became especially well known to Jewish people was the reign of terror in Judea instigated by Antiochus Epiphanes. John himself and many of his readers would probably have thought of this terrible reign of terror as a type of the whole period of time designated by the three and a half years in the prophecy of Revelation. Another period of similar length could be the Jewish war of AD 67-70, which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

**FN 25** The account in 1 Kings 17-18 indicates that the drought lasted into "the third year" (1 Ki 18:1), while both Luke (4:25) and James (5:17) say it lasted three years and six months.

**FN 26** During the reign of terror in Jerusalem was desecrated, and the Jewish people who held to their religious beliefs and practices, despite dire threats, suffered humiliating and horrible shame and deaths. The exact dates of this reign of terror are not finally known. H.B. Swete, *Apocalypse*, 134, reckons it either from June 168 to December 165 or from December 168 to the middle of 164.

**Brighton (p. 290):** The forty-two years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. From the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai and from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh in the Desert of Paran (Num 13:26) the Israelites spent two years (Ex 19:1; Num 1:1; 10:11). And from Kadesh to their entrance into Canaan at the River Jordan the people spent another forty years. If the forty-two years of the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness are part of the background, John's symbolical use of forty-two months would present the idea that God's people would not only be persecuted and suffer shortages of daily needs (as suggested by the three and a half year symbol), they would also be under God's care and protection during their earthly wilderness-like sojourn.

***11:3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."***

**Brighton (p. 291-292):** The “two witnesses” of God are “clothed about with sackcloth” (11:3). Sackcloth in biblical literature is a coarse, hairy garment worn as a sign of grief (Gen 37:34) or of sorrow and repentance over sin (1 Chr 21:16; Jonah 3:5-8; Mt 11:21). ... The word appears only one other time in Revelation (6:12), where it describes the darkness of the sun. Evidently at the End one of the signs of judgment and doom will be that the sun will become black like “hairy sackcloth.” ... This descriptive imagery is similar to that of Zech 4:2-14. In a vision the prophet Zechariah saw a golden lampstand with seven lamps (Zech 4:2). On either side of the lampstand, one on its right and one on its left, were two olive trees (Zech 4:3). The lampstand with its seven lamps of light represented the seven eyes of Yahweh by which he penetrates the whole earth with his omniscience (Zech 4:10)--which sevenfold omniscience is exercised by his Spirit (Zech 4:6). ... In the context of Zech 4:2-14, it appears that the lampstand is Israel, the people of God, under the sevenfold guidance of Yahweh’s omniscience as exercised by the Holy Spirit, and that the two olive trees represent the anointed priesthood (at that time in the person of Joshua) and the anointed royal house of David (in the person of Zerubbabel, Zech 2:1-6:15). The two olive trees supply the oil for the lamps of the lampstand; that is, the priesthood and the royal house of David are God’s anointed representatives by which the Holy Spirit cares for Israel. ... Putting together Zechariah 4 and Revelation 1 and 11, one can say that the people of God, first of all, are viewed and represented in Zechariah 4 by one lampstand that is supplied with oil from two olive trees (Zech 4:2-14). Second, the church can also be represented by seven lampstands because she is under the sevenfold omniscience of God’s Holy Spirit (Rev 1:20). And third, she can be symbolized by two lampstands as seen through and by way of the prophetic ministry, the royal priesthood (combining the priesthood and the line of kings), and the two witnesses (Rev 11:1-4).

**Zechariah 4:11-14** Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

**Brighton (p. 293-294):** The definite article indicates that John evidently understood them to be “two well-known figures.” Andreas (sixth century) in his Greek commentary on Revelation thought they might be Enoch and Elijah. Oecumenius (sixth century) in his Greek commentary also thought they were Elijah and Enoch: Elijah because it was prophesied that he would come (Mal 4:5-6), and Enoch because he was translated and did not see death (Gen 5:24). Victorinus (third century) in his Latin commentary on Revelation stated that many interpreters thought they were Elijah and Elisha or Elijah and Moses, but

Victorinus rules out Elisha and Moses because they died. Victorinus accepts that the first witness is Elijah (cf. 2 Ki 2:11). He says the second must be Jeremiah because the Lord had said to him that he would be a prophet to the nations (Jer 1:5). Tertullian thought they were Enoch and Elijah. Other identifications that have been suggested are Zerubbabel and Joshua (see Zech 4:2-14; 6:9-13); James and John; and Peter and Paul.

The most likely candidates would be Moses and Elijah, because they appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:3; Mk 9:4; Lk 9:30). The fact that according to Luke (9:31) they spoke about Jesus' coming "exodus," which was soon to happen in Jerusalem, also lends credence to this identification. And the description of the godly powers in Rev 11:5-6, which speaks of fire from their mouths (cf. 2 Ki 1:10-14) and the closing of Heaven so that it would not rain (cf. 1 Ki 17:1) and the ability to turn water into blood (cf. Ex 7:14-21), encourages the same identification as well.

**Gospel of Nicodemus ??:** I am Enoch who pleased God, and was translated by Him. And this is Elijah the Tishbite. We are also to live to the end of the age: but then we are about to be sent by God to resist Antichrist, and be slain by him, and to rise after three days, and to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.

**McGee (p. 981):** It seems unlikely that Enoch would be one of the witnesses since he was a Gentile. The very fact that he did not die does not qualify him for the office for, by the time to come to the Great Tribulation period, the church as already been translated, and some of them were translated without dying.

**McGee** points towards the two witnesses being Elijah and John the Baptist, but he admits that he does not know for certain because John hasn't told us who they would be.

**Date: October 19, 2023**

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

**Primasius:** He shows now that he is speaking not of future realities but of present things when he says, "These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth." This refers to the church, which is illuminated and made strong by the light of two Testaments and is equipped by the two kinds of witness that by divine inspiration is allowed in various of its members. The two lampstands represent the [one] church, but he has spoken of two because of the two Testaments or because [the church] is gathered from the circumcision and uncircumcision and exists in union with the chief cornerstone.

***11:5 And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.***

**2 Kings 1:1-15** After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. Now

Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.” But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus says the LORD, You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” So Elijah went. The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?” And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says the LORD, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” They answered him, “He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.” Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’” But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, “O man of God, this is the king's order, ‘Come down quickly!’” But Elijah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So he arose and went down with him to the king.

**Sirach 48:1** Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp.

**Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

*11:6 They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.*

**Exodus 7:19-20** And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff



and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.” Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood.

**McGee (p. 982):** “As often as they wish” reveals the confidence God places in these faithful servants. God cannot trust you and me like this. He cannot trust some of us with money; certainly He wasn’t able to trust me with very much. He does not trust us with power, and this is the reason that He removes men from office after a period of time—time is always on His side—because He cannot trust men with power. It is a good thing that many of us do not have it.

***11:7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,***

**Luther (LW 43:238):** We are not fighting to win land and people, wealth and glory. Nor are we aiming to establish idolatry or extend it. Rather are we fighting to establish God’s word and his church. Especially do we fight for our children, for the coming generations. ... That is the real reason and serious purpose for which we now fight, die, or live.

**McGee (p. 982):** The witnesses will finish their testimony. In the midst of the week, the Antichrist, who is the Beast, the Man of Sin who is moving to power, will bring back first the Roman Empire. Then, when he gets the whole world under his control, he will not hesitate to overcome and destroy these two witnesses. At that time he will be permitted to do so. This is the temporary victory of darkness over light, evil over righteousness, hell over heaven, and Satan over God, because God is going to let Satan loose during this period.

McGee takes his typical Dispensationalist timeline approach and equates the two witnesses with the “little season” of Revelation 20:3. Here is just another inconsistency with this interpretation of Revelation.

***11:8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.***

**Brighton (p. 297-298):** “The beast which is coming up out of the abyss.” Already in 9:1-11 John had seen the demonic forces from the abyss afflicting the human race. And the leader of this demonic force was “the angel of the abyss” whose name is “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” (9:11), which both mean “Destroyer.” In Revelation 13 John will see two beasts, one from the sea and the other from the earth, who are under the control of the dragon. That dragon is identified in 12:9 as Satan, the devil. This must also be the angel of the abyss, the leader of the demonic forces. ... Even though it causes much suffering (12:13-18), the fury of the enemy cannot stop the Church as she witnesses. But when her mission of

witnessing is completed, then she will be put to death and her prophetic voice will, for the moment, be stilled. In God's own stewardship of time, not that of the two witnesses, when their prophetic ministry is completed, God will permit the beast to overcome them and kill them. Their death will be illustrative of the death of their Lord Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:10-11). Their bodies will be unburied for a time and on display, thus bringing to mind the depravity of the place where they died (Rev 11:8). ... The denial of proper burial was an insult by which scorn and ridicule could be placed upon those left exposed to the public eye. Psalms of Solomon 2:27 states that when no one buries a body, it shows how much the dead person was despised and held in contempt. ... To prevent such shame in Israel, the Mosaic Law stipulates that dead bodies were not to be left unburied (Deut 21:22-23; cf. 1 Sam 31:8-13; Jn 19:31).

**FN 59** M. Hengel, *Crucifixion* 87-88: Crucifixion was aggravated further by the fact that quite often its victims were never buried. It was a stereotyped picture that the crucified victim served as food for wild beasts and birds of prey. In this way his humiliation was made complete. What it meant for a man in antiquity to be refused burial, and the dishonour which went with it, can hardly be appreciated by modern man.

**Isaiah 1:8-15** And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** After [the two witnesses] have witnessed and urged escape from this deceit, the beast, that is, the antichrist, comes forth from the dark and deep recesses of the earth to which the devil had been condemned. And, with God's allowance, he will kill him and leave their unburied bodies in Jerusalem itself, no doubt the ancient one which is now in ruins and in which the Lord also suffered. As it seems, he will establish his kingdom in Jerusalem in imitation of David, whose son is Christ, our true God, who is come in the flesh. In this way [the antichrist] intends to prove that he is the Christ who is fulfilling the prophetic word that says, "I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and rebuild its ruins" [Amos 9:11]. And having been deceived at his coming, the Jews will

accept this.

**Matthew 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

**Kretzmann (p. 623):** Sodom, to the Jews, was the essence of abominations, and Egypt was the country where their fathers had been kept in shameful slavery; both names therefore stood for the lowest and meanest of the earth. The great city to which these names are applied is none other than the Church of Antichrist, on account of the sins that are committed under the mantle of holiness, and an Egypt on account of the suppression of the pure Gospel that is practiced in its midst. No political criminals were ever treated with such cruelty as the confessors of the Gospel that suffered martyrdom in the Church of Antichrist.

**11:9** *For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,*

**Brighton (p. 299):** The silence of the Church for three and a half days in any given place at any time throughout the entire period from Christ’s exaltation to His second coming is also a warning that the people who live there and their children may not again have an opportunity to hear the Gospel voice of God.

#### **SC, Third Commandment**

**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**

*What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

**11:10** *and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.*

**McGee (p. 983):** The world engages in a modern Christmas and Mardi Gras, both rolled into one.

This will be the exact inverse of what happens at the restoration of Jerusalem under Nehemiah and Ezra.

**Nehemiah 8:9-12** And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.” And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the

words that were declared to them.

**11:11** *But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.*

**Brighton (p. 284):** A Syriac manuscript dating to around the twelfth century has an interesting insertion after “and they stood on their feet”: “and the spirit of life fell upon them.” The whole verse in this Syriac manuscript then reads “But after three and a half days, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and the spirit of life fell upon them, and great fear came upon those who were watching them.”

**Brighton (p. 300):** Perhaps when John saw and heard “the spirit of life from God” (11:11) entering into the two witnesses, he thought of Ezek 37:1-14. There, in the vision of the valley of dry bones, the prophet saw a spirit of life enter into the bodies and cause them to stand on their feet (Ezek 37:10). Resurrection language is strong in Ezek 37:1-14, for 37:12 says that God would open their graves and bring his people out of them; God would lead them to the land of Israel. In Ezekiel this resurrection from the dead signifies that God would again raise up his people from the death of despair in captivity for life again in Israel. So here in Rev 11:11 the church is brought back to life here on earth. Just as assuredly as God will raise up the bodies of his people in the great resurrection at the present world’s end, so he now brings back to life the two witnesses, that is, the witnessing and confessing church.

**Ezekiel 37:1-14** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then he said to me, “Son of man,

these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

**Genesis 2:7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

***11:12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.***

**Brighton (p. 300):** [The two witnesses'] real end is to ascend into God's heavenly glory. Thus their ministry of witness comes to the same conclusion as their Lord's had: death, then resurrection and ascended glory (cf. 2 Cor 4:7-15). As the Lord Christ ascended into heaven and was received by a cloud, the two witnesses ascend to heaven "on the cloud" (Rev 11:12). The definite article before "cloud" most likely relates the cloud to the cloud of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:9), possibly also to the clouds upon which he will come again at the end of this world (Mt 24:30; 26:64).

**2 Corinthians 4:7-15** But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

***11:13 And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.***

**Brighton (p. 301):** Earthquakes often accompany and attest God's mighty acts. In Ezek 38:19-20 an earthquake precedes the End, in particular the end of the enemies of God's people, portrayed as Gog from Magog in Ezekiel 38-39. According to Hag 2:6-9, a great shaking will occur in the heavens and earth, a shaking that will cause nations to tremble when God exhibits his glory on earth. In Zech 14:1-5 on the day of his coming, Yahweh will cause the Mount of Olives to split in half and thus cause the enemies of his people to flee. Matthew's account of Jesus' death (Mt 27:51) reports that the earth was shaken as in an earthquake and the rocks were split in two, and at his resurrection a great earthquake happened (Mt 28:2). And in the epistle to the Hebrews it says that before the End, God will once again shake the earth and the heavens (Heb 12:26).

**Ezekiel 38:19-20** For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the people who are on the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence. And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground.

**Haggai 2:6-9** For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.”

**Zechariah 14:1-5** Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

**Matthew 27:51** And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

**Matthew 28:2** And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of

the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

**Hebrews 12:26-27** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

**11:14** *The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.*

**Brighton (p. 303):** Thus the picture given by the scene of the two witnesses is that the Christian church—composed of individual Christians—is always living in witness, dying for that witness, and being raised again for further witness.

**Date: October 26, 2023**

**11:15** *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

*Loud voices*

**Proper Preface:** Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name.

*Kingdom of the world*

**Brighton (p. 304):** This phrase occurs only here in the entire NT. (It does not appear in the LXX.) 2 Macc 7:9 uses the phrase ο του κοσμου βασιλευς (“the king of the universe”) in reference to God, and 4 Macc 16:18 mentions τον θεον του κοσμου. But κοσμος is not elsewhere used in relationship with η βασιλεια.

**FN 1:** In addition the designation ο του κοσμου κτιστης (“the Creator of the universe”) appears in 2 Macc 7:23 (cf. 2 Macc 13:14), and 2 Macc 12:15 has τον μεγαν του κοσμου δυναστην (“the great Powerful One of the universe”).

**Brighton (p. 305):** 11:15 suggests that the cosmos is now again God’s because of the work of the Christ, for God in Christ has now brought the cosmos back into its proper relationship to God, properly ordered under his kingship.

**Psalms 2:4-9** He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron

and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

**Zechariah 14:9** And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

**Obadiah 19-21** Those of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and those of the Shephelah shall possess the land of the Philistines; they shall possess the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria, and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. The exiles of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the Negeb. Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

**RHBC (p. 140):** The reason for the praise is that glorious kingdom of Christ now extends throughout the world. This does not mean that the kingdom of Christ had not been present upon earth prior to the seventh trumpet. Neither is this a prophetic statement promising a literal millennial reign of Christ upon earth, as some commentators suggest. Rather, it means that all evil has been cast out of the new creation.

**Bede:** The seventh trumpet reveals the day of judgment in which the Lord will reward his own followers and banish those who have corrupted the earth. ... The six previous trumpets, corresponding to the periods of the present age, proclaimed the course of the various struggles of the church. This seventh trumpet is the messenger of the eternal sabbath and of the victory and dominion of the true King.

***11:16 And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God,***

***11:17 saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.***

**Brighton (p. 306):** In both 11:17 and 16:5 ο ερχομενος is absent because at the End the Lord God is no longer “the Coming One” but only the Ever-Present One forever, as he was also the Ever-Present One in the past. At the End and throughout eternity in the new heaven and new earth, God will always be the Ever-Present One.

***11:18 The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”***

**Brighton (p. 309-310):** When God takes his reign at the End, it means a time of judgment for the pagan nations, a time for destroying those who were destroying the earth. It is therefore designated the third woe (see 8:13; 9:12; 11:14). While the Christians celebrate in worship of God, the unbelieving nations are suffering their woe, their eternal judgment (cf. 2 Thess 1:6-7).

The fact that the pagan nations “were destroying the earth” (Rev 11:18) is a



descriptive way of saying that they were participating with the devil and all evil forces in their attempt to usurp the power of God and take over his reign. In the OT the destroying or defiling of the earth and especially the sacred land of Israel was often stated to be the result of the sinful depravity of the people, a spiritual corruption which even physically cursed the land (see Amos 4:7-9).

***11:19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.***

**Brighton (p. 310-311):** The ark of the covenant in God's heavenly temple also appears in clear view for all to see. In the OT the ark of the covenant (1 Ki 8:1) was the symbol of God's covenantal presence with his people.

The ark which first stood in the tabernacle later resided in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple (1 Ki 8:6). When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, probably the ark was also destroyed (2 Ki 25:9). However, there is a legend (2 Macc 2:1-8) that tells how Jeremiah rescued the ark and the incense altar. He hid them in a cave on Mt. Nebo, from where Moses saw the Promised Land (Deut 34:1). Jeremiah supposedly blocked up the cave's entrance and then made the prophecy that the ark would not be brought to light again until the Lord God would regather his people. ...

While the legend of Jeremiah hiding the ark encouraged this hope, Jeremiah himself (Jer 3:16) prophesied that the ark would no longer be missed nor even come to mind and that another one would not be made.

**2 Maccabees 2:1-8** It is also found in the records, that Jeremy the prophet commanded them that were carried away to take of the fire, as it hath been signified: And how that the prophet, having given them the law, charged them not to forget the commandments of the Lord, and that they should not err in their minds, when they see images of silver and gold, with their ornaments. And with other such speeches exhorted he them, that the law should not depart from their hearts. It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door. And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy. Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified.

**Tyconius:** When Christ the Lord was born, the temple of God was manifested in heaven, that is, in the church. The temple of God can be understood as the body of Christ, as the Lord Himself said, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” [John 2:19]. ... Although the ark often signifies the church, here the ark is said to have appeared in the temple, and by adding the “ark of the covenant,” he indicates that there is something more exalted to be comprehended. Moreover, by saying “in heaven” he urges us to penetrate some mystery, so that this might be understood: the temple is the church, and the ark of the covenant is the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, who, like that ark, bore the tablets of the covenant within himself. For he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it [Matthew 5:17], ... as God promised through Jeremiah that the ark of the covenant would be taken from human hearts, certainly referring to that ark of the Hebrews, which was at Jerusalem. That is, [he promises] that the church will be called the throne of the Lord. He says, “When you have multiplied and increased in the land, says the Lord, they will no longer say ‘the ark of the covenant of the Lord,’ nor will it come to mind. In those days and at that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all nations will be gathered to her in the name of the Lord” [Jeremiah 3:16-17]. ... The lightning is those virtues by which Christ the Lord makes his apostles to shine. The voices and the thunder are the preaching of the apostles, who thunder to the peoples as though they were clouds. Hail always harms itself when it dashes against fruit and breaks apart, and it diminishes itself even as it causes ruin. So also the fierce multitude of the Gentiles persecutes the faith of Christ, yet afterward are themselves broken apart and become smaller or nonexistent.

**Bede:** Formerly the temple of the Lord on the earth contained the ark of the covenant hidden behind the mystical veil. However, since the veil of the ancient temple and the wall of partition have now been torn asunder by the sword of the blood of the Lord, in the church, the temple of the living God whose citizenship is in heaven, the ark of his incarnation is laid open to all the world. For just as the manna from heaven was in a pure gold [container], so is his divinity in his holy body.

**Date: November 2, 2023**

**McGee (p. 986):** We come now to the crux of the interpretation of the entire Book of Revelation which revolves about this first personality. An outstanding and very intellectual minister years ago made the statement: “If you tell me your interpretation of the woman in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, then I’ll tell you your interpretation of prophecy.” At the time, I thought he was foolish, but I have come to agree with him. I believe that the identification of this woman is the key to the understanding of the Book of Revelation.

**Brighton (p. 312):** The woman with Child in Revelation 12 who is hunted by the dragon

portrays the suffering of the church during her mission, but she also reveals the glory and honor with which God, for the sake of the Child, adorns his church. The church is pictured like the Virgin Mary, as the one who births Christ, the Savior, into this world (12:5). No other entity in human history is so honored. The church and her mission are the most important aspects of human experience and world history, for she bears the cross of Christ and the love of God, the cross and love that extend to the spatial and temporal ends of the earth.

**Brighton (p. 324):** The portrayal of events on earth is suspended in order to permit John to see a cosmic vision expounding events that overarch what he has been seeing happening on earth. What John views in Revelation 12-14 dominates and controls the events that he sees taking place on earth. ... These chapters visually explain to John why the events on earth are occurring.

**FN 24:** The commentary on Revelation 5 noted that the enthronement of Christ, depicted in that chapter, dominates and controls the entire book of Revelation because everything that transpires in world history, and also the glorious eschaton at the present world's end, is under the lordship of Christ, who is worthy to rule everything because of his suffering and death. Chapters 12-14 are properly called an interregnum (Latin for "a period of time in between reigns"). While the reader of Revelation knows Christ is now enthroned in heaven, the battle between his lordship and the lords of evil still rages on earth, and this world has not yet been brought fully under Christ's reign.

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

**Brighton (p. 319):** The OT more often pictures Israel as Yahweh's wife, married at the exodus (e.g., Jeremiah 2-3; Ezekiel 16), but at times, she is also spoken of as God's bride (see especially Song of Songs). Even when God's wife is faithless, God still invites her to return to him and to become once more his lawful wife (see Hos 3:1; cf. Is 54:5-8). The NT more often portrays the church as Christ's bride, waiting for marriage at Christ's return, as in Revelation, where she is the bride of the Lamb (19:7-8; 21:2; 22:17).

