

BIBLICAL TEACHING—THE GREAT TRIBULATION

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(1) OUR LORD'S TEACHING

In this study we are not considering the trials that commonly afflict men. The issue is an event or series of events in the end times to which we have never been nearer which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. **Luke 21.26** The events in question were given the title "the Great Tribulation" by our LORD. Jesus said "Then shall be **Great Tribulation** unequalled from the beginning of the world until now." **Matthew 24.21.** Our LORD further added that so severe would the consequences for life on earth be that the period of these perilous days would be shortened—specifically for the sake of those who still lived on earth and were called of God to minister and testify subsequent to the Church Age,

The LORD spoke of much deceit about a *saviour figure* at that time. Some would proclaim such a person was hidden or in some secure hideaway. He discounted such suggestions proclaiming that HE would break the stranglehold of terror by his *sudden regal intervention* on a grand scale re-entering the world scene with the drama of a worldwide electric storm. He also forecast that the tribulation would be concluded with what seems akin to a nuclear night or massive geo-physical upheaval with cosmic connection when *the sun would be darkened* and *the moon cease to give light* and the stars fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies themselves would be shaken. The terrors described appear to have not only earth-wide but a universe wide connotation. This time lies ahead—and people have a right to know about it and prepare to escape it—especially because there is only one way out—the rapture! (This topic is taken up in the third study in this trilogy featuring "*The Tribulation*" "*The Millennium*" and "*The Rapture*".

(2) PAUL'S TEACHING—ESCAPING THE WRATH TO COME

We read in a very comforting message of the Apostle Paul that "**God has not appointed us (Christians) to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our LORD Jesus Christ.** This statement follows the quite outstanding and prestigious scripture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 "We who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with the saints who passed by way of death into HIS presence to meet the LORD in the air. It follows that to escape the coming wrath should its beginnings be imminent we must stand committed to Christ and be genuinely covenanted to Him—to his kingdom's increase and zealous of HIS appearing." 2 Timothy 1.8 and Titus 2.13.

(3) JEREMIAH'S TEACHING—JACOB'S TROUBLE

In **Jeremiah 30.7** we are told of a time which will deeply affect the Jewish people. Over the years of history before and after Christ they have suffered terribly at the hand of their persecutors. Alas their times of trial are *not* yet at an end—but subsequent to their *deepest peril* golden days lie ahead for Jerusalem. I now invite you to read eight relevant oracles of Jeremiah on this topic with these contexts in mind.

Why do I see every warrior with his hands on his loins—as if in giving birth—& every face turning pale?" "Alas/woe for the day is great—NONE IS LIKE IT—and it is the time of Jacob's rivalry/trouble *hrx* and from it he **will save himself**" (The Niphal of the Hebrew [*cy-Here we compare vv10 & 11*]) *It would appear that some Herculean struggle for the very life of Israel must be ... At great cost to other nations God will save Israel.* "And you—Jacob my servant in worship—fear not says the LORD in quiet murmuring tones—nor be dismayed—for behold me saving you from a distant or remote place—and bringing back your seed from a land of captivity. Jacob will be free from harassment and tranquil/secure *mac* and no-one will cause him (*HIPHIL*) to be terrified/tremble ... For I give you a strong restoration *hl* [of health and heal your wounds—God murmurs gently—because you are called an outcast **expelled like a wandering cow** (*cf "The wandering Jew"*)—**Zion for whom no-one cares.**

... Thus says the Lord "Behold me turning the exile of the tents of Jacob (shining vibrating tents)-and I will have compassion on his dwellings-and the city shall cause herself to be built | [=high above/on her ruins hl t-that which was fractured- **the innermost part/palace** mmmra **resting on its legal base.**" "And from them there will arise songs of thanks hdt and a voice of laughter. I will make them great in number and they shall not be diminished f[m, I will cause them to be honoured and they shall not be despised r[x-their sons will be as formerly and their assembly hd[will be established before my face.