**Brighton (p. 326):** The woman was clothed in the brilliance of Christ as exhibited by the sun. Her face and appearance themselves do not shine like the sun, for that is reserved for the exalted Son of Man (Rev 1:16; cf. Mt 17:2) and for the angel that stands in the place of Christ and represents him when commissioning John and the church (Rev 10:1, 11). But God has put around her the brilliant, sunlit glory of his Christ, signifying that in Christ and because of him she stands in God's holy presence. "Clothed about with the sun" also suggests how much God in Christ honors the woman.

**Hippolytus (mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century):** By the "woman clothed with the sun," he meant most manifestly the church, endued with the Father's Word, whose brightness is above the sun. And by "the moon under her feet," he referred to [the church]

being adorned, like the moon, with heavenly glory. And the words “upon her head a crown of twelve stars” refer to the twelve apostles by whom the church was founded.

**Methodius (early 4<sup>th</sup> century):** For just as a woman receives the unformed seed of her husband and after a period of time brings forth a perfect human being, so too the church, one might say, constantly conceiving those who take refuge in the Word, and shaping them according to the likeness and form of Christ, after a certain time makes them citizens of that blessed age.

**Tyconius (4<sup>th</sup> century):** In the woman he indicates the church who in the purification of Baptism puts on Christ, the “sun of righteousness” [Malachi 4:2], as the apostle Paul testifies, “As many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” [Galatians 3:27].

**McGee (p. 987):** At Christmastime we all use Isaiah 9:6 and other verses concerning the birth of Christ. This verse does concern the birth of Christ, but it does not concern us at all; rather, it concerns the nation Israel. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Who is referred to here when Isaiah says, “Unto us”? The church? No; it’s the nation Israel. It is quite obvious that Isaiah is speaking to the nation Israel, and he is speaking not relative to a Savior but to a Governor, a Ruler, a King, One who was to come and rule over them. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” It is interesting that as a child He was born in His humanity; but as a Son from eternity, He was given. “And the government shall be upon his shoulder”—we are not talking now about the Savior but about the One who is coming as King. We will see that happen in the Book of Revelation. “And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” There will not be any peace until He comes. When the rulers of the world say, “... Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them ...” (1 Thess 5:3). They were having a big peace conference in Holland when World War I broke out, and most of the delegates almost got fired upon before they got home! When men say, “Peace and safety,” it is idle talk, because man is working at peace from the wrong end. It is the human heart that is wrong, and only Jesus will bring peace. He is the Prince of Peace. Isaiah is talking to Israel when he says, “Unto us a child is born,” and that is the figure that John picks up here in Revelation.

***12:2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.***

**Brighton (p. 327-328):** Mary, the mother of the Christ Child, is the model for the woman here in 12:1-2, for the woman, as does Mary, symbolizes and represents the church. The woman thus represents the faithful people of God who longed for the Messiah to come, and who by their faith can be said metaphorically to be the

mother of the Child and thus to have given birth to him. After the birth and the ascension of the Child, the woman becomes and represents the church of the Apostles. ...

The fact that the moon is under her feet suggests that she is the dominant entity in his creation. Under God's sovereignty all things and all creation are governed for the benefit of the church, to spread and increase the church, care for her, and protect her while in her earthly pilgrimage. For the church is the jewel, the apple of God's eye.

**Isaiah 26:17-18** Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

**Hippolytus:** [The words that she was with child and cried out in anguish for delivery] mean that the Church will not cease to bear from its heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world.

**Tyconius:** The Church spiritually gives birth to those with whom she is in the pangs of childbirth, but she also never ceases to be in the pangs of childbirth with those to whom she has already given birth. For this reason the apostle says, "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" [Galatians 4:19].

**12:3** *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.*

*Seven Heads – perfect leadership*

*Ten Horns – complete power*

**Brighton (p. 328-329):** The dragon's seven heads reflect his deceptive claim that he, and not the Christ, is the spirit who has all knowledge to supervise all earthly matters. Each head is crowned with a diadem reflecting his deceptive claim that he possesses all royalty and lordship. The ten horns point to the boastful claim that the dragon has supreme earthly power. ... The dragon has dominating power and authority to exercise it. Any other earthly power, symbolized by a single horn, can exist and exercise that power only under the consent and sanction of the dragon and by his guidance.

**John 8:44** [Jesus says to the Jews:] You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**Victorinus of Petovium (late 3<sup>rd</sup> century):** It says that [the dragon] was the color of red, that is, of scarlet, for the fruit of his work has given him such a color. For he was a murderer from the beginning [John 8:44], and everywhere he has oppressed the whole race of people, not so much by the debytt of death as through

all kinds of miseries. The “seven heads” are the seven Roman kings from whom the antichrist comes; ... the “ten horns” are the ten kings at the end of time.

**Tyconius:** [The red dragon] is the devil. He says that there was “another portent” to indicate the hostile opposition of the devil. It was he who inflamed Herod with the fire of envy so that he would feign to adore the Christ even while seeking with all his power to kill Christ whom he knew was to be born king of the Jews. ... For in the seven heads and seven diadems he signifies the rule of all kings, while in the ten horns we have the number of the ten persecutors who will fan the fires of persecution against the whole Church in the last times.

***12:4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.***

**Brighton (p. 329):** The casting of the stars out of heaven to the earth dramatically portrays the dragon pulling other angels with him in his rebellion against God. A third of the stars were involved with the dragon in this rebellion. Whether one takes “the third” as a literal number or as a symbolical number, it suggests not a majority, but a sizable minority of the angelic host. This is the only reference in the Bible which suggests the number of angels that the dragon took with him in his opposition to God.

**Brighton (p. 319-320):** The oldest reference to the devil depicts him as a serpent (Genesis 3). Later this serpent is located in the sea (Amos 9:3), a place of chaos. God did create great sea creatures which were good (Gen 1:21), but since the fall enormous sea creatures are often characterized as evil (e.g., Leviathan in Job 3:8; Is 27:1). Leviathan and Rahab appear in the OT s names of the ancient serpent, the devil.

**Brighton (p. 329):** The dragon’s opposition is not at first against the woman, but against the Child, for the Child is the focus in the dragon’s warfare against God.

**Brighton (p. 320):** Extrabiblical myths also contain a similar evil monster. The Babylonian myth Enuma Elish tells how Tiamat, the water monster, is cut in two by Marduk, the young god of light. In Canaanite lore the great seven-headed monster of the deep, the dragon, was known as Lotan/Litan, a form of Leviathan. In Egyptian lore the red dragon Set-Typhon pursues Isis and is later killed by her son Horus. In Greek mythology the pregnant goddess Leto is pursued by the dragon Python. She gives birth to Apollo, who turns on the dragon and kills it.

**Brighton (p. 329-330):** Ancient mythologies have a number of stories of a woman with child who is pursued by a monster or dragon. These myths provide evidence that ancient peoples had heard the truth of a woman whose Child would deliver the human race from the forces of evil and darkness, embodied in the ancient serpent or dragon. These myths originated from the original promise God gave to Adam and the woman

when he said that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head (Gen 3:14-15). By the time that these ancient myths were recorded in extrabiblical literatures in which they are preserved, they had already been distorted and given shape by pagan ideas and influences. ... In their core they witness to the one true, original story of a Child from a woman who would rescue the human race.

**Matthew 2:16-18** Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

**Matthew 4:1-11** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

**RHBC (p. 146):** Luther colorfully described the abuses and false understandings of the medieval Mass as a "dragon's tail" because it swept so many people into idolatry (SA II II 11).

In this "dragon's tail," Luther includes purgatory (12-15), false miracles (16-17), pilgrimages (18-20), monastic societies (21), relics (22-23), and indulgences (24).

**12:5** *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,*

**RHBC (p. 147):** It is striking how the ministry of Christ is thus abbreviated. No mention is made of His death or resurrection. John's readers would have known all these details in any case, and they are surely explicit elsewhere in Revelation. Here the emphasis is upon His triumph over His enemies in the latter days, to which matters the vision quickly moves.

**Brighton (p. 320):** [αρσεν (“male”)] seems redundant after υιος, for a “son” is obviously a “male child.” Αρσεν is most likely added in order to emphasize the male sex of the Child. There are examples of such emphasis in the OT. For example, in Jer 20:15 the designation *ben zakar* appears. *Ben* (“son”) alone would have been adequate, but *zakar* (“male”) was added perhaps to emphasize that the birth of the son (Jeremiah) was, in ancient Near Eastern culture, especially joyful because male children were highly desired. Here in Rev 12:5 the emphasis could be that the Christ Child’s maleness is important in the context of this chapter’s depiction of the church as a woman, whose bridegroom and husband must be male. If the woman is seen as the Virgin Mary, the maleness of the Child may also reflect his lineage from God the Father and contrast the lack of any human father—and indeed there is no (human) father figure in Revelation 12.

**Psalm 2** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

**Luke 1:31-32** [Gabriel to Mary:] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

**Brighton (p. 331):** The incarnation and the entire ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension are compressed into the words “snatched up to God.” ... John’s purpose is to emphasize the final outcome of Christ’s incarnation and passion and resurrection, that is, the dragon’s failure to destroy the Child and the victory of the Christ over the enemies of God’s people. ...

The dragon tried his utmost to destroy the Child when the woman gave birth. The action of King Herod in killing the infants of Bethlehem in his effort to destroy the infant Christ is certainly a part of the dragon’s design against the Child. But the Child was snatched from Herod’s wicked hands and taken to Egypt (Mt 2:13-18), a type of the final snatching to God at Christ’s ascension. Also Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness is to be viewed in connection with the dragon’s continued effort to intimidate and to destroy the Christ (Mt 4:1-11). Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry the devil attempted to thwart his mission (see Heb 4:15).



But despite the agony and the suffering that the Lord Christ endured, the dragon did not and could not destroy the Child.

**FN 42** – Luke’s account of the temptation reports that afterward the devil ceased for a time his tempting “until an opportune time” (Lk 4:13). The most opportune time, when Jesus was most vulnerable, was at his passion, when “Satan entered Judas” (Lk 22:3).

**Methodius:** Someone might take objection [that the woman who is with child is the church who baptizes], when the Apocalypse explicitly states that the church brings forth “a male child.” ... Remember that the mystery of the incarnation of the Word was fulfilled long before the Apocalypse, whereas John’s prophetic message has to do with the present and the future. And Christ, who was conceived long before, was not the child who “was taken up” to the throne of God for fear that He might be injured by the serpent; rather He descended from the throne of his Father and was begotten precisely so that He might remain and check the devil’s assault on the flesh. And so, you must admit that it is the church that is in labor, and it is those who are washed in Baptism that are brought forth. ... I think that the church is here said to bring forth “a male child” simply because the enlightened spiritually receive the features and image and virility of Christ. The likeness of the Word is stamped on them and is begotten within them by perfect knowledge and faith. Thus Christ is spiritually begotten in each one. And so it is that the church is with child and labors until Christ is formed and born within us, so that each of the saints by sharing in Christ is born again as Christ.

***12:6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.***

**Brighton (p. 331-332):** The church would not immediately share in the exalted glory of the ascended Christ, for the woman flees “into the wilderness.” As was prophesied of Mary, so now the church would be pierced with a sword (Lk 2:35). ... So now the new Israel, the church of Christ, enters her wilderness experience after having seen and been the recipient of the great salvation worked by the Lamb of God. As the Israelites of old were cared for by God in the barren desert with manna and food and water and safety (Ex 16:4-5, 13; 17:3-7; 23:20), so now the church would be nourished and defended by God in her harsh and dangerous environment.

**Methodius:** Now the woman who has brought forth and continues to bring forth “a male child,” the Word, in the hearts of the faithful, and who went forth into the desert undefiled and unharmed by the wrath of the beast, is our mother the church. And the wilderness into which she comes and where she is nourished for “a thousand two hundred sixty days” is a wilderness truly bare of evil, unfruitful and sterile in what is corruptible, difficult to reach and hard for the majority to pass through. But it is fruitful and abounding in pasture, blossoming and easy of approached to the holy, full of wisdom and flowering with life. And this is none

other than the lovely place of virtue, full of fair trees and gentle zephyrs, where the south wind rises and the north wind blows and the “aromatical spices flow” [Song of Solomon 4:16]. ... The Church, then, comes to this spot that is a wilderness and, as we have said before, is barren of evil, and [the church] receives nourishment; borne on the heaven-traversing wings of virginity, which the Word has called the pinions of a mighty eagle, she has crushed the serpent and driven away the storm clouds from the full light of the moon which the church possesses.

**Oecumenius (6<sup>th</sup> century):** And so the child was saved from the plot of the dragon but the woman given over to destruction? Indeed not. But she too was saved by the flight into Egypt, which is a desert, and there was free from the plot of Herod. And there she was hid away and was nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days, which equals three and a half years, more or less. Thus, for some such length of time the mother of God remained in Egypt, until the death of Herod, after which another message from an angel brought them to Judea.

**McGee (p. 990):** “And the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of (from) God.” During the intense part of the Great Tribulation Period, this remnant of Israel will be protected by God. There are those who dogmatically say that Israel will go to the rock-hewn city of Petra and will be preserved there because no enemy can get in. But in our day and enemy now comes from above and drops down bombs. The last place I would want to be when bombs start falling is within that rock-hewn city of Petra. To make that dogmatic statement alongside clear-cut prophecies is certainly to deceive people. This is not a clear-cut prophecy, and I do not know where the place will be. It does not hurt us preachers to say we don’t know something when we don’t know. To my judgment it is tragic to be so dogmatic about that which is not revealed. If you want to make such a statement about a speculative Scripture, I will not object if you will say, “This is my judgment,” or, “I think this is the way it will be.”

**Date: November 9, 2023**

***12:7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,***

**Brighton (p. 321):** In Daniel, Michael appears as the guardian and patron angel of Israel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1). He is called “one of the chief princes” ... of God’s angels (Dan 10:13; cf. 10:21). In Dan 12:1 Michael is the protector of God’s people who will come to their aid in the end times of suffering. In Jude 9 Michael is called “the archangel,” and when Satan disputed with him about the body of Moses, he protected Moses’ body by saying, “The Lord rebuke you.” ...

This tradition of the status of Michael as the great archangel was inherited by the church. However, in some Christian writings the roles of Michael and Christ are confused because Michael is given an excessively elevated status, and this confusion persists among some scholars today.

**12:8** *but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.*

**Oecumenius:** The vision that is to explain the events concerning the antichrist refers to a beginning earlier than the beginning just described. This earlier beginning ... is the fall of Satan from Heaven. ... The holy Scripture says that Satan exalted himself against God, that is, he lifted up a stiff and insolent neck to Him and devised an apostasy. Although God, who is by nature good and forbearing, was patient with him, the holy angels did not tolerate the arrogance of their master and banished him from their ranks. This passage speaks of this event. Michael, one of the great leaders of the angels, made war against Satan and his followers, and Satan did not prevail in this war against him.

**Primasius (mid-6<sup>th</sup> century):** We must not think that the devil and his angels dared to fight in heaven, since he could not even tempt Job without God's permission. Rather by "heaven" he quite manifestly indicates the church, where each one of the faithful constantly contends against spiritual evils. Therefore the apostle says, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers and against the world rulers of the present darkness" [Ephesians 6:12]. And so he says here that Michael with his angels fights against the devil, because by praying according to the will of God for the church in this world and by granting her his aid, he is properly understood to be fighting for her. ... The devil and his angels are not only those who are similar to him in nature and will. They are also as men, who after being caught in his traps, become pursuers of such things. Indeed, because of the qualities of his will it is said about the devil, "An evil man has done this" [Matthew 13:28], and about Judas, "[One of you} is a devil" [John 6:70].

**12:9** *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

**2 John 7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

**Brighton (p. 333-336):** While Christ's birth, death, and resurrection established peace between God in heaven and humanity on earth, that peace is now being contested by evil spiritual powers in heavenly realms who seek to sever the peace between God and people achieved by Christ. The warfare in heaven must be interpreted as a spiritual struggle in which the dragon attempts to displace the Christ Child, the victorious Lamb who was slain, in order to establish himself again in the presence of God as the prince of the angels and as the one who has dominion over humanity on earth, and specifically as the one who has the authority to stand before God and accuse people for their sins. ...

It is a war, so to speak, of words—the words with which Satan accused God's

saints of their sins (e.g., Job 1-2; Zech 3:1-5). With these words Satan claimed that he, not the Christ, truthfully represented the saints before God's heavenly throne. This warfare, though of words, is deadly serious, for if Satan's accusations were validated in the heavenly court, then God's justice would require him to deny even his own people because of their sin. But for that to happen God would have to deny the claim of his own Son to be the rightful representative and advocate for God's people. ...

This war, this casting of Satan out of heaven, took place as a result of Christ's victory and at his ascension and session at the right of God (see 5:1-14). There was no room for two opposing advocates, each claiming to be the rightful representative of sinful humanity. ... Now dethroned from his seat in the council of angels (see Job 1:6; Zech 3:1), the dragon could never again appear before God. ...

As a result of Christ's victory on the cross and his public vindication over the dragon at his ascension and exaltation, there was no longer any room in heaven for the accuser. The dragon had to be thrown out of heaven, for Christ's vicarious atonement and justification of the saints made Satan's accusations false—lies—and an offense against God's gracious justice in Christ. Once Christ was elevated and enthroned, the slanderer was held in contempt of God's court and "was thrown out" (12:9), never again to appear before God's heavenly presence. ...

When did this war, this expulsion of the dragon and his evil host, take place? According to 12:5, it happened when the "Child was snatched up to God and to his throne," that is, at the ascension of Christ. Apparently before Christ's victory and ascension, the devil could at will stand before God and bring accusations against God's saints. ... In both Job (1:6-11; 2:1-5) and Zechariah (3:1-7), Satan stands before God's heavenly presence to accuse two of his saints: Job and Joshua the high priest. ...

This war in heaven in Rev 12:7 is not the original rebellion of the devil against God, which took place before the fall of Adam and the woman (Gen 3:1). The war and expulsion described in Revelation 12 happened as a result of Christ's victory and elevation. ... The conclusion that the expulsion of Satan from heaven here in Revelation 12 is the result of Jesus' ministry of redemption agrees with Jesus' statement at the return of the seventy-two, when he said, "I was watching Satan falling like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18). Jesus also said, "Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out outside, and I, when I am lifted up from the world, will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:31-32).

**Oecumenius:** As though avenging himself on God because of his fall, he harms his servants and deceives people and tempts them to apostatize from God. Since he could not harm God Himself, he thinks that in this way he is harming the Master.

*Date: November 16, 2023*

**12:10** *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.*

**Brighton (p. 337):** The victory was won on the cross (5:6; cf. Jn 12:31-32), and the completeness of that victory is demonstrated by the resurrection of the Christ for all to see and witness (Rev 1:17-18; cf. Acts 2:29-36). Now at the ascension and elevation of the Christ of God, that victory is fully displayed and consummated in the heavens when the dragon is expelled and can never again stand before God’s heavenly glory.

**Luther’s 1535 Lectures on Galatians (LW 27:11):** When, I say, [Satan] comes to you and accuses you not only of failing to do anything good but of transgressing against the Law of God, then you must say: “You are troubling me with the memory of past sins; in addition, you are telling me that I have not done anything good. This does not concern me, For if I either trusted in my performance of good works or lost my trust because I failed to perform them, in either case Christ would be of no avail to me. Therefore whether you base your objections to me on my sins or on my good works, I do not care; for I put both of them out of sight and depend only on the freedom for which Christ has set me free.”

**Romans 8:1, 33-34** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ... Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

**12:11** *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*

**RHBC (p. 152):** This verse is one of the interpretive keys in Revelation, for it describes how people are victorious in the latter days. This victory comes through the blood of the Lamb. The Church’s victory over Satan was achieved through the blood shed by Jesus on the cross. John emphasized this point in his first letter. The blood of Jesus “cleanses us from all sin” (1Jn 1:7). In that same letter he said, “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1Jn 5:4-5)

**Romans 8:37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**Hebrews 11:35-38** Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.

Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

**12:12** *Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!*

**Brighton (p. 338):** The dragon also knows “that he has but a short time” (12:12) to attempt the destruction of God’s creation. The End is soon to come, and then the dragon will be forever separated from all of God’s creation. And so the devil “sets to work at once with redoubled zeal, goaded by his defeat.”

**Date: November 23, 2023**

**12:13** *And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.*

**Oecumenius:** When the dragon saw himself in these bad circumstances and that he had fallen from his angelic rank, he became exceedingly bitter against humankind and persecuted the woman who had given birth to the Savior of humankind, in order that he might kill her. “He pursued the woman,” for he knew that her child was too great to be captured, and he envied people their salvation from the Lord, for he could not tolerate such a change that while he had been expelled from Heaven, people would ascend from earth to Heaven through virtue.

**12:14** *But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.*

**Brighton (p. 339):** “The two wings of the great eagle” (12:14), is reminiscent of the care by which God succored the people of Israel in their wilderness pilgrimage: in Ex 19:4 the Lord God reminds the people of Israel, “I carried you on eagles’ wings, and I brought you to myself” (see also Is 40:31).

**Exodus 19:4** You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

**Deuteronomy 32:10-11** He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions,

**Psalm 91:4** He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

**Isaiah 40:31** They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

**Primasius:** As though they were wings, the Church uses the two Testaments, for taught by them and instructed in their precepts, she strives to avoid the snares of the enemy, and being fashioned to follow their examples, she overcomes. Moreover, [the church] is guided by the twofold love of God and the neighbor. The place of solitude is this place of our earthly sojourn, for “while we are in the body, we are away from the Lord” [2 Cor 5:6]. And this is especially true of the heart that does not go away from the world by way of place but by way of affection, as the prophet says, “Behold, I fled afar off and remained in solitude; I awaited Him who might save me” [Ps 55:7-8]. It is proper that here he used the image of the eagle, for it can fly to greater distances than other birds, yet when it sees its prey from afar, moved by its natural needs, it immediately swoops to low levels. Such is the church also, for although in her spiritual members she seeks and ponders in her mind that which is above, yet burdened by the weakness of the body, she submits to the requirements of bodily needs. Because of this, “she groans in travail until now, for the creation is subjected to futility, not of its own will but on account of Him who subjected her in hope” [Rom 8:20-22]. And again, “For either we are beside ourselves for God, or in our right mind for you” [2 Cor 5:13]. The period of three years and six months signifies that time up to the end of the world during which the Church increases and flees the worship of idols and every error of the serpent.

**12:15** *The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.*

**Brighton (p. 339-340):** The fact that the dragon is referred to as “the serpent” (12:14-15) indicates that in the dragon’s warfare against the woman, the most dangerous onslaught against her will be the temptation to leave the truth of Christ in the quest to become her own god in wisdom and saving care—the same temptation by which the serpent successfully lured Eve and Adam (Gen 3:1-6).

**Brighton (p. 340):** Though God cares for the woman by hindering and restraining the serpent, nevertheless the serpent causes her much anxiety and pain. “The serpent spewed out of his mouth” a raging flood of “water like a river” in order to drown the woman (12:15). In great terror the woman cries out, and God hears her cry and responds by causing the earth to swallow the river.

**Psalms 18:4-5** The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

**Psalms 65:7** Who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples,

**Psalms 93:3-4** The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up

their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!

**Psalm 124:2-5** If it had not been the LORD who was on our side when people rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; then over us would have gone the raging waters.

**Numbers 16:1-3, 28-34** Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” ...

And Moses said, “Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD.” And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up!”

**Jonah 2:3** For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me.

**Matthew 7:24-25** “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

**12:16** *But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.*

**Isaiah 43:1-2** But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and



through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

**Oecumenius:** That the earth swallowed the river signifies that it received the trial into itself, that is, it received the Lord, who had been crucified. But the help that the earth rendered was not simply in this. Rather, its help was in this, that it gave the Lord back again. For on the third day He came to life again, having trampled on death, since it was not strong enough to hold Him who was the Author of life, as the blessed Peter says [Acts 3:15].

*12:17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*

His plans for the Church and Christ thwarted, Satan begins going after individual Christians.

**Date: November 30, 2023**

*13:1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.*

θηριον - This usually refers to a wild animal, especially a dangerous, hostile, or evil animal. **Brighton (p. 343):** Intertestamental writings, influenced by the beasts of Daniel 7, Job 40-41, and other biblical texts use animals to represent evil forces which oppress mankind. 1 Enoch 60:7-8 describes two beasts—one in the sea, named Leviathan, and the other associated with the desert, named Behemoth—which threaten the human race.

ονομα - **Brighton (p. 343):** The majority of manuscripts attest the singular form, which suggests that the same blasphemous name was on all ten heads. The plural implies that each head has a different blasphemous name, hinting that the beast employs a variety of disguises and methods of deceit. The plural is probably the correct reading.

**Brighton (p. 348):** Just as Satan is the “beast” from “the abyss,” that is, hell (11:7), similarly the “beast” here in 13:1, which is under Satan’s control, is from “the sea,” which is a place of chaos and evil on earth. The sea as the origin of this beast points to a sinister origin. ...

In the OT the “sea,” especially in its boiling rage, is frequently portrayed as the place of fearful chaos and destruction caused by mankind’s sin and rebellion against God. As such it is the dwelling place of the sea monsters Leviathan and Rahab, which terrorize the human race.

**Brighton (p. 349):** The first beast has “ten horns and seven heads” (Rev 13:1), exactly like the dragon (12:3). This identifies the beast, and what it represents, as the instrument and agent of the dragon. The beast, like the dragon, also has “diadems” (13:1). However, the diadems—the sign of royal authority and

dominion—are not upon the monster’s heads, as was the case with the dragon, but on its horns. The dragon ... has diadems on his heads, because the dragon is the supreme mastermind of evil who will motivate and inspire the beasts.

This first beast parallels the fourth beast in Daniel 7: “He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

**McGee (p. 997):** The first Beast is a person who heads up the old Roman Empire. Rome simply fell apart, and this is the only one who will ever be able to put it together again.

**13:2** *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.*

**Brighton (p. 352):** The interpretation [of the first beast] includes Rome but also must be broadened: the beast represents and symbolizes every human authority and everything of the human nature that the dragon can corrupt and control and use in his warfare against the woman (the church) and her seed (individual Christians): political, governmental, social, economic, philosophical, and educational systems, as well as individuals.

**13:3** *One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.*

**Brighton (p. 344):** The perfect passive participle of  $\sigma\phi\alpha\zeta\omega$  also described the Lamb “who had been slain” (Rev 5:6, 12) and the slain martyrs, whose souls were under the heavenly altar (6:9). Therefore this verse suggests a resurrection by demonic power in imitation of the Lamb.

**RHBC (p. 158):** Other commentators take a different tack, suggesting that the beast’s mortal wound is an indicator of how oppressive empires, though defeated, still come back to life to war against God’s people. Here they make pointed reference in keeping with the beasts of Daniel. The Babylonians were defeated, only to be replaced by the Persians. They were defeated by Alexander the Great, only to be replaced by Hellenistic rulers who oppressed the Jewish people. These were defeated in the Maccabean revolt, but eventually the Romans came to power. Strike one oppressive empire with a mortal wound and it heals and returns with another oppressive empire.

**Victorinus of Petrovium:** “One of its heads was mortally wounded, but its mortal wound was healed.” He is referring here to Nero. For it is a well-known fact that when the army sent by the Senate was following him, he cut his own throat. And he is the one whom, when he has been brought to life again, God will send as a king worthy of those who are worthy of him, the Jews and those who persecute Christ, and he will send him as a christ such as the persecutors and the Jews

deserve.

**McGee (p. /** This verse, together with 17:8, has led many to the view that Satan actually raises the Beast from the dead. ... Because of these two Scriptures, there are many who have taken the position that the Beast is actually raised from the dead by Satan. This cannot be because Satan does not have power to raise the dead; that power has not been given to him at all. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who can raise the dead. ...

There are others who take the view that the Beast here refers to the Roman Empire and that imperial form of government, under which Rome fell, will be restored in a startling manner. I believe this will happen, but I do not think it is a resurrection, for Rome never died; Rome fell apart. ... The Roman Empire has not truly died; it lives on in the nations of Europe today.

***13:4 And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"***

**Brighton (p. 355):** Worship of Roman emperors had been encouraged ever since the reign of Augustus, but it was not until the latter part of the first century AD that such worship was widespread.

***13:5 And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.***

***13:6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.***

***13:7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,***

***13:8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.***

**Ephesians 1:4-5** He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.

**Romans 8:28-30** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.

***13:9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear:***

***13:10 If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.***

***Various interpretations of the first beast:***

- Preterists think that John writes primarily about the Roman Empire of his day. The blasphemies of the beast are evident in how Domitian styled himself as “lord and God.”
- Historicists think the vision describes civil entities and human governments at later periods of history.
- Dispensationalists think all these matters apply to the seven-year period of tribulation. After the Church has been “raptured” from the earth, a “revived Roman empire” will arise during those years, eventually becoming a worldwide government lead by the Antichrist.
- Idealists see here an image of how Satan will use any human institution to persecute Christians and drive them from their faith.

***Date: December 7, 2023***

***13:11 Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.***

**Brighton (p. 357):** While the beast from the sea, which is outside the usual realm of humanity, represents external oppression that forces its dominating tyrannical rule upon people and thus enslaves them, the beast from the earth and what it represents works from within and among people, springing up from humanity’s own native soil, as it were. The beast from the earth does not force itself upon people but rather insinuates itself into their confidence and then leads them astray.

***13:12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.***

**Brighton (p. 358-359):** The political powers come and go, as signified by the first beast’s head that died and returned to life, giving the impression that at times the political beast is weak or dead. But the second beast continually sanctions the first beast’s hold on the human race by moving all to stand in fear and awe before it.

***13:13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,***

The deceptive miracles of the second beast are imitations of those in the Scriptures, here referencing Elijah calling down fire on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:24-40).

**13:14** and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

**3 John 9** I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.

**13:15** And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

**13:16** Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,

**13:17** so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

**13:18** This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

666 – **Brighton (p 363)**: One proposal by Ireneaeus (Against Heresies 5.29.2) was that 666 was the total of Noah’s age at the time of the flood (six hundred years, Gen 7:6) added to the height (sixty cubits) and breadth (six cubits) of the statue Nebuchadnezzar set up (Dan 3:1).

If the number 666 applied only to the religious beast from the earth, then one digit (one six) would have been enough. But the three sixes (three digits, 666) refer to three entities: the dragon, the political beast, and the religious beast.

#### ***Various Interpretations of the Second Beast***

- Preterists generally see here an image of pagan religion in Rome.
- Historicists generally suggest an image of papal Rome, as its stretching into the civil realm is buttressed by blasphemous doctrines.
- Dispensationalists see the second beast as a second personality that will appear in the seven year tribulation, perhaps as the head of an apostate church.
- Idealists see an image of any false religion Satan uses to attack the Church.

#### ***Antichrist Passages***

John doesn’t mention the Antichrist when speaking about either beast in Revelation 13. In fact, we have to go to John’s epistles in order to hear everything the Bible tells us specifically about the Antichrist:

- **1 John 2:18-19** Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us;

for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

- **1 John 2:22** Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.
- **1 John 4:2-3** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.
- **2 John 7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the Antichrist.

**Date: December 14, 2023**

***14:1 Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.***

**Brighton (p. 368):** In Rev 7:1-8 [the 144,000] represented the church militant, the Christians on earth, who were sealed by God in preparation for the conflict before them. In 14:1 they accompany the Lamb, who, as the Son of Man, is about to execute the judgment of God in the harvest of the earth at the End (14:14-20). ... They are, for the moment, still the church militant on earth (on Mt. Zion), but now their warfare is over and they are about to join the church triumphant in Heaven. The seal of God that the 144,000 bore when in warfare (7:1-3) is now identified as “his [the Lamb’s] name and the name of his Father.’

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Without any doubt whatsoever, the “Lamb” is Christ. He is standing on Mount Zion, not the ancient city, but the new city of the living God. These thousands indicate either the full harvest of the apostolic seed, the grace in each being completed twelve times a thousand, the perfect fruit of the faith of those being saved, or they signify those from the New Testament who are chaste in both the inner and the outer person. For among the ancients the virtue of virginity was rare, found only in a very few, and from this fact one must suppose that these are different from those mentioned earlier who were introduced with the names of the tribes of Israel, to whom he did not attribute virginity. The foreheads of all of these are sealed with the light of the divine countenance, by which they are revealed as holy to the avenging angels.

**Morris (p. 170):** Some takes the words to refer to the earthly Zion in which case we must interpret them of the millennial reign. But this seems unlikely. In the first place, the Lamb would have made the transition from heaven to earth without any comment being made about it. And in the second, John appears to be referring to the final triumph and not an intermediate victory. We should not overlook the fact that the Lamb is standing on the mountain, whereas the beast stood only on sand.

*14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps,*

*14:3 and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.*

**Brighton (p. 369):** “The new song” is most likely identical to the “new song” in 5:9. Thus the song is “new” to the 144,000 (the Christians on earth who will soon be glorified), since it is the song of the new creation in Christ, but it is the same “new song” that has been sung by the saints and angels in Heaven ever since the victory and ascension of the Lamb.

**Revelation 5:9-14** And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

**Psalms 96:1-2** Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

**Psalms 40:1-3** I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

**Bede:** The old song was this: “Blessed is he who has his seed in Zion and his household in Jerusalem” [Isaiah 31:9 LXX]. However, the new song is this: “Rejoice, O barren one, who did not bare,” [Isaiah 54:1] and again, “To eunuchs in my house and within my walls, says the Lord, I shall give a place and a name better than sons and daughters” [Isaiah 56:5]. ... To sing the song to the Lamb is to rejoice with him for eternity before all the faithful, especially from the incorruptibility of the flesh. Nevertheless, the other elect are able to hear the song, although they cannot sing it, because through love they have been made glad in their high status, although they do not rise to their rewards.

**14:4** *It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,*

**1 Samuel 21:5** And David answered the priest, “Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?”

**2 Samuel 11:9-13** But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?” Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.” Then David said to Uriah, “Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

**McGee** points to the exhortations that bring singleness and virginity to the forefront in the last days.

**Jeremiah 16:1-4** The word of the LORD came to me: “You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place. For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning the mothers who bore them and the fathers who fathered them in this land: They shall die of deadly diseases. They shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground. They shall perish by the sword and by famine, and their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth.

**1 Corinthians 7:8-9** To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

**14:5** *and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.*

**Zephaniah 3:12-17** But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to



Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. **Isaiah 53:7-9** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

**Date: December 21, 2023**

***14:6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people.***

**Kretzmann (p. 631):** This passage has been understood by Lutheran commentators, and undoubtedly correctly, to apply to Doctor Martin Luther and the Reformation. For he, as the angel of the Lord, different from the other angels spoken of in the previous chapters, brought back and preached the eternal Gospel of the justification of a poor sinner through the merits of Jesus Christ alone, by faith. In the very midst of the kingdom of Antichrist he preached the Gospel, and with such divine zeal and power that many thousands of captives were filled with joy over the deliverance here proclaimed.

**Brighton (p. 377):** Was John conscious of the fact that the “eagle flying in mid-heaven” in 8:13 and the “angel flying in mid-heaven” here in 14:6 might have reminded some of his hearers of the constellation called Pegasus by the Romans. Roman lore envisioned a future “Great Year” when all the constellations would return to their original positions:

It was the Thunderbird (the Roman winged horse, Pegasus) that stood at the beginning of the equatorial constellational sequence, positioned in mid-heaven at the center of the sky. ... Now should the Thunderbird (Pegasus) take a position in mid-heaven once more, then the stars of the universe would all occupy the positions they once had at the time of creation. Such a restoration marked the “Great Year,” “when all the stars return to the place from which they at first set forth, and, at long intervals, restore the original configuration of the whole heaven.” [Cicero, *The Republic*, 6.24]

**Brighton (p. 381):** The “eternal Gospel” is the eternal message of God—of both judgment and grace—based on the person and saving work of Jesus Christ. And this eternal message has as a reference point ... the second coming of Christ, when he will both judge the unbelievers and deliver his believing followers.

**14:7** *And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”*

### **Fear God**

**Psalm 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

**Deuteronomy 4:9-10** “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children— how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’

**Acts 9:31** So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

### **Give Him Glory**

**John 14:13-14** Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

**John 15:7-8** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

**14:8** *Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”*

**Brighton (p. 383):** Babylon is a symbol of these two enemies in their most deadly form: when the harlot sits on the beast, that is, when the false religious entities, and in particular apostate Christianity, attempt to use or work with the existing political and social powers to destroy the church of Christ.

**Isaiah 14:11-17** Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not

let his prisoners go home?’

**Revelation 12:7-12** Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

**Revelation 18:10-24** They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.” And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!” The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?” And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the

blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”

**Oecumenius:** By “Babylon” he is referring to the confusion and arbitrarily random trials of the present life—for confusion is the meaning of Babylon—and to the manic stupefaction of those who worship idols. And the city is magnified with names, being called by them the “inspired” city. But were you to consider the physical Babylon itself, you would not fall down before the sight before you. By the “wine of the wrath of her fornication” he refers to [the city’s] apostasy from God, as it is written, “You have destroyed every one that goes a whoring from you” [Psalm 73:27]. Such fornication entails a darkness of the mature reason, for who, possessing a sound mind, would choose to worship wood and stones and call forth the wrath of God?

**McGee (p. 1009):** The city of Babylon will evidently be rebuilt during the Great Tribulation Period. If you have my book on Isaiah, you will see that I deal with this probability in chapter 13. I believe that ancient Babylon will be rebuilt, though not at the same location, and that judgment upon it, which is predicted in the Book of Isaiah, is yet to come.

**14:9** *And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,*

**Psalm 74:9 LXX** For there is a cup in the hand of the Lord, full of unmingled wine; and he has turned it from side to side, but its dregs have not been wholly poured out; all the sinners of the earth shall drink them.

**Oecumenius:** It is “poured out unmixed,” that is, utterly poured out. For the wrath of God is poured out along with his benevolence and goodness, wholly poured out. For there is not an equal measure of wrath and goodness, but the benevolence of God is many times greater. Indeed, were the righteous anger and the goodness of God in equal measure, no one would be able to withstand it.

**14:10** *he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.*

**Brighton (p. 383-384):** Eternal suffering is a result of God’s anger, meted out as undiluted wine (14:10), that is, anger that is not tempered with any mercy. At the conclusion of this world’s history, God will show no mercy in his judgment against those who are adherents of the beasts. Wine in its full strength is undiluted with water. Wine was an intoxicant and is often used as a metaphor for the judgment of God. For example, in Jer 25:15-16 the prophet is told to take from Yahweh “this cup of the wine, the wrath” and make the nations drink it so that they are intoxicated and drunkenly stagger about. In Ps 75:7-8, as God judges, he makes the wicked drink the cup of such intoxicating wine, “even its dregs.”

**Bede:** The saints who reign with the Lord are always able to observe the punishment of the wicked., so that they might give the greater thanks to their

Redeemer and sing forever of the mercies of the Lord. For the torments of the wicked that are seen, do not distress those who are in agreement with the just Judge, just as the rest of Lazarus that was seen was able to give no refreshment to the rich man who was buried in the flames [Luke 16:23-24].

**Morris (p. 176):** Christians who suffered for their faith did so in the presence of crowds of onlookers. Ultimately their tormentors will be punished in the presence of the more august spectators ‘in keeping with many other scenes of this book where the deepest sting that bitter conscience is dealt is that I must suffer while utter purity is looking on’ (J.P. Love, *Layman’s Bible Commentaries*).

***14:11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”***

**Andrew of Caesarea:** We must understand this smoke to be either the sighing of those being tormented, which arises from below along with their lamentation, or the smoke that comes from the fire that torments the fallen. It says that it “goes up forever and ever,” and by this we learn that even as the bliss of the righteous is everlasting, so also is the torment of the sinners.

***14:12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.***

**Brighton (p. 384-385):** A godly characteristic of the saints is their patient endurance in their deference to God’s judgment and his timetable of executing it. In Rev 13:9-10, they wait for God to avenge their blood (cf. 6:9-11) and to strike down those who have blasphemed the Gospel and God’s holy name (11:7-13; 13:6; 16:9-21). They do not take into their own hands the execution of this judgment, though they participate in its announcement (Heb 10:30-31; Rev 10:11; cf. Lk 9:51-55). ...

The faithfulness of Jesus is the cause of the believer’s salvation, and “the faith of Jesus” in Rev 14:12 (and in Rom 3:22, 26, which have genitive constructions similar to that in Rev 14:12) refers first of all to his faithfulness, then also to the believers’ faith in Jesus. By faith the saints cling tenaciously to Christ amid temptations and persecutions which pressure them to worship the beast.

**Primasius:** The Lord says, “He who endures to the end will be saved” [Matthew 10:22], and the apostle says, “You have need of endurance” [Hebrews 10:36]. So also in this passage it says that the endurance of the saints consists in this, that those who persevere to the end escape the fellowship of the beast and the mark of its name.

***14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”***

**Kretzmann (p. 633):** Those that die in the Lord are those that remain steadfast in His Word and faith unto the end, whether this end be that of a quiet death or that of martyrdom. With their death they enter immediately into the bliss which is prepared for them; there is no purgatory, no soul-sleep, in the sense of the term as used by modern false teachers: the soul is in the happiness of heaven, and the body will there be reunited with it on the Last Day.

**Bernard of Clairvaux:** Not those alone who die for the Lord, like the martyrs, but without doubt those also who die in the Lord as confessors are blessed. There are two things, as it seems to me, which make death precious, the life which precedes it and the cause for which it is endured. ... By the mercy of God, you are beginning to live again, not to sin, but to righteousness, not to the world, but to Christ, knowing that to live to the world is death, and even to die in Christ is life.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The voice from heaven does not bless all the dead, but only those who die in the Lord., who have died to the world and so carry about the dying of Jesus in the body and suffer with Christ. For these persons the departure from the body is truly a rest from their labor. Moreover, the obedience of their works is the reason for their unfading crowns and the rewards of glory that are the prizes given in great measure to those who prevail in the contests that the contestants of Christ, our God, endure to the end against invisible powers. “For the suffering of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed” to those who please God, as the apostle says [Romans 8:18]. It is necessary also that we who yearn for such glory should pray unceasingly to God, saying, “Incline our hearts, O Lord, to your testimonies, and turn our eyes from every vanity,” and “enter not into judgment with your servants, for no living creature will be righteous before you” [Psalm 143:2]. Rather, visit us with your bountiful mercies, for the might and the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, namely, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**McGee** argues that this verse is not fit for a funeral before the Great Tribulation Period. He argues that this verse, especially since it says “from now on,” limits the blessings of the dead to those who came to faith during the Great Tribulation.

**Date: December 28, 2023**

***14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.***

**Daniel 7:13** “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

**Matthew 24:30** Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

**Matthew 26:64** Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

**Acts 1:9-11** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

**14:15** *And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”*

**Morris (p. 179):** Is ripe points to the drying off of plants when the crop is fully ripe. The time for the intervention of him who bore the sickle is not chosen arbitrarily. HE puts in the sickly at exactly the right moment. Persecuted believers may know that if God’s intervention is delayed this is only because it is not yet the right moment to reap. Reaping is certain as soon as the harvest of the earth is ripe.

**Genesis 15:13-16** Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

**14:16** *So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

**Brighton (p. 390-391):** While at first glance it may seem strange that an angel should give a command to the exalted Lord Christ, “the angel is no more than a messenger” from God the Father. The command to begin the harvest comes from the Father, and the angel is merely relaying the command to the Lord Christ. The harvest and the judgment are executed by the exalted Christ because he won that right by his death and resurrection, but they are done under the authority of God the Father. And the heavenly Father is the one who determines the exact hour or moment that it will be carried out.

**14:17** *Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.*

**Isaiah 63:4-6** For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of

redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

**Caesarius of Arles:** If we must understand the reaper seated on the white cloud to be Christ himself, who is this vintager, unless it is the Selfsame, only in his body which is the church? Perhaps we would not be far wrong were we to understand those three angels who come out to represent the threefold sense of the Scriptures, namely, the historical, the moral and the spiritual senses. The sickle would then be the difference [between them].

**14:18** *And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.”*

**Matthew 3:12** His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**Joel 3:13** Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.