(4) DANIEL'S TEACHING

THE END OF THE MODERN GOVERNMENT AND WORLDWIDE DEVASTATION

(1) And he (THE BEAST ROME REDIVIVUS shall confirm the covenant with many -or cause a covenant to prevail - [rbg "strengthen the covenant"] for a single week

(2) And in the middle of the week he shall cause the interruption or cessation or restraint or end or removal of **sacrifice and evening incense offering** *The Antichrist will ban critical Jewish religious rites*[This statement assumes the Jewish temple will be rebuilt as Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophecy]

(3) And until the removal to distant parts or **the hiding** [pnk. *The expression relates to "wings"*]. This may refer to the Rapture and also to the departure of large swathes of Jewish population in face of war.

(4) Contaminations [xqv] will have laid waste or desolated or astonished [Poel of mmv] to the end or the finish or the languishing. [hl k]

(5) And that determined or active and sharp [xrj carries the sense of "something predetermined" "something bitter" something sharp and decisive" "something that will cut down a latter day harvest like a thresher"] will be poured or "melt upon" [Jtn] the desolating or "the one who continues to desolate." **(Daniel 9)**

This mighty warrior angel is speaking about vials from heaven and of terrible punishment for terrible crime. This latter day war which lies in prospect in the not distant future is little appreciated except in heaven where in the light of divine wrath the Apocalypse speaks of the silence of a half and hour.

What is of interest is that the sanctuary of Israel is the primer and fuse for this great conflict and that because the volt face and opposition international community and its latter day leader or "prince"

(5) JOHN'S APOCALYPTIC TEACHING

THE TRIBULATION DEVELOPS IN FIVE STAGES

It is possible to view the Great Tribulation from a 5th vantage point-much more complex and detailed-that of John the divine. This part of the study falls naturally into 5 segments divided in a fast flowing historical chronicle within a period of seven years which you can read in the Apocalypse 4.1-18.24. There is a literary device I shall explain immediately below. that John uses both in the gospel to cast the fast flowing ministry of Jesus into three and a half years and again in the Apocalypse to cast the Tribulation into a similar brief episode that extends for 7 years in accordance. John's overall historical canvas is bounded by the same "70th week" as Daniel 12 where we read...

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.(THE TRIBULATION) But at that time your people everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered. Then I Daniel looked and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed inline who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?... From the time the daily sacrifice or offering has been turned aside or caused to withdraw or been removed (MID TRIBULATION) to the abomination or contamination that destroys is a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who continues to wait [Hebrew Piel of hkj] or "tie himself to" and causes himself to touch or reach one thousand three hundred and thirty five days"(Daniel 12)

JOHN'S LITERARY DEVICE

For a number of years I have studied the META TAUTA prepositional word-combination. The usage of John is strictly with TAUTA ("these") in the accusative. There are several uses given by Liddell and Scott: (1) "into the middle of"(MOTION) (2) "looking for"(QUEST) (3) "next"(SEQUENCE or SUCCESSION)

John's use is No (3) and strengthened by TAUTA *the word combination* comes to mean ""in order of time". John, who uses *the combination* in the gospel (John 2.12, 3.22, 5.1, 6.2, 7.1, 19.38, 21.1) and in the Apocalypse (4.1, 7.1, 7.9, 9.13, 15.5, 18.1, 19.1) certainly cannot be arraigned on the charge of being unaware of any purpose or plan. He clearly was giving as precise a division as could be desired of the matter he is relating and that on a time scale.

We may further adduce that because the narrative of the Gospel spans no more than 3.5 years and that of the Apocalypse subsequent to church history (Chapter 1-3) spans the TRIBULATION period or the 70th WEEK of Daniel it too covers just 7 years the use of the combination in this instance serves to divide both very short periods equally. It could be argued from this that the presentation of Christ in the gospel of John is a foreshadowing of the fulfilment of Daniel's 70th week but the essential extrapolation of the Apocalyptic Tribulation Period which issues in the Glorious Kingdom of Christ is the one unique and valid fulfilment in full accord with every prophetic notice in scripture.