**14:19** *So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The “wine press of God” is the place of torment prepared for the devil and his angels. Because of the multitude of those who are to be punished, it is “great.” For the “way of destruction is wide” and spacious.

**Matthew 7:13** “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.”

**14:20** *And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.*

**Brighton (p. 388):** In the Roman world a σταδιον was a measure of distance equivalent to 625 Roman feet, which is about 607 English feet. The distance of 1600 stadia or furlongs would be around 184 miles.

**Brighton (p. 391-392):** While the grain harvest (14:14-16) symbolizes the ingathering of both the people of God and the wicked, the vintage of the earth (14:17-20) emphasizes the gathering and judgment of the unbelievers, that is, those who worshiped the beast and its image (14:9-11). ...

This second angel, who gives the command to the angel with the sickle, is identified as the angel “from the incense altar,” who has “authority over the fire” (14:18), that is, the fire of the incense altar, the fire that causes the incense to smolder and its sweet smell to rise. This may be the same angel who, in Rev 8:3-



5, stood before the incense altar with a censer of smoldering incense, which represented the prayers of the saints. That angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the incense altar and then poured it out on the earth.

**Brighton (p. 393):** The harvest of the vintage is completed and the judgment carried out when “the winepress was trampled underfoot” (14:20). This judgment and punishment of the worshipers of the beast and its image (14:10) takes place “outside the city.” Most likely the “city” is Jerusalem and thus to be identified symbolically with the “holy city” in 11:2. While the “holy city” was trampled underfoot by the pagan nations, now the pagan nations in turn are “trampled underfoot” in the winepress of God’s fury and judgment (14:20). John would have remembered that it was outside the city (see Heb 13:12) where the judgment of God trampled underfoot (so to speak) his Son, when he suffered the judgment and punishment for the sins of the world. ... Isaiah saw, in a vision of the day of God’s vengeance and redemption, one single person (Is 63:3) whose garments were red from treading alone the winepress of God’s anger (Is 63:1-6).

**Isaiah 63:1-6** Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

**Obadiah 8-16** Will I not on that day, declares the LORD, destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of Mount Esau? And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter. Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; do not gloat over his disaster in the day of his calamity; do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity. Do not stand at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress. For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. For as you

have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been.

**Brighton (p. 394):** In comparison to the 1600 stadia: The distance from Tyre to the Wadi of Egypt is about 1700 furlongs or 200 miles. The distance from “Dan to Beersheba” in the OT is about 1260 furlongs or 145 English miles.

**1 Enoch 100** And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten And brothers one with another shall fall in death Till the streams flow with their blood. For a man shall not withhold his hand from slaying his sons and his sons' sons, And the sinner shall not withhold his hand from his honored brother: From dawn till sunset they shall slay one another. And the horse shall walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners, And the chariot shall be submerged to its height. In those days the angels shall descend into the secret places And gather together into one place all those who brought down sin And the Most High will arise on that day of judgement To execute great judgement amongst sinners. And over all the righteous and holy He will appoint guardians from amongst the holy angels To guard them as the apple of an eye, Until He makes an end of all wickedness and all sin, And though the righteous sleep a long sleep, they have nought to fear. And (then) the children of the earth shall see the wise in security, And shall understand all the words of this book, And recognize that their riches shall not be able to save them In the overthrow of their sins. Woe to you, Sinners, on the day of strong anguish, Ye who afflict the righteous and burn them with fire: Ye shall be requited according to your works. Woe to you, ye obstinate of heart, Who watch in order to devise wickedness: Therefore shall fear come upon you And there shall be none to help you. Woe to you, ye sinners, on account of the words of your mouth, And on account of the deeds of your hands which your godlessness as wrought, In blazing flames burning worse than fire shall ye burn. And now, know ye that from the angels He will inquire as to your deeds in heaven, from the sun and from the moon and from the stars in reference to your sins because upon the earth ye execute judgement on the righteous. And He will summon to testify against you every cloud and mist and dew and rain; for they shall all be withheld because of you from descending upon you, and they shall be mindful of your sins. And now give presents to the rain that it be not withheld from descending upon you, nor yet the dew, when it has received gold and silver from you that it may descend. When the hoar-frost and snow with their chilliness, and all the snowstorms with all their plagues fall upon you, in those days ye shall not be able to stand before them.

*Date: January 4, 2024*

**Brighton (p. 398):** The first five scenes (16:1-11) depict events that take place concurrently: each covers the same time period, from Christ's ascension up to Armageddon. The sixth scene (16:12-16) describes the last battle, here called Armageddon, which takes place just prior to the end of this present world at Christ's return. The seventh scene (16:17-21) envisions the End at the second coming of Christ.

**RHBC (p. 184):** The first cycle of seven, the seals, brought our attention to how the exalted Lamb had placed His seal upon those upon earth, marking them as His own with His protection, and how He takes them to heaven. The second cycle of seven, the trumpets, emphasizes how the Lamb empowers His people in mission in the face of evil. This cycle of seven, the bowls, emphasizes how God Himself brings His final judgments against evil.

These are the "last" plagues. After these bowls have been poured, John states that the wrath of God against evil will be complete. ... The further visions of judgment, upon the prostitute (ch. 17), Babylon (chs. 18-19) and the dragon (ch. 20), should not, then, be understood as judgments subsequent to the plagues, but rather as further elaborations of this final judgment.

*15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.*

**Leviticus 26:24** And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins.

*15:2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.*

**Brighton (p. 397):** The best explanation appears to be that John purposely used unconventional grammar to make the following point. Those who are being conquered by the beast in their earthly and human experience, though trampled and slaughtered, nevertheless are victorious by faith in terms of their spiritual and eschatological existence.

**Primasius:** [He saw] the water of Baptism made holy by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Or, in view of the character of fire, this water has been made red through martyrdom. For this reason we read, "The kiln tests the clay vessels, and the trial of tribulation the righteous" [Sirach 27:5]. "And I saw those standing upon [the sea] who had conquered the beast and his image." The term standing upon indicates that they are immovable in the faith. The psalm describes them in virtually the same way. For after it says, "who made by understanding the heavens," indicating no doubt those who are spiritual and fully enjoy the clear

understanding of the heavenly truth, it adds, “who founded the earth upon the waters,” [Psalm 136:6] namely, those who are immoveable upon their Baptism.

**15:3** *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!”*

**Brighton (p. 397):** Several manuscripts have αἰωνων (“ages”) [instead of nations]. The Vulgate also reflects this reading. Nowhere else in the NT does the title ο βασιλευς των εθνων occur. The title ο βασιλευς αιωνων does occur once elsewhere, in 1 Timothy 1:17. But since Codex Alexandrinus, together with many other manuscripts, supports the reading of εθνων, it is the preferred reading.

**1 Timothy 1:17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Brighton (p. 402):** “The song of Moses,” is also called “the hymn of the Lamb,” a hymn of God’s redemptive care. In contrast with the “new song” in 14:3, which celebrates the final deliverance at the end of this world, this song of Moses and of the Lamb celebrates the deliverance from the enemy in any particular suffering at any time throughout the pilgrimage of the church on earth. It joins the OT church (“the song of Moses”) to the NT church (“the hymn of the Lamb”) in one grand unity. The Lord is always delivering his church in times of turmoil and death so that she can have another day in which to witness.

**15:4** *Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

**Brighton (p. 402):** Here in Rev 15:3-4 it is the “name” of “Yahweh, the [only] God, the Almighty,” that is to be feared and glorified because he alone is holy. In Amos 4:13, as the prophet confesses that it is God alone who has created the mountains and the winds, he proclaims in addition that “Yahweh, God of hosts, is his name,” which the LXX renders as “the Lord God, the Almighty, is his name. His holy name is to be feared and glorified (cf. Jer 10:7) because, as proclaimed in Mal 1:11, “My name will be great among the nations from the rising to the setting of the sun.” God’s name will be recognized as great especially when “everywhere incense and pure offerings will be presented to [his] name” (Mal 1:11) and when all the nations come before Yahweh to worship Him and thus glorify His name.

**Morris (p. 184):** Before leaving this song notice that, though it is sung by the victors, there is no word in it about themselves or the way they overcame. Those who triumph in Christ fix all their attention on Him. ‘Heaven is heaven because in it at last all self, and self-importance, are lost in the presence of the greatness and the glory of God’ (Barclay).

**15:5** *After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened,*

**Brighton (p. 404):** After John had seen the church’s battlefield, “the glassy sea mixed with fire” (15:2), and the saints victoriously singing even as they suffered defeat and death because of the beast, its image (which they would not worship), and the number of its name (which they would not receive), the apostle’s sight is lifted heavenward. He sees “the sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony” ... This was God’s dwelling place, the visible home of God’s presence with His people in their wanderings in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt (Ex 25:8-9; 40:34-38). This tabernacle was sometimes called “the tent of the testimony,” because the ark of the covenant containing the “testimony” of the Law was placed within the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, of the tabernacle (Ex 40:20-21).

**15:6** *and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.*

**Brighton (p. 405):** The “golden cinctures” or belts indicate royalty, either of honor received from the king, or of royal family related to the king. In Rev 1:13 the Son of Man is girded with a “golden sash” or cincture around his chest. Thus the seven angels are clothed in the holiness and righteousness of God and His Christ, with the sign of royalty indicating that they are acting on behalf of God and in particular on behalf of Christ their Lord and King.

**15:7** *And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,*

**Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

**15:8** *and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.*

**Exodus 19:18-20** Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

**Isaiah 6:1-5** In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with

two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

**Exodus 40:34-35** Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

**Bede:** If one interprets the smoke to be the hidden mysteries of the judgments of God, these remain impenetrable and closed to mortal beings until the plagues of the present age are ended and the Lord then shall come, who both illumines what has been hidden in the darkness and makes manifest to what extent the coming of the Antichrist will be useful either for the testing of the faith of the church or just for the blinding of the Jews, who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved.

*Date: January 11, 2024*

***16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”***

**Kretzmann (p. 635):** It is the voice of God which is heard, for it is He that has the avenging plagues in His hand. The seven angels, the seven bowls containing the wrath of the Lord upon the earth, the home of the obstinate and hostile men; for the time of grace had now come to an end for them, and the time of punishment had come.

***16:2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.***

**McGee (p. 1022):** The first bowl of judgment is quite interesting. It looks as though God is engaged in germ warfare upon the followers of the Antichrist. Scripture states that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and also death is in the blood. These putrefying sores are worse than leprosy or cancer. As man discovers a remedy for one disease, another that is more frightful appears. These are judgments of God by which He reveals physically what man is morally—utterly corrupt.

**Exodus 9:8-12 [Sixth Plague]** And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” So they

took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The bowl here, just as the cup, is to be interpreted as a tormenting activity that, when poured out by the angel, produces an evil sore, which here is symbolic of grief that throbs in the heart even as puss oozes from a sore. This grief occurs in the hearts of apostates, for since they are punished by plagues sent from God, they receive no healing from the antichrist whom they have made their god. Perhaps also their bodies are physically wounded as a reproach to their souls, which have been wounded by the arrows of that deceitful rogue, the devil.

***16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.***

**Exodus 7:19-21 [First Plague]** And the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’” Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

**Revelation 8:8-9** The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

**Primasius:** It seems to me that this passage signifies those among the Jews who did not interpret the law spiritually but understood it in a fleshly manner, and therefore they could not discern Christ in it. As the Apostle says, “Had they recognized [him], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” [1 Corinthians 2:8].

***16:4 The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.***

**Revelation 8:10-11** The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became

wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.

**Primasius:** [This bowl] contains all of the other nations who have been so overcome by natural error and enmeshed in impure lusts that they even think of divine things in a carnal manner. And so, by these waters one may understand the teachings of the Gentile nations. Therefore, it says, “They became blood,” just as it says in Genesis, “My spirit shall not abide in these people, for they are flesh” [Genesis 6:3], and also in the book of Wisdom, “stirred up by filthy blood for rebuke” [Wisdom 11:6-7]. In addition, the Apostle says, “To set the mind on the flesh is death” and “the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to God” [Romans 8:6-7].

***16:5 And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.”***

***16:6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!”***

**Isaiah 49:26** I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

Roland Preston and Anthony Hanson equate the third bowl with the atomic bomb in their 1949 commentary in the Torch Bible Commentary: “The comment is not unlike that which many people are making today about the atom bomb: ‘thou hast given blood to drink.’ God has allowed us to discover one of nature’s greatest secrets, and we look like celebrating the event in blood.”

***16:7 And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”***

***16:8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.***

***16:9 They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.***

***16:10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish***

***16:11 and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.***



Date: January 18, 2024

*16:12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.*

**Brighton (p. 417):** When the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, he saw a terrifying host gathered and poised at the River Euphrates. This host was about to be unleashed on the human race, and when let loose, it would kill a third of the human population. ... This evil host is described in such nightmarish terms that it is clearly of demonic origin. Here in 16:12-16 John receives a second view of the last battle, but in greater detail as the imagery is developed further. ... A third and final time John will see a scene of this last battle when, in connection with the final defeat of the devil, he sees the forces of Gog and Magog destroyed.

**Exodus 14:21-31** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

**Joshua 3:9-17** And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God." And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest

in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.” So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

**Isaiah 11:15** And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals.

**Morris (p. 191-192):** The Euphrates was the boundary of the Roman Empire and for John’s readers the land beyond it was a great unknown land. Who could tell what mighty kings lurked there? The Parthians lived in that area and during the first century there was a persistent fear that they would invade the Empire. This was reinforced by the Nero redivivus myth, which affirmed that Nero would put himself at the head of the Parthian hordes and march into the Empire.

John is suggesting that at the End all these fears and more will be realized. We should bear in mind that Nero and his armies in the myth were not going to ally themselves with Rome, but to attack her. So John is thinking of division among the forces of evil, not of a united front. But we would be wrong in holding that he is doing no more than voice a contemporary expectation. By appealing to contemporary fears he is making the point that at the end of time the divided forces of evil will engage in a terrible conflict. Curiously, having told us that the way will be cleared for the mighty potentates to march westward, John does not follow this up. He does not say that the kings used the way prepared for them. In fact he does not mention them again.

**16:13** *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 like frogs.*

“False prophet” = beast from the earth (ch 13) = harlot (ch 17)

**Frogs**

**Brighton (p. 420):** The beast from the earth, now called the false prophet ... represents all false religions and also the corrupted and apostate elements within the Christian church—those that may be called “Christian” but which really are not.

**Exodus 8:3-4 [Second Plague]** The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall

come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.”””

**Leviticus 11:9-11** “These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you. You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses.

**1 Kings 22:19-23** And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ And the LORD said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’ Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.”

**16:14** *For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.*

**1 Timothy 4:1-3** Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

**Matthew 24:23-28** Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

**16:15** (*“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”*)

**Brighton (p. 422):** The fear of suffering in the battle could be a temptation to surrender to the enemy and thus forfeit Christ’s garment and stand “naked” in one’s “shame.” For this reason the Lord urges His church in Laodicea to remain clothed in white garments so that the shame of her nakedness would not appear (3:18).

**16:16** *And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. Armageddon*

**Brighton (p. 416):** The Hebrew *har megiddo* means “mountain of Megiddo,” though most translations transliterate it into English as “Armageddon.” ... Some manuscripts of Revelation, most of the Byzantine family, have Magedwn which would be a reference to the ancient city of Megiddo and not to the mountain of Megiddo. Near this ancient Canaanite city (“by the waters of Megiddo”), Barak and Deborah and the Israelites defeated Sisera and his host (Judg 5:19). Josiah was killed and his army defeated by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (2 Ki 23:29-30; “on the plain of Megiddo,” 2 Chr 35:22-24). ... As an ancient Canaanite city, Megiddo was situated on the north side of the Carmel ridge of hills and was thus strategically situated in a commanding position overlooking the mountain pass between the coastal plain and the Valley of Esdraelon.

**Brighton (p. 423):** As Mounce declares, “It is one of history’s famous battlefields, having witnessed major conflicts all the way ‘from one fought by Tuthmosis III in 1468 BC to that of Lord Allenby of Megiddo in 1917.’”

**Date: January 25, 2024**

**16:17** *The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”*

**Brighton (p. 426-427):** “The air” that is struck is the entire atmosphere that surrounds the earth, including the air that people breathe. This last plague encompasses and impacts the entire earth and all the human race, much more than did the first six. Not only are the earth and the sea and the fresh water supplies and the sun struck, but now the necessary element of human existence is blighted, the air which surrounds people and which they breathe, without which they would quickly die.

The seventh plague proclaims emphatically that the time is up, for the End is here and it is time for the final judgment. The cry from the cross “It is finished” signalled the end of Jesus’ suffering and as a result also signalled the completion of everything necessary for the new beginning of a new life at the resurrection. So here this cry in 16:17 signals the end of the time for repentance and an end of

God's merciful patience.

*16:18 And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.*

*16:19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.*

**Oecumenius:** By islands he speaks of the Gentile churches, as the prophet says, "The Lord has reigned; let the earth be glad, and let the many islands rejoice" [Psalm 97:1]. ... But that he refers to demons when he mentions the "mountains," even the holy psalmist shows, singing, "The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, for He is coming" [Psalm 97:5].

**Primasius:** It is my view that by the terms islands and also mountains the church is signified on account of the greatness of its stability. Isaiah spoke about these: "In [your] teachings give glory to the Lord; in the islands of the sea [give glory] to the name of the Lord, the God of Israel" [Isaiah 24:15], and again: "And in the latter days that mountain of the house of the Lord will be established upon the tops of the mountains" [Micah 4:1].

*16:20 And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found.*

*16:21 And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.*

*Date: February 1, 2024*

**Brighton (p. 434):** This vision of the End does not give another dimension and emphasis, as do the first four scenes of the End. Rather, it is a lengthy vision which summarizes and concludes all that John has seen earlier in the previous four scenes concerning the End. This fifth, lengthy vision of the End draws to a conclusion the entire prophetic message of Revelation. It does this by means of several scenes, each of which depicts a certain aspect of what will take place at the End. Each of these scenes in turn also brings to a conclusion certain other things that John has seen before, not only in the four earlier scenes of the End, but also what he has seen in other parts of the prophetic message.

*17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,*

***17:2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.***”

**Brighton (p. 435-437):** For the first time the enemy of the church is called “the great harlot” (17:1). In 17:7 she is pictured riding on the beast “which has the seven heads and the ten horns.” The beast which bears the woman is clearly the beast from the sea in 13:1, which also has “ten horns and seven heads.” In 13:11-18 at the dragon’s bidding another beast arises which also plagues the church; the beast from the earth which has “two horns resembling a lamb’s, but it was speaking like a dragon” (13:11). ... As the prophetic message of Revelation unfolds, this beast from the earth is later identified as “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). And now here in Revelation 17 that second beast, which bears the number 666, is further identified as “the great harlot” (17:1).

The first beast ... represents everything of the human sphere (society, government, economics) that the dragon uses in his warfare against the church. That so-called “political beast” does not evolve but remains the same. In contrast, the lamb-like beast, which speaks for the dragon represents every spiritual and religious entity that the dragon deceitfully uses against the true church of Christ. This so-called “religious beast” evolves and develops until it finally and especially represents false Christianity and the apostate church. Therefore what this second beast represents changes from all false religions and spirituality in general into the false prophet and harlot, that is, pseudo-Christianity and the false church, the most deadly form of the religious beast.

The use of “harlot” to designate the apostate pseudo-church is reminiscent of God’s complaint that his people Israel had become a harlot because of their idolatry in the worship of false gods (e.g., the entire book of Hosea, especially Hos 4:10-15). ... Unfaithfulness was equated with harlotry and idolatry. Until God’s judgment at the End, the pseudo-church, which appears to be beautiful and attractive (the harlot), will be accepted and honored by the world, for she flatters and encourages the lifestyles of the ungodly.

**Proverbs 9:13-18** The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and knows nothing. She sits at the door of her house; she takes a seat on the highest places of the town, calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” And to him who lacks sense she says, “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

***“sits on many waters”***

**Jeremiah 51:12-13** Set up a standard against the walls of Babylon; make the watch strong; set up watchmen; prepare the ambushes; for the LORD has both planned and done what he spoke concerning the inhabitants of

Babylon. O you who dwell by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come; the thread of your life is cut.

***“the dwellers on earth have become drunk”***

**Jeremiah 51:7-8** Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed.

***17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.***

This is the third of four times John is carried away by the Spirit (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

**Brighton (p. 439):** While the harlot in 17:1 is pictured as sitting “upon many waters,” symbolizing the nations of the earth (17:15), here in 17:3 she is sitting on a beast in “a desert.” In 12:6, 14 the woman, after the birth of her Child, “fled into the wilderness/desert.” There the desert is patterned after the wilderness experience of the Israelites in the exodus and symbolizes the current wilderness-like experience of the woman, that is, the church. For the church, life in this world is a pilgrimage through a desert in which only God can care for and sustain her (12:6, 13-14). ... Is she stationed in the desert because she knows the woman of Revelation 12 (the true church) is also in the desert, that is, on her pilgrimage though this earthly life? Does this harlot also station herself in the desert so that she can pretend that she is the true church and thus by her immoral deceptiveness wean people away from the church of Christ? Where else but in the desert could the harlot be if she wants to offset the church of Christ, which is on a pilgrimage trek in the desert?

***Relationship between harlot and beast***

**Brighton (p. 441):** The fact that here the woman rides the beast suggests that, at the moment, the beast serves the purposes of the harlot. At other times, the relationship is reversed, and the harlot serves the beast. ... At still other times these two minions of the dragon seem to work as equals in tandem (16:13-14). And finally, at times they squabble and fight among themselves, as if the dragon is not always able to keep them in line, working only for him and not for themselves. This becomes evident when, near the End (and possibly at other times as well), the beast turns upon the harlot to destroy her (17:16), most likely as a part of God's judgment on her.

**17:4** *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.*

**Brighton (p. 442):** In her hand the “golden cup full of abominable things, indeed, the unclean things of her immorality” symbolizes all the immoral, evil, and corruptive attitudes, practices, and influences that she proffers to the peoples and their rulers (cf. Jer 51:17). She is quite successful in enticing the rulers and their peoples to drink of her cup, by which they themselves become inebriated in wealth, and in luxurious and sensual and immoral lives (cf. Rev 18:3, 9, 11, 15). All who are under her spiritual influence, a false substitute for Christianity, justify such immorality as godly and righteous.

**Cyprian (The Dress of Virgins 12):** Showy adornments and clothing and the allurements of beauty are not becoming in any except prostitutes and shameless women, and of none, almost, is the dress more costly than those whose modesty is cheap. Thus in holy Scripture, by which the Lord has wished us to be instructed and admonished, a harlot city is described, beautifully attired and adorned, and with her adornments, and rather because of those very adornments, destined to perish.

**17:5** *And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.”*

**17:6** *And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*

**Brighton (p. 444):** She is drunk not from wine, but “from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.” ... The woman is not in an occasional drunken bout; rather, this is a description of a condition in her lifestyle that is constantly occurring. Her steady diet is the blood of God’s people.

**RHBC (p. 201):** These words may have reminded John’s readers of the bloody deaths in the arena of the faithful martyrs of Christ by Nero. Such spectacles, along with gladiator contests and wild beast hunts, made many of these shows bloody, but they were wildly popular among the general populace. Here the picture focuses upon the thirst for the blood of Christ’s people and reinforces the full measure of Babylon’s perversity and her bloodthirsty zeal for persecution.

**Date: February 8, 2024**

**17:6b** *When I saw her, I marveled greatly.*

**17:7** *But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.*



**17:8** *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*

**Brighton (p. 445-446):** As John now looks at the beast, the angel further describes it as the beast that “was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss, and it goes away into destruction.” The first time that John saw this beast, one of its heads was mortally wounded, but then the head was healed. The ability of the beast, either partially with one of its heads or in its whole being, to be resuscitated or even resurrected time and time again moved the inhabitants of the earth to marvel and be awestruck. The beast and what it represents come and go in one form or another throughout the entire period from Christ’s ascension up to the End at Christ’s return. The beast disappears in one particular makeup or disguise ... and then rises up in another form and entity to plague the church of Christ. Human institution of every kind, and “-isms” of all sorts, come and go. As symbolized by the beast they last for a while as terrifying threats to the saints of God, but then they disappear, only to be replaced by other entities under the control of the dragon.

**17:9** *This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;*

**Brighton (p. 447):** John and all readers of Revelation during the first and second centuries certainly would know that the “seven hills” pointed to the city of Rome. For Rome was known as the city of seven hills, as many of her authors and poets proudly declare.

**17:10** *they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.*

**17:11** *As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.*

**Brighton (p. 449):** Attempting to match a list of seven kings (from the Roman Empire or from world empires) with the seven kings in 17:9-10 does not yield a satisfactory result. One must seek elsewhere for a solution to the mystery of the seven kings and the beast itself as the eighth. The most that can be said for the above schemes is that, even if one could satisfactorily make such matching identifications, they would only serve as models or types of all such earthly rulers and the powers they exercise.

**17:12** *And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.*

**Brighton (p. 451):** Because they do not claim spiritual and divine sanction for

their ruling power and authority, these “ten kings” most likely are not Roman emperors. They could be lesser kings or rulers dependent on Roman sponsorship for their governing positions—for example, the Herodian kings of Palestine or the rulers of Egypt.

These ten kings “did not yet receive a kingdom,” for they do not possess their own authority and power to rule. However, the implication is that at any time in the future these ten kings may become independent of Rome and thus acquire their own kingship.

***17:13 These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.***

***17:14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”***

**Brighton (p. 453):** The Lamb here in 17:14 is identified as “the Lord of lord and the King of kings,” which is the designation the Son of Man will use when he comes in judgment at the End (19:11-16). Because of this identification, the victory of the Lamb over the beast and its kings could be viewed as taking place at the End.

**1 Timothy 6:13-16** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

**Date: February 15, 2024**

***17:15 And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.***

***17:16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire,***

**Brighton (p. 454):** It is a telltale sign of her coming final judgment when the beast and the ten horns begin to “hate the harlot” and turn on her. It is interesting that the beast turns to hate the woman with its ten horns and not its seven heads. Historically, Rome was finally brought down not so much by her own emperors but rather by kings and ruling powers of her client states and from neighboring states with whom she flirted but whom she could never completely bring under

her sway.

**Morris (p. 206):** It is easy to think of the forces of evil as one united phalanx. But there is no cohesion in evil; it is always self-destructive. Wicked men are not just one happy band of brothers. Being wicked, they act in jealousy and hatred. At the climax their mutual hatreds will result in mutual destruction.

*17:17 for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.*

*17:18 And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”*

*Date: February 22, 2024*

*18:1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory.*

**Exodus 34:29-35** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

*Could this angel also be the mighty angel of Revelation 10?*

**Brighton (p. 463, fn 18):** The possibility that they may be the same angel is also supported by comparing the angel in 10:1 and 18:1 to the angel of Jesus Christ mentioned in 1:1 and 22:16 and to the angel of God mentioned in 22:6. Those passages refer to a single angel, the angel of God the Father and of God the Son. That divine angel is the agent through whom Revelation was given, according to 1:1; 22:6, 16. That divine angel could be the same one described in 10:1; 18:1 (and also in 18:21; 19:17). That identification is supported by the revelatory role of the angel in 10:1; 18:1, 21; 19:17 and by his majestic, divine appearance.

**18:2** *And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.*

**Brighton (p. 464-465):** The angel in 18:2 heralds the fall of Babylon. Similar was the prophetic announcement of the fall of ancient Babylon by the prophet Isaiah (21:6-9). In that prophetic announcement the same words appear as here in Rev 18:2: “She has fallen; Babylon has fallen.” Isaiah’s prophecy about Babylon’s fall (cf. Is 47:1-15; Jer 50-51) did not come to pass until long after the prophet’s death.

**Isaiah 21:6-9** For thus the Lord said to me: “Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees. When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on donkeys, riders on camels, let him listen diligently, very diligently.” Then he who saw cried out: “Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights. And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!” And he answered, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground.”

**Isaiah 13:19-22** And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

**Jeremiah 50:39-40** “Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations. As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her.

In John’s era, Rome represented “Babylon,” and the Roman Empire finally crumbled away under pressure from various barbarian hordes in the fifth century AD. Therefore, John would not live to see his prophecy fulfilled even in the form of Rome’s fall, but it would surely come to pass.

**Brighton (p. 465):** The description of Babylon becoming “a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit” is to be interpreted metaphorically and/or literally as well. ... Demons and unclean spirits could here be more than merely the memories that haunt the empty shell of Babylon. They could be the actual demons of Hell itself which—under the guidance of the dragon, the chief of demons—have been all along the companions of the harlot as they inspired her to carry out her anti-Christian activities. Now at her demise, having used her for

their own devilish purposes, all that is left of the once proud city are the demons hovering over the corpse.

**Baruch 4:30-35** Take a good heart, O Jerusalem: for he that gave thee that name will comfort thee. Miserable are they that afflicted thee, and rejoiced at thy fall. Miserable are the cities which thy children served: miserable is she that received thy sons. For as she rejoiced at thy ruin, and was glad of thy fall: so shall she be grieved for her own desolation. For I will take away the rejoicing of her great multitude, and her pride shall be turned into mourning. For fire shall come upon her from the Everlasting, long to endure; and she shall be inhabited of devils for a great time.

**Caesarius of Arles:** Whenever you hear the name Babylon, do not think of it as a city made of stones, for “Babylon” means “confusion.” Rather, understand that the name signifies those people who are arrogant, robbers, dissolute and impious, and who persevere in their wickednesses. ... Whenever you hear the name Jerusalem, which refers to the vision of peace, understand that it refers to persons who are holy before God.

***18:3 For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”***

**Primasius:** This passage refers to three kinds of sins, and it also mentions the same number of those persons who transgress by them. It refers to avarice, which according to the apostle is also called a “servitude of idols”; licentiousness by the word fornication; and gluttony in that which pleases. Against this the Lord forewarned, saying, “Do not allow your hearts to be weighed down in dissipation and drunkenness” [Luke 21:34]. It says that the kings of the earth have committed fornication with it. For merchants are enriched, as it says, by avarice, although some [interpreters] prefer to interpret this to mean that they are rich in sins rather than in wealth. By nations it designates that promiscuous multitude of the lewd crowd; by kings it refers to those among them who appear for a time to succeed; and by merchants it refers to those who in their desire for earthly riches trade their souls by an unhappy barter for temporal abundance. Such persons act wholly contrary to the words of the Lord: “What shall a man give in return for his life?” [Matthew 16:26]

**Date: February 29, 2024**

***18:4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;***

**Brighton (p. 466-467):** The voice urges God’s people to “come out from” the midst of Babylon lest they perish with her in her sins (18:4). Similarly, both Isaiah and Jeremiah called upon God’s people to come out from ancient Babylon so that

they would escape her destruction (Is 48:20; Jer 50:8; 51:6, 45). In Num 16:25-27 Moses warns the people to move away from the tents of the wicked men, Dathan and Abiram, lest they be swept away with them in their sins. Jesus, just before his own death on the cross, warned His followers that when they saw “the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not be,” they should flee and not look back or go back to rescue anything (Mk 13:14-16; cf. Mt 24:15-18; Lk 21:20-21). And Paul warns Christians not to be in fellowship with unbelievers in their pagan idolatry and manner of living, and then he cites Is 52:11 in urging his readers “to come out from their midst” (2 Cor 6:14-17; cf. Eph 5:6-11). At all times God’s people are to come out of any association or fellowship which denies the truth of Jesus Christ. The pending judgments of God are near. In view of the present world’s end, when the harlot will be made desolate, God’s people are to flee without delay from the terrifying destruction that is to be her end.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18** Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

**Oecumenius** refers to Genesis 9:12-22: And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.

**Caesarius of Arles** refers to Isaiah 52:11: Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

**18:5** *for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.*

**Genesis 18:20-21** Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”

**Jeremiah 51:9** We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her, and let us go each to his own country, for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies.

**Ezra 9:5-6** And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, saying: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.” (Finally, we have referenced every other Bible book!)

**18:6** *Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.*

**18:7** *As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’*

**18:8** *For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.”*

**Primasius:** All of these future events are appropriate for the second advent, when upon the inquiry of the final judgment the society of the impious will be excluded and will suffer its just reward, so that those who sinned in time might be punished in perpetuity. This is what is meant when it says, “Repay her double” and “a double draught is mixed for her,” that whoever took pleasure in transient delights might suffer eternal torments.

**Date: March 7, 2024**

**NOTE:** Revelation 18:9-19 parallels Ezekiel 27:1-36, which speaks of the fall of Tyre.

**18:9** *And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.*

**18:10** *They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”*

**Brighton (p. 471):** These kings are most likely not those who turned on the city to destroy her, but rather are those who lived and ruled under her license and prospered and felt secure under her spiritual patronage. Now, as they stand on the sidelines far enough away so as not to be sucked into her torment and fiery ordeal, they perceive that their security and well-being and future may also go up in the smoke of the harlot's torture.

**Brighton (p. 459):** ὥρα can refer to any short interval of time such as a “moment,” an “hour,” or a “short, indefinite period of time.” To understand the word here as a “moment” heightens the suddenness of the judgment that falls upon the harlot Babylon (see Mark 13:32-37; cf. Jer 51:8; Mal 3:1).

*18:11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore,*

*18:12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble,*

*18:13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.*

#### *Slavery in the ancient world*

**Brighton (p. 472-473):** Noteworthy in the list are the last two items in 18:13, “slaves, and the souls of men.” The first item is σωματα, literally “bodies,” a word that occasionally denoted “slaves,” especially when used as an item of trade and merchandise. “It is estimated that there were as many as 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire” [Mounce]. In the city of Rome itself in the first century before Christ, there were an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 slaves, a third of the city's population. So prevalent was slavery that “the social structure and whole economy of the Roman Empire were dependent upon the pool of slave labor, skilled and unskilled.” Slavery was not based on race, for slaves often came from the same ethnic groups (including Greeks and Romans) as their owners. Slaves were taken from areas conquered by Rome and included large numbers of Greeks as well as barbarians (from Europe and regions to the east). Besides military conquest, another major source of slavery was piracy, especially in the Hellenistic era. Pirates often attacked whole towns, particularly in the Greek homeland, kidnapping the people and selling them into slavery. Slave traders regarded their human cargo just like any other merchandise to be sold to the highest bidder. In the Greco-Roman world, slavery itself was accepted, but even so trading in slaves generally was regarded with contempt and disgust because of the deceit, fraud, and appallingly inhumane practices that were routine in that industry. ... If “souls of men” (ψυχας ανθρωπων) is taken in apposition to “bodies”



(σωματων), then both together would mean, “slaves, that is, souls of men.” This understanding of the two phrases would emphasize the evil of the slave trade in that it expresses the thoughts that slaves, body and soul, belonged to the master as property. Human slaves were thus considered no different than any other merchandise commodity of value. ...

In 1 Chronicles 5:21, “souls of people” refers not to slaves but to captives taken in warfare. Such captives, ordinary citizens taken from a conquered land, were common sold as slaves. ... Human beings on the auction block who were already slaves were one item of merchandise, but captives were another kind of goods to be sold. Slaves who had been slaves and were sold as such often demanded a greater price. Captives that were sold were considered less valuable (with exceptions, such as educated people) and were sold like so much livestock, like animals.

***18:14 “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!”***

***18:15 The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,***

***18:16 “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!”***

***18:17 For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”***

**Date: March 14, 2024**

***18:17b And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off***

***18:18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?”***

***18:19 And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.***

**Walther, *Law & Gospel*, Thesis XXI (Lecture 34):** If I no longer believe and have fallen from the faith, I need to build a new ship for myself. That is contrition and repentance. But, according to Scripture, we say, “Your Baptism stands fast! God never takes away the Word He has given.” If I fall into mortal sin after my Baptism, my Baptism does not help me one bit. But once I am back in my right mind, I can say, “I am not lost. I am baptized. God baptized me and said, ‘I want

you to be My child.’ And God never takes back this Word.” So, if I cling to my Baptism, that is, to God’s promise, then I will regain all the benefits of my Baptism.

**FN 67:** When Walther says, “I need to build a new ship for myself,” he paraphrases Ezekiel 27:9 from the pre-1912 Luther Bible. This is the lamentation over Tyre, which has parallels with the lament over Babylon in Revelation 18:11-19. A related verse is Genesis 6:14, where God comes to Noah, who responds to the divine proclamation of the flood by building the ark. Walther is saying that, just as God destroys Tyre and Babylon despite their wealth and power, so God will destroy the faithless, erstwhile Christian, regardless of Baptism. Walther builds on Luther in LC IV 80-82. Luther criticizes Jerome’s speaking of repentance as the “second plank” or ship, together with Baptism. Luther sees Baptism as the only ship, while repentance is the act of holding on to that same ship of Baptism after a Christian has fallen overboard into sin. Walther takes Jerome’s statement and gives it Luther’s meaning. Walther is not saying that one must build his own ship and sail to Heaven under his own steam.

**Ezekiel 27:9** The elders of Gebal and her skilled men were in you, caulking your seams; all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in you to barter for your wares.

**LC IV 80-82** Besides this, you will also have the devil about you, whom you will not entirely tread under foot, because our Lord Christ Himself could not entirely avoid him. Now, what is the devil?

Nothing else than what the Scriptures call him, a liar and murderer. A liar, to lead the heart astray from the Word of God, and to blind it, that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. A murderer, who cannot bear to see you live one single hour. If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as possible. But there is no reason why we walk so securely and heedlessly, except that we neither think nor believe that we are in the flesh, and in this wicked world or in the kingdom of the devil.

**18:20** *Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!”*

**Brighton (p. 476):** “Rejoice in celebration” not only means “be happy, rejoice,” but “be joyful by having a celebration.” This call prepares for the wedding feast in 19:6-9. In contrast to the mournful dirge of the kings and merchants and mariners (18:9-19), heaven and its people break out in celebration.

**18:21** *Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the*

*sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;*

**Luke 17:1-4** And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

*18:22 and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more,*

*18:23 and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.*

*18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”*

**Caesarius of Arles:** “The blood of the prophets and saints was found in her and of all who have been slain by [her] upon the earth.” Did the same city kill the apostles that also killed the prophets and all of the rest of the martyrs? Rather, this is the city of all the proud and arrogant, which Cain established by the blood of his brother and which he named after the name of his son, Enoch, that is, after his posterity.

**He continues on ...**

**Genesis 4:17** Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch.

When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.

**Habakkuk 2:12** “Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!

**Matthew 23:34-35** Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Date: March 21, 2024

**19:1** *After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,*

This is the only NT chapter which has the word “Hallelujah.” Outside of Revelation, “Hallelujah” is only in the Psalms (104-106, 111-113, 115-117, 135, 146-150).

**Dr. Brighton** calls this chapter the Hallelujah Chorus of the great Te Deum that began in 4:8.

**19:2** *for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”*

**J.P. Love (1960 Layman’s Bible Commentary):** We like to think of a Hallelujah Chorus in the style of Handel, where the Hallelujah is the triumphant worship of the reigning Lord. And John comes eventually to such a chorus. But he is realistic enough to know that first there must be the equally triumphant rejoicing over the downfall of evil at the hand of God.

**19:3** *Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”*

**19:4** *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”*

**Psalm 106:48** Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD!

**19:5** *And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”*

Date: March 28, 2024

**19:6** *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.*

**Brighton (p. 492-493):** God never lost His kingdom, for He is the eternal King (1 Tim 1:17), and He has always ruled everything through power and judgment. But His gracious reign over the human race was interrupted by humanity’s sin of rebellion, beginning with Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-24). In that sin humanity lost paradise. But God would win back mankind and again exercise His reign of grace and love, and thus (so to speak) take back His kingdom. ...

But at this world’s end, when the Lord Christ at His second coming displays His

exalted lordship over the entire human race for all to see and acknowledge (Mt 24:29-31; 26:64; cf. Phil 2:6-11), God will claim His rule over all people in full view of every human eye. In particular, He will openly enter His eternal reign over His saints (see e.g., 1 Cor 15:20-28).

**1 Corinthians 15:20-28** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

**Philippians 2:5-11** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*19:7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;*

*Vow renewal*

**Brighton (p. 494-495):** The immediate cause for the rejoicing and celebration is the “marriage of the Lamb” (19:7). But because this marriage of the Lamb with His Bride is the occasion by which Yahweh, the Almighty God, openly enters His reign and receives His kingdom, the real and actual purpose of the rejoicing and celebrating is to “give the glory to Him” (19:7). The marriage of the Lamb causes and motivates the celebration, but its purpose and end result is to glorify Yahweh, God Almighty.

The OT usually pictures Israel as Yahweh’s wife and implies that the original marriage already took place at the exodus (e.g., Hos 2:14-16, which envisions a remarriage like the first one; cf. Ezek 16:8). ... the

NT pictures the relationship as an engagement, with the wedding still in the future.

**Ezekiel 16:8** “When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine.

**Hosea 3:1-3** And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.”

### ***Betrothal***

**Brighton (p. 496):** Betrothal was taken very seriously; it was tantamount to marriage, but the betrothed couple did not come together and live as husband and wife until the wedding and its feast. The wedding ceremony and the marriage feast usually took place at the house of the bridegroom (see, e.g., Gen 29:21-22). The wedding feast could last for a week (Judg 14:12) or even two weeks (Tobit 8:19-20). Often the groom would pay the betrothal price to the bride’s father (Gen 34:12; Ex 22:16; 1 Sam 18:24-27; 2 Sam 3:14; cf. Ruth 4:10). ...

“I will betroth you to Myself in righteousness and in justice and in mercy and in compassion; and I will betroth you to Myself in faithfulness” (Hos 2:19-20). How poignantly this was carried out in the life and crucifixion and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! For this was the betrothal price that God paid in order to purchase His people as His bride. ...

Thus the bridegroom has purchased his betrothed and made her to be his promised wife. That promise will be fulfilled when Christ returns for his bride at the End. But now John hears that “the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has prepared herself” and is now ready for her husband, the Lord Christ, to claim her and receive her (Rev 19:7).

**McGee (p. 1047):** “The marriage of the Lamb is come.” Marriage is a marvelous picture of the joining together of Christ and the church. Notice that the Old Testament saints are not included--only the believers during the church age are included. Even John the Baptist designated himself as only a friend of the Bridegroom. He said, “He that has the bride is the bridegroom” (John 3:29). The bride occupies a unique relationship with Christ. You see, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

**19:8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**

**Brighton (p. 497):** “The righteous deeds of the saints” (Rev 19:8) are “the saintly acts of the members of Christ, wrought in them by the Holy Spirit” [quoting Swete]. ... And it is these works of Christ’s love that God will use in the judgment at the End as evidence to demonstrate that they are His faithful people (Matt 25:31-40).

**Matthew 25:31-46** “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**Bede:** The marriage supper of the Lamb occurs when the church will be united with her Lord in the wedding chamber of the heavenly kingdom. “And his bride has made herself ready.” By always persisting in the works of righteousness, [the church] has shown herself worthy of the spiritual banquet and the eternal kingdom. One can also interpret this according to the parable of the Gospel, which speaks of the virgins who, when the bridegroom was coming, rose up to prepare their lamps, that is, among themselves to consider their deeds for which they hope to receive eternal blessedness. ... It was granted to [the church] to be clothed with her own deeds. But it is not so with the wicked who, according to Isaiah, “weave a spider’s web and will not be covered by their works, for their works are without

benefit” [59:5-6].

**19:9** *And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”*

**Matthew 22:1-14** And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

**Isaiah 25:6-8** On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

**Revelation 3:21** The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

**Brighton (p. 500):** In Jewish theology (as reflected in pseudepigrapha) the thought and picture of a holy meal prepared by God for His people was also present, most likely drawn from references such as Is 25:6-8 and Is 55:1-2. For example, in 4 Ezra 2:38-40 at a heavenly feast prepared by God for His people, the invited guests are said to have been sealed for this honor and to have received “glorious garments” from God, and thus they are “clothed in white.” 3 Enoch 48:10 says that when Israel is saved, the Messiah will appear and God’s people, of both Israel and the Gentiles, will share in a banquet.