So in a word this essentially simple device gives us our divisions for both Gospel and Apocalypse and for the tribulation five segments of this 7 part division apply (1)4.1, (2) 7.1, (3) 7.9, (4) 9.12, (5)15.5 and (6)18.1 -In each instance John writes "**After these things I saw**".

It is then the specifics of THE GREAT TRIBULATION in its development according to this given time sequence that is the subject of the body of this study.

PARENTHESIS (1) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

EXPLORATION OF THE "REALM OF PERFECTION" WHERE CHURCH WILL DWELL AFTER THE RAPTURE

After the story of the seven churches which reflects the seven ages of the church in Chapters 1-3 of the Apocalypse we have no further mention of the church on earth although we get glorious glimpses of the church at praise represented by the elders; further glimpses of the church in stoles (an epithet for preparation for war) since there will be "war in heaven" and yet further glimpses of the church at the altar interceding for a resolution to the age-long issue of the Kingdom of the Pantocrator or "the one who perfects".

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

(1)VAST KNOWLEDGE

The living creatures show what is in store-fuller knowledge!

In the space of the throne and circling round the throne are four living creatures full of eyes moving inwards observant of the heart of **the PANTOCRATOR** and outwards observing the reaches beyond. Few in all history have been admitted to view this order of being. Ezekiel is one who has. John describes as being amid a boat full **γεμνοα** of eyes like a catch of fish though that was death yet here is life and here miraculously are beings who survive being caught up in the mystery of God and have fabulous knowledge of heaven and earth

(2)SERVICE POWER CHRISTLIKENESS HEAVENLY NATURE

The living creatures depict what is in store-service power Christ-likeness heavenly nature

Each of the "living creatures" has four faces. Ezekiel saw the human face directed at him. He was thus a prophet of the Christ. To the left (for Christ was to be crucified taking the curse) he saw the Ox and to the right the Lion (speaking of the future rule of Christ). He also testified to the eagle or heavenly aspect of the "living creatures" The four gospels are presentations of Christ derived from the very nature of God which is reflected in these living ones.

(3)CUSTODIANS OF HOLINESS

The living creature depict what else is in store-radiant praise joyful holiness

John is observing the development of a new stage of history from heaven. The presentation of God and Christ advanced here is of the Lord perfecting his plan. These living ones reflect God's activity sympathetically and in worship displaying absolute harmony of presentation and greatest celerity. They are "flying" [**πετομενω**] They cycle intimately round the throne. They know no "day and night" rest or pause but cry as the seraphim of Isaiah 6 "Holy Holy Holy". The dynamic of the "living creatures" tends towards a final historic application of power to the end of subjecting the earth to God.

(4)ATTESTATORS OF "ONE WHO PERFECTS"

The living creatures introduce us not to the one who forgives to seventy times sever but to Jesus who perfects us that we may never sin

The living creatures lead worship of the "Pantocrator"-a word in its original Sanscrit is more illuminating than its Greek derivative. It does not simply mean "God's sovereignty" but GOD AS "PERFECTER" OF ALL ABOUT HIM. The two most humbling mysteries of God - His "eternal being" and "His power to perfect sinners" - draw true worship. Imminent with their ministry is the perfecting of God's rule on earth.

WORSHIP OF THE PANTOCRATOR-NOT JUST FOR FORGIVENESS BUT PERFECTION!

To miss Revelation 4 is to miss the cardinal feature of worship. Christ is our "Perfecter" whose thoroughness and care into eternity will ever enthral us. The living creatures give an amazing lead. "Glory" **δοξαν** (all our expectation fulfilled through Him and in us)"Honour" **τιμην**(the price He paid and the costly persecution of believers led here)and "blessing" **ευχαριστια** (the gratitude we ever have for his body & blood given for us).The elders fall "in close to the throne" every time this glorious triple theme recurs. They are before the eternally living one and their crowns are at HIS feet. This is a manner of growing intimacy and joy to share "perfection" They teach the church to give GLORY HONOUR BLESSING POWER to "the one who perfects" our Lord Jesus Christ!