**Apringius of Beja:** Who are those who have been invited to the feast of the Lamb, unless those to whom it is said: “I will not drink from this fruit of the vine until I will drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father who is in Heaven”



[Matthew 26:29]. And again, “Many will come from east and west and will recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven” [Matthew 8:11]. This is to drink the new cup, to prepare the new bodies of those being raised, to keep a new joy, and to repay the sincere righteousness of a true faith. These are the blessed who are prepared for this feast and for this repast.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The marriage supper of Christ is the feast of those who are being saved and the joy that accompanies it. The blessed will come into these things when they enter into the eternal bridal chamber with the holy Bridegroom of their purified souls. For he who has promised this is faithful. Since there are many blessings in the coming age, which surpass every understanding, the participation in them is indicated through various terms. Sometimes they are called the “kingdom of Heaven” on account of their glory and honor; sometimes they are called “paradise” on account of the everlasting banquet of good things; sometimes they are called the “bosom of Abraham” on account of the rest of those who repose there, or the “bridechamber” and “marriage” because of the endless joy and the perfect and inexpressible union of God with his servants. This union surpasses every carnal and bodily union as much as light is separated from darkness or a perfume from a foul odor.

**19:10** *Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

**Brighton (p. 501):** No matter how much one is overwhelmed by the Word of God spoken by a prophet or an angel (or a pastor or an evangelist), because of the awe that that Word evokes and out of respect for the holiness of the event, one is never to worship the messenger, but only God Himself, who sent the messenger.

**Revelation 22:8-9** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things.

And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

**RHBC (p. 225):** John, who reclined on the breast of the Lord, fell at the feet of the angel and was about to worship him out of a carnal sense of devotion. ... Yet in Rev 22:8 he suffered a relapse and again tried to worship an angel. For, he thought, can this be a sin, since they are such glorious spirits and ministers to us in such a remarkable way? Thus again he tried to worship the angel. But again the angel replied, “You must not do that. ... Worship God.” HE was in this way a truly good angel. [Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*]

**Morris (p. 220):** The angel links himself with John by calling himself a fellow-servant with you. They are not unimportant differences between angels and men, but the really significant thing is that they are both “servants” of their common Lord. The angel further belongs to those who hold to the testimony of Jesus,

explained as the spirit of prophecy.

*Date: April 4, 2024*

*19:11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*

**Brighton (p. 507):** This is the second time in Revelation that the second coming of the Lord Christ is portrayed. In the vision of the harvest of the earth at the End in 14:14-20, the first view of His second coming, the Son of Man was pictured as the Lord of the harvest. Here in 19:11-16 He is described as the mighty warrior, the Lord of hosts, who comes at the End to execute the judgment of God and to carry out the sentence of that judgment (19:17-21).

**Isaiah 40:10** Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

**Isaiah 53:12** Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

**Isaiah 62:11** Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.”

*19:12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.*

**Eyes**

**Hebrews 4:13** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**Bede:** Sometimes he speaks of the commandments as the “eyes of the Lord,” sometimes he is speaking of the Spirit. Of the commandments, he says, “Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet” [Psalm 119:105], and of the Spirit, he says, “I came to cast fire upon the earth” [Luke 12:49].

**Brighton (p. 509):** Here in the second vision of His return at the End, the Son of Man now wears “many diadems” (19:12) because He comes as the absolute Ruler and Lord to execute God’s judgment as His mighty warrior.

**Name Written that No One Knows**

**Andrew of Caesarea:** That his name is unknown signifies the incomprehensibility of his essence. By virtue of his works he is known by many names, such as Good, Shepherd, Sun, Light, Life, Righteousness, Holiness, Redemption. Similarly, he is called by terms of negation, such as Incorruptible, Invisible, Immortal, Unchangeable. However, according to his essence he is without name and is unapproachable, being known by himself alone with the Father and the Spirit.

**Genesis 32:22-32** The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.

**Revelation 2:17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

**Exodus 6:2-3** God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

**Mark 4:11-12** And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."

**19:13** *He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.*

**Isaiah 63:1-6** Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them

drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

**Brighton (p. 506):** The LXX uses βαπτω in sacrificial contexts for the dipping of hyssop or the priest’s finger into the blood of the sacrificed animal.

**Exodus 12:22** Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

***Word of God***

**Wisdom 18:15-16** Thine Almighty word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, And brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth.

***19:14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.***

**Oecumenius:** [Christ] is the commander-in-chief of the heavenly powers. The Lord in fact called himself that when bearing the name of Jesus, son of Nun, he said, “I, as commander of the army of the Lord have now come” [Joshua 5:14]. The horses that belong to the holy angels are also white, for the angels too rejoice over the pure deeds of humankind, since they are pure by nature and free from every stain. This is symbolized by their raiment of fine linen, which is pure and white.

**Primasius:** In heaven the churches, as though “with unveiled face beholding the glory of God” [2 Corinthians 3:18], all being pure in heart and made whiter than snow by grace, are said to follow Christ. ... They always go forward on white horses, that is, with pure bodies and minds, following the footsteps of Christ, who is going before and to whom it is said in the Song of Songs, “We run after you for the aroma of your ointments” [1:4].

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***19:15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.***

***Sharp Sword***

**Isaiah 11:1-5** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge

the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

**Isaiah 49:2** He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

**Oecumenius:** The vision places [the sword] in the mouth. In this way it is indicated that all things have their existence by the Word of God and that whoever in any way disobeys him will not remain unpunished. ... For certainly punishment awaits those whom the Word does not reform. To indicate that the rod of iron is that of severity and punishment, the prophet suggests the rule of the Romans about which Daniel spoke in saying, “Arise, devour much flesh” [7:5], when he spoke to God, saying, “You will rule them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel” [Psalm 2:9].

**Brighton (p. 516):** “He Himself treads the winepress of the wine of the fury of the wrath of God, the Almighty.” As 19:13 described, His garment is “dipped in blood,” the blood that He Himself shed because He bore transgressions and God’s judgment in the stead of sinful humanity. ... “Any view of God which eliminates judgment and His hatred of sin in the interest of an emasculated doctrine of sentimental affection finds no support in the strong and virile realism of the Apocalypse” [Mounce].

**19:16** *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

**Brighton (p. 517):** Though covered in blood, His “garment” also bears a written name which is above every other name. The name was also written on “His thigh” (19:16). Usually the name (in a spiritual sense) is on the forehead for identification purposes (cf. 14:1 and 22:4). But here on the Son of Man the name is on “His thigh.” Whether the name is written once, on that part of the garment which covers the thigh, or twice, on the garment and also underneath on his thigh itself, John pointedly records that it was on “His thigh.”

In Gen 32:25 Jacob’s “thigh” was touched by God when Jacob wrestled with him. The Israelites abstained from eating the muscle of the thigh (Gen 32:32) out of respect, because it was a sign of what had happened between God and Jacob when his name was changed to Israel. The name “Israel” was a reminder that, while Jacob fought with God (in the form of an ordinary man; cf. Is 53:1-3) and conquered Him (Gen 32:28) and was thus blessed by God (Gen 32:29), God touched Israel’s thigh so that he limped (Gen 32:31).

**Deuteronomy 10:17** For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and

takes no bribe.

**Psalms 136:1-3** Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;

**Daniel 2:47** The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”

**1 Timothy 6:13-16** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

**1 Enoch 9:4-5** And they said to the Lord of the potentates, “For He is the Lord of lords and God of gods, and the King of Kings, and the seat of His glory stands throughout all the generations of the world. Your name is holy, and blessed, and glorious throughout the whole world. You have made everything and with You is the authority for everything. Everything is naked and open before Your sight, and You see everything; and there is nothing which can hide itself from You.”

**Oecumenius:** The robe symbolizes the flesh of the Lord, which was endowed with a rational soul. The holy angels spoke of his flesh through Isaiah, “Why are your garments red and your apparel as if from a trodden winepress, utterly stained by trodden [grapes]?” [63:2] Moreover, the thigh indicates his birth in the flesh, for it is written in Genesis, “All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his thighs” [46:26]. Therefore, when the vision shows that on the robe and on the thigh it is written that the Immanuel is king of all, it shows that the Word, united personally to the flesh and having undergone a fleshly birth from a virgin, was in no way established less a King and Lord of all things in heaven and upon earth; nor was he diminished in rank by virtue of his incarnation. For even as such he was God and is and shall be God.

**Primasius:** [The name is inscribed] on his robe, that is, on the church with which Christ is clothed and which, according to the apostle, “he cleansed by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself a church glorious, without spot or wrinkle” [Ephesians 5:26-27]. He cleansed the robe that it might have no spot, and he stretched it that it might have no wrinkle. The thigh symbolizes the posterity of his offspring, by which all nations will be blessed, according to the apostle who teaches, “It does not say, ‘and to offsprings,’

referring to many, but referring to one, ‘and to your offspring,’ which is Christ” [Galatians 3:16]. As though to a dead-brother, according to ancient custom, the same apostle raises offspring spiritually, saying, “Lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name” [1 Corinthians 1:15], since he says that from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum he has done all things for the gospel, so that he might truthfully say to the Gentiles, “I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel” [1 Corinthians 4:15]. Therefore, on this thigh, as though on children, the knowledge of Christ is written “not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” [2 Corinthians 3:3], which confesses him to be the King of kings and the Lord of all lords.

**19:17** *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God,*

**Brighton (p. 519):** Just as before the destruction of Jericho “the commander of Yahweh’s army” (Josh 5:14) met Joshua to encourage him to know that the hosts of Jericho would be destroyed, so now John is comforted by the Son of Man in the knowledge that the hosts of the enemies of God’s people would be overcome and victory would belong to the Christ and His church.

**Joshua 5:13-15** When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” And the commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

***Standing in the sun***

**Apringius of Beja:** He saw an angel standing upon the sun. The sun upon which this angel is standing is the Faith of the catholic church. Concerning this angel also Daniel spoke as follows, “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who stands before the sons of your people” [12:1]. For just as then this holy archangel stood in the sight of God on behalf of the sons of the ancient people, so now he unceasingly intervenes for the people of the whole catholic church. “And there shall be a time, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” [Daniel 12:1]. In the Revelation the holy John says that in that time the birds of the earth shall gather to consume the bodies of the impious.

***Flying directly overhead***

**Revelation 8:13** Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about

to blow!”

**Revelation 14:6-7** Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

### ***Great Feast of God***

**Brighton (p. 520):** [The birds] are to gather as invited guests, as it were, at “the great banquet of God” (19:17). This particular banquet, at which the birds are to feed upon the corpses, appears to be the counterpart of the marriage feast of the bride and the Lamb (19:7, 9). While the marriage feast for the bride—the Christian Church—is taking place, “the great banquet of God” is also being prepared and eaten. The banquet at which the birds feed on the corpses is in terrifying contrast to the marriage feast of joy and celebration. It is called the banquet “of God” because God has planned this banquet and brought it about by His judgment. He has set it up and has provided its provisions: the corpses of the fallen hosts of the enemies of Christ and His Church.

**Ezekiel 39:17-20** “As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of the field:

‘Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,’ declares the Lord GOD.

*This passage is set in contrast in Ezekiel’s prophecy with the vision of the new Temple in chapters 40-48.*

***19:18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”***

***19:19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.***

**Andrew of Caesarea:** It speaks of the armies allied with the devil in the plural, because of the many forms of their sin and their divisions and various opinions. [By contrast], it speaks of the angelic powers and of those persons like the angels who follow Christ in the singular as an army, because of the unity of their mind



and their will which is well-pleasing to the divine Word.

**19:20** *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.*

**19:21** *And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

**Brighton (P. 523-524):** [The harlot] wants to believe that she is the most beautiful and encourages the people of the world to receive her as the true bride of Christ. For this reason the harlot is also called “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:21). But in her heart she knows she is not that bride, for someone else holds that position before God, her “stepsister” whom she hates and taunts. And though her poor “stepsister” is dressed, to the human eye, in rags and is the laughing stock of the world, the harlot is terribly jealous of her. For she knows that one day the despised woman in rags—and not she herself—will be the bride of Christ.

**Date: April 11, 2024**

**Brighton (p. 533):** Except perhaps for the number 666 (13:18), no other portion of Revelation has caused more confusion and consternation than the first six verses of chapter 20, which describe what has come to be known as the millennium. One could receive the impression from the amount of interest caused by these verses that they are the most important and influential in the entire book. In fact, the manner in which most commentators view the millennium determines to a large degree how the whole of Revelation is interpreted. Since these verses which describe a thousand-year period are a part of John’s vision of the End at Christ’s return (17:1-22:5), they should be interpreted first of all in relationship to the other events described in this section of Revelation. The description of the millennium (20:1-6) is placed between two scenes: the scene of the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet at the second coming of Christ (19:11-21) and the scene of the last great battle when Gog and Magog are defeated and Satan is thrown into hell (20:7-10), where the false prophet and the beast had already been cast (19:20). This suggests that whatever the millennium is and to whatever time it refers, its placement between these two scenes determines how it is to be interpreted and, more importantly, how it is to be viewed in relation to the rest of Revelation. This commentary’s exposition of 20:1-10 will show that the millennium began with the binding of Satan at Christ’s first advent (his incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension) and will conclude when Christ returns in glory to bring this present world to its end.

### *Jewish interpretations*

**Brighton (p. 534-535):** Even before John wrote Revelation there was a tradition within Judaism concerning a millennium. According to this tradition the history of the world consists of seven periods of a thousand years each, patterned after the seven days of creation. There would also be an eighth day, an eighth thousand-year period which would come after the seven millennia of the present world, and this eighth would continue without end (2 Enoch 32:2-33:2). The seventh day, the seventh thousand-year period, would be a millennial day of rest (2 Enoch 32:2-33:1), in which the Messiah would reign, after which would be the resurrection and judgment (4 Ezra 7:28-33); the messianic reign would endure until the present evil world has come to an end (2 Baruch 40:1-4). ...

Here in the Apocalypse of Elijah the millennium seems to be a symbol of eternal life in the new heaven and new earth—a symbol of the eternal Sabbath, of the eternal seventh day—rather than referring to a millennium of one thousand years during the messianic age on the present earth. In the Epistle of Barnabas (15:4-9) the seven days of creation symbolize the seven periods of the earth's existence, a thousand years for each period. As in the creation, when everything was completed by God in six days, so in six thousand years God will complete all things for the coming of the Messiah. And as God rested on the seventh day, so in the seventh thousand-year period, the millennium, the Son of God will come to earth and “destroy the time of the lawless one.” An eighth day is also mentioned, which was inaugurated by Christ's resurrection and ascension, and it will be “the beginning of another world” (Epistle of Barnabas 15:8). Apparently the eighth day represents eternal life after the end of this present world's existence, which eternal life was inaugurated by Christ's resurrection and ascension.

### *Reformation's Premillennial resurgence*

**Brighton (p. 538-539):** It was not until the Reformation in the sixteenth century that premillennialism began to become popular and take its place alongside the amillennialism of Augustine. Luther (who had been an Augustinian monk) and Lutheranism opposed the reintroduction of premillennialism. However, it was sponsored by such fanatical leaders as Muntzer and Bockelson. Calvin himself also rejected premillennialism, but later Calvinists like Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638) accepted and advocated it.

**AC XVII 5** They condemn also others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

**20:1** *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.*

**Brighton (p. 546-547):** Frequently John uses the words “after these things” before “I saw”. The fact that here in 20:1 John does not say “after these things I saw an angel ...” indicates that there is no “order of time” in relating the vision of the angel binding Satan to the visions that preceded it. That is, we are not necessarily to understand that what John sees in 20:1-10 follows in time what he has just seen in Revelation 19, the marriage feast of the bride and the Lamb (19:1-10) and the second coming of Christ at the End (19:11-21). If John intended for the reader to understand that the “thousand years” (20:2-3) was to take place after the second coming of Christ, he most likely would have indicated that by using a phrase such as “after these things” to introduce 20:1-10.

**Key to the bottomless pit**

**Brighton (p. 547):** In 9:1 “the key of the shaft of the abyss” was given to the star which had fallen out of heaven. That star is to be identified as “the angel of the abyss” in 9:11, that is, Satan, the “king” of the demons. He opened the shaft of the abyss (9:2) from which then came the demons who afflict the human race (9:3-6). Now here in 20:1 John sees an angel from heaven, that is, from the presence of God, who has “the key of the abyss”—not just of the shaft of the abyss, but of the abyss itself.

**Morris (p. 228):** The final unimportance of Satan is perhaps indicated in the fact that it is not the Father who deals with him, nor the Christ, but only an unnamed angel.

**20:2** *And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,*

**Brighton (p. 548):** The “strong man” is the devil, and the one who had come to rob him by first binding him is Jesus Christ.

**FN 26:** The verb *dew*, “to bind, tie up” in 20:2 occurs elsewhere in Revelation only in 9:14. There God commands that four angels who had been bound at the River Euphrates are to be released for the last great battle before the End (9:15-19). These may be the same four angels John saw in 7:1, holy angels who were restraining evil and destructive forces.

**Brighton (p. 549):** According to the four gospels, then, the devil was bound, conquered, judged, and cast out as a result of Jesus’ saving ministry, culminating in his death on the cross and his resurrection. Therefore, the binding of Satan, the dragon, took place at Jesus’ victory, accomplished by his ministry, death, resurrection and ascension (cf. also Rev 12:5, 7-10)—at the beginning of the “thousand years” (20:2).

**2 Peter 2:4** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

**Jude 6** And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, He has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.

*20:3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

**Brighton (p. 551):** The dragon is confined in the abyss for a “thousand years” (20:2-3). Only two other passages in the Bible mention a time period of a thousand years. In Ps 90:4 “a thousand years” are to God “like a day just gone past and like the watch of the night” (cf. Job 10:5). In 2 Pet 3:8 the apostle states “that a day with the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day.” Those two references do not refer to the same thousand-year period of time mentioned in Rev 20:2-3. However, they do suggest the hermeneutical method for interpreting the length of time represented by the “thousand years” that the dragon is confined. In both cases it is not a specific period of earthly history, exactly one thousand years long, that is in view. Rather, the “thousand years” is a general reference to a lengthy period of earthly time which is, however, brief in God’s estimation.

**Brighton (p. 552):** In 2 Enoch 32:2-33:2 and also the Epistle of Barnabas 15:4-9, a comparison or analogy is drawn between the seven days of the original creation and seven periods of one thousand years each. The total of seven thousand years represents the complete span of earthly history, and it is not a literal or exact period of time. ... Both of these writings also speak of an eighth “day,” that is, an eighth period of one thousand years, which represents the new creation that will endure forever; therefore the eighth “thousand” too is not a literal period of time, but a symbolic period of completeness.

**2 Enoch 32:2-33:2** Then I can again receive you at My second presence. And I blessed all my creatures visible and invisible. And Adam was five and half hours in paradise. And I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he rested from all his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, and that the first seven revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours. And now, Enoch, all that I have told you, all that you have understood, all that you have seen of heavenly things, all that you have seen on earth, and all that I have written in books by my great wisdom, all these things I have devised and created from the uppermost foundation to the lower and to the end, and there is no counsellor nor inheritor to my creations.

**Barnabas 15:4-9** Children, notice what is the meaning of “He made an end in six days”? He means this: In six thousand years the Lord will make an

end of everything. For a day with Him means a thousand years. And He Himself is my witness, saying, “Behold, the day of the Lord is as a thousand years.” Therefore, children, in six days, in six thousand years, He will make an end to everything. “And He rested on the seventh day.” This means, when His Son comes, He will destroy the time of the wicked one, and will judge the ungodly, and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then He will truly rest on the seventh day.

Furthermore, He says, “Sanctify it with clean hands and a clean heart.” Even if a man is pure in heart, we are altogether deceived if we think he can sanctify the day God sanctified now. We will indeed sanctify it at that time, while we enjoy true rest. We will be able to do so because we have been made righteous and have received the promise. There will be no more sin, but the Lord will make everything new. We will be able to sanctify it because we ourselves have been sanctified first. Furthermore He says to them, “I cannot stand your new moons and Sabbaths.” What does He mean? The present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me. What I have made is the beginning of another world in which I will give rest to everything. I will make the beginning of the eighth day. Therefore we also celebrate the eighth day with gladness on it. Jesus rose from the dead, manifested Himself and ascended into Heaven.

**Brighton (p. 553):** This restraint and holding back of Satan is depicted visually by his being bound and cast into the abyss. He was cast into the abyss “so that he could no longer deceive the nations,” that is, so that he could not destroy the church (the woman) and her witness to Christ and her mission to the nations.

**Luke 10:18** [Jesus] said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

**Matthew 12:22-29** Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.” Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

**Mark 3:20-27** Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” And the scribes

who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

**2 Thessalonians 2:7-10** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

**Augustine (City of God 20.7):** The further verb, “sealed,” means, I think, that the angel wants no one to know the secret of who is on the devil’s side and who is not. For to be sure, this secret division is absolutely unknowable in this world of time, inasmuch as we have no certainty whether the one who is now upright is going to fall, and the one who is now lying flat is going to rise to righteousness.

**Date: April 18, 2024**

***20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.***

**Brighton (p. 555-556):** Rev 20:4 says three things about those who are raised to life and reign with Christ during this time: (1) they sit on thrones and are given authority to execute judgment; (2) they suffer martyrdom because of their witness to Jesus; and (3) they do not worship the beast nor bear its mark.

**Augustine (City of God 20.9):** The mixed kingdom must be the church, such as she exists in her temporal stage, while the unmixed kingdom is the church such as she will be when she is to contain no evildoer. Consequently the church, even in this world, here and now, is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Heaven. Here and now Christ’s saints reign with Him, although not in the way they are destined to reign hereafter; but the “weeds” do not reign with Him, even now, though they grow along with the “wheat” in the church.

***Beheaded***

**Brighton (p. 543-544):** This is the only time that the verb *πελεκίζω*

appears in the NT. It does not appear in the LXX, possibly because beheading was not a frequent mode of execution among Semitic peoples. However, the Israelites knew of the barbaric practice of dismembering a dead person, for the Philistines cut off the head of Saul after they found his body on Mt. Gilboa (1 Sam 31:9). ... David too cut off the head of Goliath (1 Sam 17:51; cf. Acts 12:2). ...