John records three main "sights" - first the "book", second an "angel", and third a "lamb" (**vv1.2,6**)

"THE BOOK" APOCALYPSE CHAPTER 5

It is quite normal to gain our first impressions or revelation of God from a book. The book in question is in the hand of the One that sits on the throne.

It is described as written on both sides. The book on the right hand of the One on the throne is a "small book" **Greek=βιβλιον**

It is a "full book" Please observe that it is little-containing the detail of forward events more readily than even our sophisticated computers. Notice also that God prefers hard copy. That it is full suggests **there are many events pending** and its **seven seals** opened by Christ will resolve how He causes terrible wars to cease and settles the greatest geo-physical disruption since the flood and overcomes Satan's end time strategy in the "70th week"

THE LAMB DRAWS OUT SAINTS AND TAKES THE SCROLL

Then John saw in the centre of the throne facing the Father a beloved lamb standing. The session was punctuated by this act and by another toward the resolution of the seals when the 144,000 were led to glory-cf the "return from the prey of **Genesis49.9-10**. There is also the act in **Apocalypse 14.14** when the "son of man" harvested the earth which might be understood of Israel-gathering in the wheat. To return to the theme John now has a most thrilling vision of a lamb "slain as but yesterday" as Luther put it in his comment on **Apocalypse 5.6**. The lamb is standing in the centre of heaven's power and purpose-ready to act. Our Lord is here characterised as complete in power and complete in understanding what must follow-the development of history. Cf **Isaiah 11.1 & 10**. Reference to "a lamb" and "the lamb" respectively (**Rev.5.6 &14.1**) comprehends the gathering of the church in the first instance and Israel's latter day witnesses or body of martyrs in the second instance from the earth.

As in the case of MICAH in **2 Kings 22.19** so here the Lord has great wisdom and in what REINEKER calls a "**highly dramatic historical present tense**" Christ "**takes**" the scroll from the Father.

THE THRONE-THE INNER CIRCLE OF DEITY

The Father on the throne-the lamb having received the book-and in front of Him

THE FIRST CIRCLE

The 4 living creatures

THE SECOND CIRCLE

And 24 **elders** with harps and vials on the sea by the throne encircle the lamb-in the third circle of power and privilege v6. When they fell before the throne they held golden bowls of incense of prayer and harps. The elders appear to sing - maintaining their interest in the "power" of the lamb besides adding their "cum laude" to the chant of the **living creatures** v.8.

THIRD CIRCLE Their song indicates that the "redemption of the body -the homecoming of **saints** to glory is a reality and they have come from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.v.9 The saints were aware of their role to rule the earth besides their intercessory privilege. With the elders they had already been made kings and priests-with the rule of earth in their vision

A FOURTH CIRCLE

Besides the circle of living creatures and elders and saints who have come home there is the fourth wide circle of angels.

The **angels** are numbered at 10,000 X 10,000 and 1000 X 1000's-that is hundreds of millions and millions besides. This power is awesome. This host assembled, co-ordinate with the call of the living creatures and expressing more fully the call for the lamb to take power in their mighty voice "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength". Jesus said He could call 10,000 angels -here are multi millions of angels in heaven-further evidence that the church triumphant is home. All heaven and earth and earlier history consented-indeed all the above and their universal fellowship called for the unending hold on power of the lamb. This glorious tribute brings together the pictures of **Psalm 47.8** **Isaiah 6.1** and **Ezekiel 1 26-27**.

THE PRELIMINARY PRAISE OF ALL CREATION

It seems strange that at this stage before judgment fell or rebels were reined in that creation should sing to God's glory in unison. The word used by John [Apocalypse 5.13] is not **κτισις** but **κτισμα** which means every "colony" of the created orders brought its worship-a remarkable foretaste of the eternal worship

The glory of God the Redeemer and Perfecter of all things is accorded praise before judgment falls as HE will be through the ages of ages. It is to be additionally observed that the aorist of **ακουω** in this and many other contexts of the Apocalypse can mean John "heard" praise of a "once for all" and continuing nature-confirmed by the use of the present participle of **λεγω** in v12.

With the advent of Christ after the tribulation the evidence is that there is an irreversible order of righteousness. The era of grace will have yielded to the era of glory. Human government will have yielded to the sovereign rule of **the Pantocrator** whose intent is to make all things perfect.

SEGMENT 1 4.1-6.17 μετα ταυτα

SIGNALS THE ONSET OF FAMINE DEATH & WAR

APOCALYPSE CHAPTER 6.1-17

*This segment covers six of the seven seals. The seals introduce a period when Christ sets His absolute impress on world history -in the few years before his kingdom's dramatic advent the pace quickens, God's schedule is met, and the wonder is that the lamb has discerned and woven the dark threads with the threads of gold and silver amid an emerging pattern of faithful witness and rebellious defiance. The sequel to the close of church history is the opening of seals or the immediate ensuing hidden future; then in immediate succession follow trumpets, thunders, vials-all of them complete. In this prior revelation or notice to mankind which the seals represent Christ lays bare what is to be expected at the onset of the final seven years **TRIBULATION** before **HIS** kingdom.*

THE FIRST SEAL

I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures speaking like the voice of thunder, "Come and see" Here we are out of our depths on the order of being spoken of. These eternally **living creatures** worship Rev.5.8-they are the inner circle of creation. The unidentified "rider" figures in four seals that are well known to the "**living creatures**"-holding sway even thereafter

ZECHARIAH'S OLD TESTAMENT "HORSES" REFERENCE ANALYSED

"And I saw a white horse and **he who placed himself** upon the horse **held a bow**. A crown was given to him and he went out conquering and that he should be future conqueror". The horse intimates power and the symbolism of horse and bow takes us east to the "**Persian emblems**" of power. The last "**white horses**" signify the ride of tyrants or a bid for supreme rule. Demosthenes (355BC)spoke of the "white horses of tyrants". After the fashion of the Spartans this person **crowns himself** and rides

off to conquer. The horse in Zechariah's prophecy stand ready to ride in the last days of uneasy world peace.

THE SECOND SEAL

When the Lamb opened the second seal, John heard and obeyed while a **second of the "living creatures"** (signified by the Ox of sacrifice) said, "Come and see". This creature drew John for a second time near the throne. There a view or picture was opened to him. John saw a **"fiery red horse"** going out and it had been given him to take peace from the earth, and that they slay one another. And a great sword (Greek=**μαχαίρος** -already by Xenophon's time this meant "a bent sword of the scimitar type).So the "tawny" horse and the "bent sword" signify a time of religious sacrificial killing of an unusual nature (Greek=**σφαζω**=cutting the jugular)

THE THIRD SEAL

When the Lamb opened the third seal John heard the third **living creature** (signifying man) saying, "Come and see".

And I saw, and **the colour of this horse was black** (Greek=**μελας**=enigmatic-malignant). The rider had a yoke-but not for equine control-rather a **controlling balance for trade**- "a balance bar for scales".

A voice from the midst of the living creatures, "A slave's measure of corn for a days wage and three days measure of barley for a day's wage." "And you must not break the law or acquire illegally oil and wine." This means severely limited food resources.