“The ones who had been beheaded on account of the witness of Jesus” epitomize all martyrs of the faith. Indeed, they represent all Christians, including those who have died (regardless of the circumstances of their death) and also those who have not yet died physically but who would die for the faith if called upon to do so. The sense and reference to the phrase, then, is similar to those biblical passages that say that those who have been incorporated into Christ through Baptism and faith have already died with Christ in a spiritual sense.

**Brighton (p. 558-559):** John’s use of the verb “to behead with an ax” in 20:4 would then serve as a violent reminder that all who live for and with Christ during the “thousand years”—the NT era, the church age—would suffer intense persecution of whatever sort it might be, such as was happening and had happened under Rome, for example, under Nero and Domitian.

**FN 59** Paul was beheaded with an ax in the Neronian persecution. In the same Neronian persecution Peter too suffered martyrdom, but by crucifixion. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.25.5-8; 3.1.2-3, records the martyrdom of both Paul and Peter.

The biblical usage of “martyr” and “martyrdom” supports an interpretation of beheading here in 20:4 as the epitome of the persecutions that all Christian experience.

**Pieper (Christian Dogmatics II:393):** The chiliasts give to Christ an additional kingdom, the millennium. This caricature of the Kingdoms of Grace and of Glory, which is entirely the product of man’s fancy, perverts the hope of the Christians, turning their thoughts away from the eternal glory in heaven ... and fixing them on some illusory glory to be had here on earth.

**Pieper (Christian Dogmatics III:520-521):** The grossest chiliasm anticipates a full measure of not only spiritual, but also carnal delights and pleasures in a future millennial kingdom on earth. Gross chiliasm teaches a future golden age and era of peace for the Church on earth, in which the Church, after a universal conversion of the Jews and the fall of Antichrist, will reign over the world for a thousand years and control also all secular affairs. This chiliasm teaches two future visible returns of Christ and a twofold resurrection of the dead, with or without the “establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth” in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Subtle chiliasm omits a twofold return of Christ and two resurrection of the dead and confines itself to a “hope of better times” for the

Church, to set in before the end of the world. ...

Chiliasm has no basis in Scripture, for Scripture itself explains the passages to which chiliasm appeals as speaking of the spiritual glory of the New Testament Church, which dawned with the coming of Christ into the flesh and the preaching of the Gospel in the world. ...

Scripture, however, does not place the fulfillment of this prophecy in a future millennial kingdom, but says of all believers who, without leaving home, have come to faith in the Gospel during the New Testament era (Heb. 12:22): "But ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God."

**Isaiah 2:2-4** It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

**Isaiah 11:6-9** The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

**Zechariah 9:9-10** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

**Joel 2:23-27** "Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. "The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall



never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

**Joel 3:18-21** “And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim. “Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the LORD dwells in Zion.”

**Micah 4:1-4** It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

**20:5** *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.*

**Apringius of Beja:** “Until the thousand years were ended,” that is, until such time as the sacrament of the faith and the mystery of the cross is perfected in them and that those who are beginning to flourish might appear in their eternal blessedness. “The rest of the dead did not come to life.” He did not say, “they did not arise again,” but that they did not come to life, because without joy and happiness, and without the reward of eternity, in their torments they shall be regarded as though dead. “This is the first resurrection.” That is to say, the happiness of the saints and their reward; for it is said to be the “first” because of its splendor and preeminence.

**20:6** *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

**Brighton (p. 560-565):** Some early church fathers (such as Justin Martyr) believed that there would be two physical resurrections, one (of the saints) at the

beginning of the millennium and the other (of all people) at the present world's end. Some modern commentators interpret the two occurrences of ἐζησαν, "came to life" in 20:4 and "did ... come to life" in 20:5, similarly and reason that there cannot be in the same context two different meanings for the same word. The difficulty with that interpretation is that John does not speak of a second resurrection in 20:1-10. ... The first is the present, spiritual resurrection of all believers, and the second is the future, physical resurrection of all the dead on the Last Day. ...

Nowhere else does Scripture speak of two physical resurrections. ... Granted that this chapter does describe two different resurrections, the first one is spiritual and the second is one physical and bodily. And this is consistent with the way in which the rest of the NT speaks. For example, in John 5:19-30, when Jesus spoke about his authority, he said (John 5:25) that the moment was then present when "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will come to life." ... Death and resurrection language is used to represent conversion, that is, the translation from the spiritually dead state of unbelief to the resurrected state of coming to life through believing in Jesus and his Word. ... Here in the same context, the same discourse, two different resurrections are described, one spiritual and one physical. The spiritual resurrection takes place in the present time through conversion to faith in Christ, while the physical resurrection will occur at a future time, that is, "at the consummation of the age." ...

Is the "first resurrection" here in Rev 20:5-6 spiritual resurrection, that is, being raised to spiritual life in Christ? When viewed in contrast to John's graphic description of the bodily resurrection at the present world's end (20:13), it would certainly seem so. This would interpret John in Revelation in agreement with other parts of the NT which likewise refer to two resurrections, one spiritual, present now, and one physical, in the future at the End. Commentators who believe that John in Revelation 20 is speaking of two physical resurrections are creating a disagreement between Revelation and the NT as a whole—a disagreement which would be difficult to reconcile. In Revelation 20 John is seeing visually what is presented verbally elsewhere in the NT, that a spiritual resurrection takes place in the present life when a person comes to faith in Christ, and a second resurrection, a physical one, will take place at the End.

**John 5:19-29** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you,

whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

**Ephesians 2:1-6** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

**John 11:25-26** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

**Brighton (p. 566):** John juxtaposes “the first resurrection” (Rev 20:5-6) and “the second death” (20:6). But the relationship between these two ideas can be fully understood only if one keeps in mind that there also is a second resurrection and a first death.

**Brighton (p. 568):** Who are “the dead”? In keeping with the understanding that “the first resurrection” is spiritual and the first death is the state of unbelief, “the rest of the dead” are all those throughout the thousand years who never come to faith in Jesus Christ. They physically lived and died “in a state of impenitence and unbelief.”

**Origen (Homilies on Jeremiah 2.3.1-3):** Jesus baptizes “in the Holy Spirit and in fire,” not the same person “in the Holy Spirit and in fire,” but the holy person “in the Holy Spirit,” while another person, after he has believed, after he has been deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit and after he has sinned again, Jesus washes in fire. So ... it is not the same person who is baptized by Jesus in the Holy Spirit and in fire. Blessed, then, is the one who is baptized in the Holy Spirit and does not need the baptism by fire, but three times unhappy is that person who has need to be baptized in fire, though Jesus takes care of both of them. For “a shoot from the stump of Jesse will come forth, and a branch will grow out of the root,” a shoot for those who are punished, a branch for the righteous. So God is a

consuming fire and God is light, a consuming fire to sinners, a light to the just and holy ones. And blessed is he “who shares in the first resurrection,” he who has kept the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Who is he who is saved in another resurrection? He who needs the baptism from fire, when he comes before that fire and the fire tests him, and when that fire finds wood, hay and stubble to burn.

**Oecumenius:** “This is,” it says, “the first resurrection,” clearly that of faith. For the second resurrection will be the universal resurrection of the body. Therefore, “blessed is he who shares in the first resurrection!” For we will all take part in the second resurrection, even those who are unwilling. Upon those who are in the first resurrection, that is, upon the faithful, “the second death has no power.” What sort of death is this second death? Clearly it is that of sin and of the subsequent punishment. For just as he spoke of a first and a second resurrection, so also is there a first and a second death. The first death is physical and results in the separation of the soul and the body. The second death ... is spiritual and is caused by sin. Of this death also the Lord spoke: “Do not fear those who kill the body; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Hell.” [Matthew 10:28]

**McGee (p. 1057):** The first resurrection began with the resurrection of Christ. Then it is followed by the resurrection (at the Rapture) of His church sometime more than nineteen hundred years later—but before the Great Tribulation (see Rev. 4). At the end of the Great Tribulation is the resurrection of both the tribulation saints (“the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God; and whosoever worshipped not the wild beast”) and the Old Testament saints (see Dan. 12:1-2). ...

The tribulation saints and the Old Testament saints will evidently reign on this earth with Christ. I believe that David will be His viceregent. The church, which is the bride of Christ, will reside in the New Jerusalem where she reigns with Him from that exalted place and, I believe, over a great deal of God’s creation. Christ will commute from the New Jerusalem to the old Jerusalem on this earth. And I suppose that the church also will travel back and forth between its heavenly home and the earth.

**Date: April 25, 2024**

***20:7 And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison***

**Brighton (p. 572):** While in his temporary confinement during the thousand years, the dragon could not directly attack the woman (the church) in order to destroy her and her godly mission. He was hindered from doing so by God’s care of the woman (12:6, 13-18; cf. 11:3-6). Through the two beasts (13:1-18), the beast and the harlot (17-18), the devil could cause all manner of suffering and agony and persecution for the people of the church. ... The limitations and restraints placed upon him by God during the millennium are now removed so that the world becomes increasingly hostile and violent toward the church and the

message of Christ.

**Oecumenius:** But, O friend, how would athletes continue to receive vigorous exercise were there no one to wrestle against? And how would athletes demonstrate their strength were there no opponent? For those persons who are lazy and subject to pleasures are inherently perverse, whether or not the devil is present and prodding them on. But the people of God who are noble athletes would be wrongly treated were their courage against the passions not put on public display. So, as it happens, the lazy would receive no benefit and the zealous would be very greatly wronged, were there no Satan. In a way, Satan serves as an athletic trainer for humankind, providing for those who contend an opportunity for victories.

**20:8** *and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.*

**Brighton (p. 571):** The grammar does not indicate unambiguously whether “Gog and Magog” (either or both of them) are individual leaders, names of peoples, or even geographical names of the regions which those peoples come. In Ezekiel 38:2 Gog is the individual ruler from the land of Magog.

**Brighton (p. 572-573):** The exact meaning of Gog is not known. It does appear in 1 Chronicles 5:4 as the name of one of the later descendants of Reuben, a son of Jacob. ... Magog appears in Gen 10:2 and 1 Chronicles 1:5 as the name of one of the sons of Japheth the son of Noah. Josephus identified Magog with the Scythians who invaded the Near East in the eighth/seventh century BC and may have invaded Palestine in the seventh.

**20:9** *And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,*

**Mark 13:14-23** “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

**20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

**Caesarius of Arles:** “And the devil and his people went up into the height of the earth,” that is, in the presumption of their arrogance, and “they surrounded the camp of the saints and the city of the beloved,” that is, the church. This refers to what was earlier said about those assembled at Armageddon [16:16]. They cannot be gathered into one city from the four corners of the earth. Rather, in every corner [of the earth] each people will be gathered together for opposition to the holy city, that is, for the persecution of the church. “And fire shall descend out of Heaven from God,” that is, out of the church, “and consume them.” In this passage the fire may be interpreted in two ways. Either they will believe in Christ through the fire of the Holy Spirit, and they will be spiritually consumed by the church, that is, incorporated into the church, or they will be consumed by the fire of their own sins and will perish.

**Esther 3:12-15** Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Just as fierce animals come out of their caves, so, it says, those led by the devil and the demons with him will come from their various locations and spread themselves out over the earth to ravage the camp of the saints, clearly meaning the church, which is established throughout the four corners of the world. But they do not know that it is not only a single angel but many angels who encamp round about them who fear God, as the psalm says [34:7]. They will come to subdue the new Jerusalem, the beloved city, from which the divine law has gone into all the world through the apostles. Then, they say, the antichrist will seat himself in the temple of God. This refers either to the ancient temple of God among the Jews that was destroyed because of their audacity against Christ and which those Jews who hate God still expect to be rebuilt by him, or it refers to the true temple of God, namely, the catholic church. The antichrist will usurp for himself what does not belong to him and "proclaim

himself to be God,” as the apostle says [2 Thessalonians 2:4]. Not long afterward, it says, fire comes down from heaven. This will be either a physical fire such as that which burned the two groups of fifty at the time of Elijah [2 Kings 1:9-12], or the passage refers to the glorious coming of Christ, who will slay them “by the breath of His mouth” [2 Thessalonians 2:8] and consume the aforementioned nations and their leader, the devil. Christ will hand them, along with the antichrist and the false prophet, over to the lake of fire, where they will be tormented forever and ever. Christ the Savior has taught us to pray that we enter not into temptation, and so, recognizing our weakness, let us do that earnestly, that we be saved from the trials of that which is prophesied.

**Date: May 2, 2024**

***20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.***

**Brighton (p. 581):** John sees “a large white throne and the One sitting on it” (20:11). In the inaugural vision of heaven (4-5) which introduced the prophetic message of Revelation, John had seen this “throne” and “One sitting” on it (4:2). Here in 20:11 the throne is described as “large” and “white.” In 4:2 the throne of God and his presence upon it are the central and dominant feature; around the throne are the twenty-four thrones of the elders (4:4) and the four winged creatures (4:6-7). Here in 20:11 the throne of God and his presence on it are the only feature, for now God on his throne is the supreme judge before whom the entire human race stands.

**Psalm 102:26-27** They will perish, but you will remain; they will wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.

**Isaiah 51:6** Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

**Mark 13:31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

**2 Peter 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

**Methodius (On the Resurrection 1.8):** It is not satisfactory to say that the universe will be utterly destroyed, ad sea and air and sky will be no longer. For the whole world will be deluged with fire from heaven and burned for the purpose of purification and renewal; it will not, however, come to complete ruin and corruption. ... And Paul clearly testifies this, saying “For the creation waits with

eager longing for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly but through Him who subjected it in hope. Therefore, the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.” [Romans 8:19-21]

**Isaiah 65:17-25** “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

**Isaiah 66:22-23** “For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

**20:12** *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.*

**20:13** *And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.*

**Brighton (p. 580):** In classical Greek  $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$  was the proper name of the god of the “netherworld” and then also the “place of departed spirits.” Therefore it came to refer also the “the grave, death.” Hades could refer to the “underworld” as a place of punishment, but it was never used to refer to a place of joy in the hereafter or anything life heaven. The LXX uses the word to translate *Sheol*. In the NT  $\alpha\delta\eta\varsigma$  can refer to the grave in general as the place where all the dead are or go (e.g., Acts 2:24-27, 31), or it can refer to hell in particular (e.g., Luke 16:23). The word appears four times in Revelation (1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14), always paired with



“death” and always referring to the “grave” in general. In Revelation the terms for hell are αβυσσος, “abyss,” and λιμνη του πυρος, “lake of fire.”

***20:14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.***

**1 Corinthians 15:51-55** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

***20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

*Date: May 9, 2024*

**Caird:** Here is the real source of John's prophetic certainty, for only in comparison with the "new Jerusalem" can the queenly splendours of Babylon be recognized as the seductive gauds of an old and raddled whore.

*21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

**Brighton (p. 591):** As God on his throne held the last judgment, "the earth and the heaven fled" from his face "and a place was not found for them." This suggests that the present heaven and earth originally created by God (Gen 1:1) would not be a fit home for his resurrected and righteous saints. Under the judgment of God because of the sin of the human race, the earth was cursed and thus suffered decay and ruin.

**Genesis 3:17-19** And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**Genesis 5:29** When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."

**Isaiah 24:5-6** The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.

**Romans 8:20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

**Isaiah 65:20-25** No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox,

and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

**2 Peter 3:10-13** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

**Revelation 6:12-14** When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

**Revelation 16:17-21** The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

**Brighton (p. 593):** "The sea" in 21:1 seems to represent the chaos caused by sin and the fearful gulf that separates God and humanity resulting from human sin and rebellion against God. In the OT at times "the sea" is a terrifying embodiment of the violent tumult that exists between people and God, and between humans.

**Genesis 49:4** Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!

**Psalms 93:3-5** The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore.

**Isaiah 57:20** But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt.

**Ephesians 4:14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by

the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

**Jude 12-13** These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

**Revelation 15:2** And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

**Assumption of Moses 10:5-6** The sun will not give light. And in darkness the horns of the moon will flee. Yea, they will be broken in pieces. It will be turned wholly into blood. Yea, even the circle of the stars will be thrown into disarray. And the sea all the way to the abyss will retire, to the sources of water which fail. Yes, the rivers will vanish away.

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Concerning the sea, it says that “the sea was no more.” For what use is there of a sea when people no longer need to sail it or to acquire by means of it the goods grown in regions lying far away? Moreover the “sea” is symbolic of the turbulence and unsettledness of life, and so there will then be no need of it when there remains no trouble or fear among the saints.

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

**Brighton (p. 595):** This “new Jerusalem” is not the old historic city of the present earth restored. Rather it comes “from God,” for God is its architect and builder” (Heb 11:10), and it is the city where God dwells with his people (Heb 12:22), and it will remain forever (Heb 13:14).

**Apringius of Beja:** The heavenly Jerusalem is the multitude of the saints who will come with the Lord, even as Zechariah said: “Behold, my Lord God will come, and all His saints with Him” [14:5]. These are being prepared for God as a fine dwelling, namely, those who will live with Him. “As a bride adorned for her husband.” Adorned with holiness and righteousness, they go to be united with their Lord and shall remain with Him forever.

**21:3** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

**Kretzman (p. 651):** When the children of Israel journeyed through the wilderness, the Tabernacle of the Lord was also in their midst, and God dwelled in the Most Holy Place. But that was a temporal, earthly, imperfect type, pointing

forward to the blessed perfection of heaven.

**21:4** *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

**21:5** *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

**Brighton (p. 600-601):** And God said, “Behold, I make all things new!” (21:5). It is a creative word, a spoken word by which God creates. In Genesis 1 several times it is written, “And God said.” ... Here in Rev 21:5 after “And God said” there follows a word by which he creates, only this time it refers to the new creation, the heaven and earth being recreated, restored after “the first things have passed away” (21:4). It is quite fitting that the first time God speaks in the prophetic message of Revelation it should be his creative word by which he will make his original creation new. ... To “make all things new” (Rev 21:5) thus means that all things that God had originally created will be recreated and restored to their original pristine state.

**2 Corinthians 3:18** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-17** From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Colossians 3:1-4** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**21:6** *And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”*

**Brighton (p. 602-603):** The One sitting on the throne, God the Father, continues to speak: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” (21:6). The first time God called himself “the Alpha and the Omega” was in the prologue

(1:8). Now for the second time, here in 21:6 he declares that he is such. And then God adds “I am ... the Beginning and the End.” While this addition (which is not present in 1:8) may seem to be a definition and explanation of “the Alpha and the Omega,” the two are not synonymous. For “the Beginning and the End,” while explaining the sense of “the Alpha and the Omega,” does so in reference to all creation. That is, it declares that “the Alpha and the Omega” is also “the Beginning and the End” of all creation, of all life (cf. Col 1:13-20; Rev 3:14). While the phrase “the Beginning and the End” is not present with “the Alpha and the Omega” in the prologue (1:8), it is present here in 21:6 because of the context of the new heaven and earth. God, “the Alpha and the Omega,” now also calls himself “the Beginning and the End” of the creation of the new heaven and earth. One more time the combination of “the Alpha and the Omega” and “the Beginning and the End” will appear, in 22:13, where the Lord Christ says this of himself. By sharing these titles, the full divinity of Christ and his equality with the Father are affirmed.

**Isaiah 55:1** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

**21:7** *The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

**Revelation 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

**Revelation 2:11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’

**Revelation 2:17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

**Revelation 2:26-27** The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

**Revelation 3:5** The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

**Revelation 3:12** The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

**Revelation 3:21** The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my

throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

**1 John 5:4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

**21:8** *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

**RHBC (p. 251):** The climax of this book and indeed all of history at last comes clear: the restored heaven and earth is presented to God’s resurrected people. Such a magnificent future and hope calls us to rise above the ugliness and sin of this fallen world, because impenitence and a lack of vigilance can still lead to the shipwreck of our souls. At the same time, God is faithful, and so will unfailingly fulfill the purposes for which His Son became man; He will remove the curse that so sorely afflicts us.

**Morris (p. 240):** To be cowardly before the enemies of God at the last is finally to lose the things of God. John is not speaking of natural timidity, but of that cowardice which in the last resort chooses self and safety before Christ, and fears the threats of the beast rather than trusts the love of Christ. God did not give his people such a spirit of cowardice (2 Tim 1:7).

**2 Timothy 1:7** for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

**Date: May 16, 2024**

**RHBC (p. 254):** The following verses indicate that this vision is not only the conclusion of the book of Revelation, but also to the entire Bible. Several details in the following verses, such as river of life and tree of life, take us back to Genesis. The blessings of Eden are thus pictured as being restored in the new creation. In Gn 3, Adam and Eve were cast away from the presence of God and prevented from eating of the tree of life. Here the people of Christ dwell again in the presence of God and are invited to eat from the tree of life. Life is restored in Christ.

**McGee (p. 1067):** The New Jerusalem will be to eternity what the earthly Jerusalem is to the Millennium. The earthly Jerusalem does not pass away, but it takes second place in eternity. Righteousness reigns in Jerusalem; it will dwell in the New Jerusalem. Imperfection and rebellion exist even in the earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium; perfection and the absence of sin will identify the heavenly city. Just as a king’s queen is of more importance than the place of his government, thus the New Jerusalem transcends the city of earth. This will cast no reflection on the earthly city, nor will it cause her inward pain. She can say in the spirit of John the Baptist, “She that hath the bridegroom is the bride” (see John 3:29).

**21:9** *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** Fittingly does he call the bride the “wife” of the Lamb. For when Christ was slaughtered as a lamb, He at that time betrothed [the church] with His own blood. For just as when Adam was sleeping, the woman was formed through the taking of the rib, so also the church, formed through the shedding of blood from the side of Christ as He was sleeping voluntarily on the cross through death, was united with Him who suffered for us.

**Morris (p. 241):** The latter expression puts some emphasis on the final state. The marriage is now not something to be looked forward to but something that has arrived.

**Hebrews 12:18-24** For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

**Morris (p. 241, quoting Barclay):** God’s servants do not select their tasks; God may send them for judgment or for blessing or for both in turn. But they must go where they are sent; they must speak what God tells them to speak.