THE FOURTH SEAL

The fourth **living creature** (represented by the eagle) said, "**Behold a grey or fresh green horse** (Greek=**χλωρος**=greenish yellow -strictly of young grass or greenish yellow as the eye but mainly with the significance "fresh").The horse fresh enough to carry its rider "death" everywhere. Another horse followed in the sense of one exactly alike and as his servant-called Hades. To them was given authority to kill more than a quarter of the earth's population in the circles where sword (Greek=**ρομφαία**=broad sword of war) and starvation and death(often of execution following court judgment) were the principal killers together with "beasts"(the diminutive is better translated 'microbes' than 'lions')

THE FIFTH SEAL

When the Lamb opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar of incense -which was just outside the veil-but its fragrance came within - where souls slain murderously on account of God's word and on account of holding true in their witness combined their prayer:

They literally screamed at God, "Until when, O Absolute One(literally "despot")O Holy One, O promise-faithful One, will you delay judgement and retribution for our blood from the inhabitants on earth" They were given white stoles(Greek=**στολαι**=soldiers dress-often special cavalry uniform)-and the word that "flowed along the ranks" was "Wait still a very short time-until your fellow servants and brethren(of heaven's army) is complete-as ready to die as you yourselves were" What a striking and appropriate reply to this righteous protestation!

TRIBULATION- SEISMIC AND GEO-PHYSICAL EVENTS

1 Behold a massive earthquake happened-the first sign

2 The sun became dark as sackcloth of goats hair

3 The moon became as blood.

4 The stars fell on the earth("The end of the world is at hand"-Charles) or the powers that govern collapse as the fig casts her figs that grew all winter and are cast off in the spring winds. This is a double reference to the physical heavens and the "winter of the Jewish state which will suffer severe loss of its young life at this time"

5 The heavens are ripped apart as a papyrus scroll is wrapped up or crawls along when the hands that hold it release it.

6 Every mountain and island were shaken (Greek=**κινεω**=the action of a plough) from their classic locations. The **whole earth was being prepared for a new MILLENNIAL**

era as the spring ploughing of the ground for a new crop. Only the inhabitants had to go with the change-which took the form of a judgement upon them.

WORLD WIDE REACTION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

And the kings or rulers of the earth and those who became great by possessions and power, and the wealthy, and the military bosses of thousands of soldiers, and the powerful, and every servant and free man **hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains.**

They keep saying to the rocks and to the mountains, **"Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb-for the great day of His wrath has come and who is able to hold his ground"**

The experience was clearly sickening as everything was moving-and darkness was all about and gross changes were afoot-while all well understood that what Christ predicted was now afoot.

This chapter is compulsory reading and it is a clarion call to prepare for a massive QUAKE of which the incremental increase in seismic activity is a strong early warning.

SEGMENT 2 7.1-7.8 μετα ταυτα

SIGNALS THE IMPETUS TOWARDS ISRAEL'S CONVERSION

This very short segment sets before the church the world and angels the wonder of divine grace and the work of the Spirit of God in the aftermath of Church History reaching out to bring the nation of Israel to Himself by especial providences. Here we see Angels deeply involved as the Hebrew writer puts it "as ministering spirits sent forth to those who are heirs of salvation". Later in the Apocalypse we shall read of the appearance of two witnesses who consolidate God's work in Israel. Further still we read of an Eagle twice acting for the well being of Israel. We are given notice in this second segment of the vital role Israel and Jerusalem is to play during the tribulation and into the Millennium. This segment follows the great earthquake or geo-physical shaking foretold in the sixth seal. The OT & NT have a spate of notices of this "humongous tremor"(see Isaiah13.13; Joel 3.16; Haggai 2.6 & 21; Matthew 24.29; Mark13.25; Luke 21.26; Hebrews 12.26) As this segment opens four angels appear on earth "holding the four winds". So at this point the world has been shaken and geography has radically changed and mankind is terribly frightened but the hills around Jerusalem stand and this nation is ready to take its place at centre stage in the world to be.

THE FOUR ANGELS

John saw four angels standing or as we say "stood" after the style of guards above the four angles of the earth. There is no need to go anti-Copernican. To take the Magnetic north and an opposite Antarctic position along with a position above the mid-east and above the pacific shows how such angular (Greek=**γωνιας**=right angle)positioning is to be read from above (Greek =**επι τας τεσσαρας γωνιας**) not from the surface view. The exact positions are clearly ordained of God -but they were devised for global cover and vital hastening immediately future events.