**21:10** *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*

**Brighton (p. 609):** “In the Spirit” indicates that it was by the Holy Spirit of God that John was transported to the mountain. This is an event in the Spirit ... by which John saw the bride of Christ visually, and possibly also experientially or empirically. ... While “the Harlot City is seen in a wilderness, the Bride City [is seen] from a mountain” [Swete]. From this “mountain” John see “the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.” Perhaps this mountaintop experience, on later reflection, may have reminded John of the mountaintop experience of the transfiguration (Lk 9:28-36), except that here it is not Christ who is transfigured, but Christ’s church, adorned in the glory of the exalted Christ as it is displayed as the holy city Jerusalem.

**Bede:** After all the descriptions of Babylon, the holy city, which is the bride of the Lamb, is seen located on a mountain. The stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands broke the image of the world’s glory into small pieces,



and it grew into a great mountain and filled the whole world.

**Daniel 2:34-35** As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

**21:11** *having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

**Brighton (p. 609-610):** The church on earth bears “the glory of God” because of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Rev 12:1), but it is unseen to the human eye. Now, after the resurrection and the restoration of heaven and earth, the church is adorned with this glory for all to see. “Radiance” (φωσθηρ) suggests that “the glory of God” conferred upon the holy city as her “radiance” now shines forth as if it were her own beauty and righteousness and holiness. In classical Greek a φωσθηρ, “illuminator, luminary,” was a heavenly body which generated its own light, like a star. In the cosmology of the Bible, God first created “light” (φως, Gen 1:3-5) and then the “luminaries” (φωσθηρες, Gen 1:14, 16), which when empowered by the light generate their own light (the sun and stars) or reflect (the moon) and distribute that light. This “radiance” in Rev 21:11 indicates that while initially the glory of God was given to the saints solely because of and through Jesus Christ, who is the light (το φως, John 1:4-9; 8:12), in the new age that glory will be the possession of God’s people who (like a “luminary,” φωσθηρ) generate their own radiance by which “the glory of God” is distributed, that is, appears and is seen.

**21:12** *It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—*

**Brighton (p. 611):** It suggests that in the new heaven and earth God’s people will forever be under God’s gracious protection so that never again will they suffer attacks or be afflicted. Moreover, they will never be tempted by evil or fall into sin and death, as happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8-9; 3:1-19). In the new Eden, that is, “paradise” (Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4; Rev 2:7), this will not happen, for the people of Christ, the new Adam, will forever be in a state of grace and righteousness and innocence (cf. Rom 5:12-21). As John sees the city Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven, the “wall” reminds him of this eternal protection.

**Brighton (p. 611-612):** It was common for ancient Near Eastern cities to have only a single gate because the gate was more vulnerable to attack and was more difficult to defend than the wall. The twelve gates of the new Jerusalem

“symbolize abundant entrance. Reference to twelve tribes emphasizes the continuity of the NT church with God’s people of OT times” [Mounce].

**Ezekiel 48:30-34** “These shall be the exits of the city: On the north side, which is to be 4,500 cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, and the gate of Levi, the gates of the city being named after the tribes of Israel. On the east side, which is to be 4,500 cubits, three gates, the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin, and the gate of Dan. On the south side, which is to be 4,500 cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar, and the gate of Zebulun. On the west side, which is to be 4,500 cubits, three gates, the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher, and the gate of Naphtali.

**21:13** *on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** The four-sided form of the gates and their threefold entries signifies the understanding of the one who worships the Trinity. This understanding is throughout the four-cornered universe, and we have received it through the life-giving cross. For the cruciform shape of the position of the gates is according to the form of the twelve oxen that bore the Sea erected by Solomon. These oxen signify the threefold grouping of the apostles by fours, the herald of the Holy Trinity and the extension of the four Gospels into the four corners of the earth. Through this is symbolized the spiritual sea of Baptism that cleanses the world from its sins and that was instituted by the spiritual Solomon.

#### **Numbers 2**

East side: Judah, Issachar, Zebulun

South side: Reuben, Simeon, Gad

West side: Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin

North side: Dan, Asher, Naphtali

**1 Kings 7:23-26** Then he made the sea of cast metal. It was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. Under its brim were gourds, for ten cubits, compassing the sea all around. The gourds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The sea was set on them, and all their rear parts were inward. Its thickness was a handbreadth, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily. It held two thousand baths.

**21:14** *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

**Brighton (p. 612):** The wall of the city rests on “twelve foundation stones,” upon which are the “names of the twelve apostles” (21:14). As Paul describes it in Eph

2:19-22, citizens of God's household and family "were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets," which foundation has as its cornerstone Christ Jesus. "The church in a historical sense rests upon the apostles and prophets, that is, upon the faith and labors of those who first proclaimed the gospel message. The juxtaposition of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles shows the unity of ancient Israel and the NT church" [Mounce]. ... [A]s there has always been only one covenant of grace embracing the entire people of God, those of old by faith in the promise of the Messiah and those by faith in the fulfillment of that promise in Jesus Christ, so now the true Israel of God will be in the new heaven and earth as represented by the new Jerusalem (cf. Rom 4:13-25; Gal 4:21-28).

**Brighton (p. 612):** The twelve angels on the twelve gates are evidently guardians of the gates (cf. Ps 34:8; 91:11; Heb 1:14). ... These watchmen will continue to be vigilant until the Lord renews Jerusalem and establishes her as the praise of the whole earth. ... These twelve angels as a group are unique, for nowhere else in biblical literature is such a group mentioned. (Evidently no group of twelve angels of any kind appear in the pseudepigraphal literature either.)

**Ephesians 2:19-21** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

**Primasius:** Having mentioned the patriarchs, he now mentions the apostles. Although we know that the church has but a single foundation, that is, Christ, it is not surprising that here it is said to have twelve [foundations]. In Christ the apostles have merited to be foundations of the church, and of [Christ] the apostle said, "No other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus" [1 Corinthians 3:11]. In Christ the apostles are also said to be "light," as He said to them, "You are the light of the world" [Matthew 5:14], although Christ alone is "the true light that enlightens every person coming into this world" [John 1:9]. Therefore, Christ is the Light that enlightens, while the apostles are a light that is enlightened. The Holy Scriptures often suggests many similar ideas. ... Therefore, in this passage we ought to recognize the twelve foundations to be the apostles, but in the one foundation, Jesus. Moreover, Jesus alone, even without the apostles, is right called "foundation," while the apostles are without Christ in no way said to be foundations of the church.

**Date: May 23, 2024**

***21:15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.***

**Apringius of Beja:** The wall of fire surrounding it is the Lord, as we have already said. The golden measuring rod is the faith concerning the Lord's incarnation, for

on account of its purity and sinlessness His body is revealed to be clearer and more brilliant than any metal. He alone is the one through whom the measure of the faith and the integrity of the holy city is established, and He only is recognized as the measure of its gates and the height of its wall.

**Athanasian Creed (27-39):** But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ; one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

**21:16** *The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.*

**21:17** *He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.*

**21:18** *The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

**21:19** *The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,*

**21:20** *the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.*

**Exodus 28:15-21** “You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. It shall be square and doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth. You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; and the second row an

emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.

**Andrew of Caesarea** links the twelve foundations with the twelve Apostles: jasper is Peter, sapphire is Paul, agate is Andrew, emerald is John, onyx is James, carnelian is Philip, chrysolite is Bartholomew, beryl is Thomas, topaz is Matthew, chrysoprase is Thaddeus, jacinth is Simon the Zealot, amethyst is Matthias.

Interestingly, Paul and Matthias are both included but James the Less is omitted.

**Bede:** Sardion has the color of pure blood and signifies the glory of the martyrs, of whom it is said, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” [Psalm 116:15]. Rightly is it placed in the sixth position, for our Lord was both incarnated in the sixth age of the world and was crucified on the sixth day for the salvation of the whole world.

**Moris (p. 245, quoting Charles):** The stones correlate with the signs of the zodiac, but that John has them in the order exactly opposite to that of the sun as it passes through the constellations.

**Morris:** If this be accepted, John is repudiating heathen concepts and using the order of the jewels to convey the thought that God reverses human judgments.

*21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

**Date: May 30, 2024**

*21:22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

**Brighton (p. 618):** The saints of God in their state of righteousness and holiness and perfection after the resurrection can now look directly into the face of God. NO longer does God have to hide his glory from their view. No long does he have to shield his people from the brilliance of his overpowering holiness and awesomeness (cf. Deut 31:17-18; Is 64:6). For God can now directly and personally live in the midst of his saints with his glory. With sin and every evil having passed away, there is no longer a need for a tabernacle or temple to mediate and temper God’s presence. For God the Father himself together with the Lord Christ is now that temple. The city itself (that is, the people of God) is now the Holy of Holies in which God dwells.

**Kretzman (p. 653):** When we reach the consummation of our hopes in eternal life, we shall no longer be obliged to have any means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments; for we shall see God face to face and shall know Him even as we are

known, 1 Cor. 13, 12.

***21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.***

**Isaiah 60:14-19** The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

***21:24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,***

***21:25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.***

**Brighton (p. 621):** The inability of any evil force or danger to threaten or hurt God's people is emphasized again, this time by the open "gates" which never are closed, and by the fact that "night" is totally absent. City gates were usually closed at night (Josh 2:5-7). "Night" here represents the spiritual darkness of sin and evil (cf. Jn 11:10; 12:35; 1 Thess 5:5). Because there is no darkness of sin and the suffering and terror of eternal death that sin generates, there is no need for the gates in the wall of the city to be closed. It will always be day because of the eternal light of God's presence (Rev 21:23-24).

***21:26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.***

***21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

**Primasius:** He is here describing the church of the future when, unlike at the present time, the evil will not be mixed in along with the good and allowed to live with them. For the good alone will reign with Christ with whom and in whom they will live happily forever, namely, in that heavenly Jerusalem that is the mother of all. Indeed, it says that they are written in the book of the Lamb [to whom] He said, "Rejoice that your names are written in Heaven" [Luke 10:20].

*Date: June 6, 2024*

*22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb*

**Brighton (p. 623):** John is shown “the river of the water of life” which is so pure that it is “clear as crystal.” In the Garden of Eden a river flowed which watered Eden and then became the source of four rivers which watered different regions of the earth (Gen 2:10-14). Would John on reflection be reminded of this river which watered Eden in its state of perfection?

**2 Enoch 8:5-6** And paradise is in between the corruptible and the incorruptible. And two streams come forth, one a source of honey and milk, and a source which produces oil and wine. And it is divided into four parts, and they go around with a quiet movement. And they come out into the paradise of Edem, between the corruptible and the incorruptible. And from there they pass along and divide into forty parts. And it proceeds in descent along the earth, and they have a revolution in their cycle, just like the other atmospheric elements.

**Genesis 2:10-14** A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

**John 4:10-14** Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

**Brighton (p. 625):** “The river of the water of life” refers to the spiritual power of God and of the Lamb that will sustain forever the communal life of God’s people with Him in the new Heaven and earth. It also indicates that all physical life will also be richly supplied by pure natural water as in the first Eden.

**Psalms 46:4** There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

**Zechariah 14:8** On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of

them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

**Revelation 7:17** For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

**Revelation 21:6** And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

**Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

*22:2 through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

**Brighton (p. 626):** In pseudepigraphal literature the tree of life appears, especially in eschatological visions. ... No human being can touch it until after the judgment, for it is reserved for the righteous, and the elect of God will partake of its “fruit for life” (1 Enoch 25:4-5). In 2 Enoch 8:4 “it covers the whole of Paradise,” and it contains “something of every orchard tree and of every fruit.”

**Brighton (p. 627):** The LXX transliterated “Eden” as Edem. But for “garden” the LXX used παραδεισος, which was transliterated into English as “paradise.” The Greek παραδεισος is also a transliteration of the Hebrew *pardeis*. This Hebrew word appears three times in the OT: Neh 2:8, where it refers to a king’s forest or expanse of land rich in trees; Eccl 2:5, where it refers to a park-like enclosure; and Song 4:13, where it signifies an orchard. It is derived from an old Persian word which meant an “enclosure” or “wooded park” like a garden. Eventually the word came to refer to a “heavenly garden,” “paradise,” which could be symbolized by a beautiful earthly garden. In biblical usage παραδεισος, “paradise,” came to be used as both in reference to the original Garden of Eden in God’s holy presence.

**Nehemiah 2:7-8** And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

**Ecclesiastes 2:5** I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.

**Song of Solomon 4:13** Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard,



**Luke 23:42-43** And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

**2 Corinthians 12:2-4** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

**Revelation 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

**RHBC (p. 258):** The two dominant images here—the river and the tree—also figure prominently in Eden (Gn 2:9-17; 3:1-7). Their reappearance here helps show that the end will be like the beginning, only better.

**Genesis 2:9-17** And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

**Ezekiel 47:1-12** Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then

he led me back to the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

***Leaves for healing of nations***

**Kretzmann (p. 654):** This indicates that we shall be nourished spiritually in the home above, that our heavenly life and our salvation will be sustained and increased by the very richest of gifts of God’s grace. We shall have an abundance of heavenly blessings and yet desire ever more of the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**McGee (p. 1076):** Even the leaves of the tree are beneficial—they have a medicinal value. Why healing is needed in a perfect universe is a very good question and a difficult problem to solve. Perhaps it is a sort of first-aid kit which demonstrates the old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” I personally believe that the bodies of the earth dwellers in eternity will be different from the bodies of the believers in the church who are to be like Christ (that is, their bodies will be like His). The bodies of the earth dwellers may need renewing from time to time. This may be the reason that they come up to the New Jerusalem—not only to worship, but also to be renewed physically and spiritually. At least the prevention is there.

***22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.***

**Brighton (p. 623):** The verb (“worship”) designates formal and official service within a cultic religious setting, such as a liturgical officiant serving before the altar of God. Hence it is translated “they will serve as worshippers.”

**Brighton (p. 629):** God’s people will live in the new Eden as the slaves whose very actions and works will be a worship of God and the Lamb. They are “slaves” in the sense of always being in the state of righteousness given by their Lord. They are “slaves” who adore and glorify the Author of

their blessed state. No longer now, nor ever again will they be slaves of sin and suffering and death (cf. Rom 6:12-23).

**Brighton (p. 629):** The full divinity of the Son and his equality with the Father are emphasized by the fact that they share one single throne, “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” And the unity of the Father and the Son is stressed further by the singular pronouns whose antecedent is “God and ... the Lamb”: “his [not their] slaves will serve him [not them].”

*22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

*22:5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

*Date: June 13, 2024*

**Brighton (p. 639):** The epilogue serves not only as a farewell, but also as an affirming “amen” to the certainty that this prophetic message of Revelation is the last word from the Lord of the Church until he comes. The epilogue, together with the prologue, declares the absolute authenticity of this work of God and the urgency for it to be heeded immediately by the Church, “for the time is near” (22:10).

*22:6 And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”*

**Brighton (p. 640):** These statements that God is righteous and true declare that there is an absolute truth, a truth that is righteous and so never changes, a truth that is faithful in its intent. God is the source of this truth and the Lord Christ is the faithful witness to it. And Christ is also the “Amen” of this truth, that is, the confirmation that there is no truth except that which originates from God the Father and comes through Christ and his words.

*22:7 “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** It is often customary for the prophets to speak divine words as though it were from their own person. The words “I am coming soon” indicate either the shortness of the present time in comparison with the future age or the sudden swiftness of the death of each person. For the departure from here is the end of every person. Therefore, since “we do not know at what hour the thief will come” [Matthew 24:43], we are commanded “to watch and to gird ourselves and to keep our lamps burning” [Luke 12:39, 45], letting our godly behavior shine even for our neighbor. Therefore, let us not cease to beseech God with a contrite heart to “save us from all our pursuers,” lest our souls, having been defeated by

them, be snatched away unprepared “with no one to rescue or to save” [Ps 7:2-3].

**22:8** *I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,*

**Andrew of Caesarea:** [To witness by eye and ear] is characteristic of one who is an apostle. Just as he said in the Gospel, “He who has seen bears witness, and his testimony is true” [John 21:24], so also in this passage [John] confesses that he is an eyewitness and an earwitness of what has been foretold and so makes himself to be a guarantee of what has been seen.

**22:9** *but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

**Acts 10:25-26** When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.”

**Acts 14:8-18** Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

**22:10** *And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.*

**Daniel 12:4** But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

**Caesarius of Arles:** Just as the divine Scriptures are sealed for those who are proud and who love the world more than God, so are they opened for those who are humble and who fear God.

**22:11** *Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.*”

**22:12** *“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.*

**Brighton (p. 647):** Christ calls it “my reward,” not their reward; it is the reward which Christ Himself earned, and which He freely gives to all believers by grace. The “reward” itself is the gift of eternal life in God’s holy presence, earned for God’s people by the death and resurrection of the Lamb of God (5:9-0; 7:13-17). This “reward” is represented by the tree of life.

**1 Clement 33-34** Therefore, what must we do, brothers? Must we abstain from the good deeds and abandon love? May the Master never allow this to happen to us! But let us hasten with urgency and zeal to accomplish every good work. For the *Demiurge* and Master of all things Himself rejoices over His works. For by His exceedingly great might He established the universe; He divided the earth from the waters that surrounded it and set it firm on the sure foundation of His own will. He arranged the living things which walk on it to exist as He ordained. Having created the sea and the living things in it beforehand, He ordained them in His own power. Above all, the most excellent and exceedingly great creation, according to intelligence, He formed man by His sacred and blameless hands in the impression of His own image. For thus God said, “Let us make man according to our image and according to our likeness.” And God made the man, “male and female He made them.” Therefore, when all these things were completed, He praised them and blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply.” Because the righteous are adorned in every good work, we see also the Lord Himself adorned by His good works and the universe rejoiced. Therefore having this pattern let us conform ourselves to His will; out of all our strength let us work righteous works. The good workman receives the bread of his work with freedom. The slothful and careless look not at their employer. Therefore it is necessary that we should be desirous for good works; for out of Him is everything. For He told us before, “Behold, the Lord, and His reward before His face, to recompense each one according to his work.” Therefore He exhorts us to believe on Him out of our whole heart neither to be idle nor careless in every good work. Let our boasting and openness be in Him. Let us submit ourselves to His will. Let us recognize the whole host of His angels, how they stand by to minister His will. For the Scripture said, “Ten thousands upon ten thousands stand beside Him, and thousands upon thousands ministered to Him, and they cried out, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, all creation is filled with Your glory.’” Therefore, in like manner, let us be gathered together for concord, as out of one mouth let us cry unto Him earnestly that we may be made partakers of His great and glorious promises. For He said, “Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, what the Lord has prepared for those who serve Him.”

**22:13 *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.***

**Brighton** illustrates this triple title for Jesus in the form of an inverse pyramid:

***The Alpha and the Omega***

Of the three, the first, “the Alpha and the Omega” is the most comprehensive, for it dominates and embraces the other two. IT refers to the magnitude of the eternal presence of God far above and beyond all creation. Long before—forever before—he created the present universe, the triune God was and is.

***The Beginning and the End***

“The Beginning and the End” points to the fact that God is the source and the beginning point of creation and that he is also its end and purpose. That is, all creation exists because of God’s creative activity, and after the present order passes away, the new creation will continue to exist forever for His glory.

***The First and the Last***

The second title suggest still another nuanced quality of the magnitude of the infinite and eternal presence of the Deity. But this second title is applied only to Jesus Christ. Three times in Revelation the Lord Christ calls himself “the First and the Last.” ... He is “the First and the Last” of all who die in Him together with Him and are raised with Him spiritually already now and will be raised physically and bodily in the resurrection at the End.

As “the Alpha and the Omega” and as “the Beginning and the End,” the Lord Christ is “the First and the Last” of God’s people, the church. He is this First and Last apart from God the Father because He alone died and rose again. This title “the First and the Last” is mentioned in between the other two because it is to be seen and understood in the forefront, for it is only through it that we can view the other two.

It is the smallest of the three in its scope (though not in its importance). For its scope and focus is the church because of the incarnation and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is only through this title and what it represents that God meets the human race.

**22:14 *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.***

**22:15 *Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.***

**Brighton (p. 638):** In the OT “dog, wild dog” was a derogatory term for a male prostitute (Deut 23:19) and also a metaphor for an evil human enemy (Ps 22:16, 20).

**Bede:** Every kind of madness that characterizes the impious now tempts the church from without. But when the Father of the household enters in and the saints enter in with him to the wedding banquet, he shall close the door, and then [the impious] will stand outside and begin to knock upon the door.

**Matthew 25:1-13** “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**Date: June 20, 2024**

**22:16** *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”*

**Brighton (p. 653):** This is the only time in the entire NT that the Lord uses His personal name to identify Himself. While the other names and titles by which He speaks of Himself display or point to the majestic grandeur of who He is and what He has done for the salvation of humanity, His personal name, “Jesus,” points to His humanity and to His intimate relationship with John and with all God’s people. He is John’s personal and loving Savior and friend.

**Brighton (p. 654):** Jesus Christ now claims to be that promised king and priest, that “star” of Jacob. The royal priest now shines in all His majestic glory as “the Sun of Righteousness” (Mal 4:2). “The morning star is a promise that the long night of tribulation is all but over and that the new eschatological day is about to dawn” [Mounce]. As the exalted Son of Man promised to the church of Thyatira (Rev 2:28), the faithful people of God will share in this glory of their “morning star.”

**Numbers 24:17** I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

**Oecumenius:** By morning star he means either the sun, since he is called the “sun of righteousness” in Malachi [4:2], and further the prophet sings, “fire has fallen

upon them,” that is, upon the chief priests of the Jews, “and they did not see the sun,” that is, him who is the “sun of righteousness,” namely, Christ. Or he means the morning star. For he is also called this by Peter in his second letter: “until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” [2 Peter 1:19].

**22:17** *The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

**Apriugius of Beja:** Salvation is given without any price and without any barter. Rather, he who desires to be saved, he will enter and will either receive free of charge the regeneration of baptism, or he will receive the remedy of repentance without cost or charge. The prophet spoke in a similar manner: “All who thirst, come to the waters; and you who have no money, hasten, come, buy and eat” [Isaiah 55:1].

**22:18** *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,*

**22:19** *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

**Deuteornomy 4:2** You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.

**Letter of Aristeas:** And when the whole company expressed their approval, they bade them pronounce a curse in accordance with their custom upon any one who should make any alteration either by adding anything or changing in any way whatever any of the words which had been written or making any omission. This was a very wise precaution to ensure that the book might be preserved for all the future time unchanged.

**22:20** *He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

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