The angels held the four winds-the BOREAS (N),EUROS(E), NOTOS(S) and ZEPHYROS (W). The winds served as points of the compass do today.

It might be asked why the winds were withheld from blowing on earth, sea or any tree. The obvious answer would be further massive destruction of fruit and the food chain from the destruction of trees(Greek=**δενδρον** "fruit trees" as opposed to **υλη** "timber trees")

Equally seaways were still open during this time of massive earth disturbance and though the land was in turmoil following the greatest "shake" ever known on earth and no doubt for a time the "sea and the waves were roaring"[**Luke 21.25**]a quiet sequential weather pattern would greatly abate the disaster. THERE IS MERCY MIXED WITH THIS JUDGMENT AND A WELCOME PAUSE BEFORE THE VERY DISTURBING EVENTS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.

A FIFTH ANGEL

I saw another angel coming down from the rising of the sun (Anatolia) **V.2** Here the viewpoint of John is "the earth"-and as **vv4-9** show- it may be the Holy Land but these Jews may still be spread worldwide. The angel held the seal of the living God. This is not a question of opening seals of **historical events** reserved for

future revelation-it was rather a case of current use of the seal to set apart God's servants as those to be saved from among modern Israel. He shouted in a mighty voice to the four angels-the very same ones commanded not to act illegally as to the earth, sea or trees. He had come to enforce the command-"Do not act wrongly(Here it may be said that to act at the wrong time is to act wrongly-and clearly angels have government among them to secure good order in this matter) in respect of earth, sea or trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

JEWES WITH A GLORIOUS MISSION

These angels then joined in the greater ministry of sealing the 144,000

v.4(Greek= $\rho\mu\delta$) for the completion of the elect of this significant period when it is clear that the "fear of the LORD" is the beginning of wisdom for Israel. The sealed persons were sealed where a soldier's hat badge was worn-between the eyes on the forehead. They were heirs of Israel preserved till these late days of God's sovereign purpose. (This act bears not the least semblance of connection with the far-fetched claim of modern non-Jewish watchtower followers that initial disciples of the cult ascend to heaven whilst the residual number abides on a paradise earth) John states with the angel that from Judah Reuben Gad Asher Naphtali Manasseh Simeon Levi Issacher Zebulun Joseph and Benjamin there are 12,000. The sealing was used in New Testament times for slaves and for soldiers. In **v.3** the angel specifically calls these persons "**slaves**" (after the style of Revelation 1.1) in their absolute willing obedience to the Lord. This act of sealing forestalls the "mark of the beast" in **chapter 13**. This is the "mark of the Lamb." The beginning of the next tribulation segment sees these **soldier saints** pass one by one to Mount Zion-a final glorious testimony to God's salvation-the thin blue line of spiritual witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ-and in the passing they witness with great effect against a background of cruel anti-Jewish activism that re-emerges in the tribulation era.

SEGMENT 3 7.9-15.4 μετα ταυτα

(NUMEROUS SAINTS AWAY FROM TRIBULATION -7TH SEAL-6 TRUMPETS -THE SCROLL-TWO WITNESSES-7TH TRUMPET -THE 144,000 IN HEAVEN-WRATH AND WORSHIP)

THE FAITHFUL CALLED HOME-FAITH REKINDLES ON EARTH

Jesus once said, "when the Son of Man comes will He find faith upon the earth" (Lk18.8) Through this SEGMENT the world and Israel too becomes very denuded of faith-though where it lives on or is awakened what splendid quality of obedience and handsome proportion of faith is in evidence. John directs us to look above to heaven and home - glorious with the redeemed. "I saw, he says, a great mixed multitude (the redeemed of all ages-the recent raptured ones and the fresh martyrs), that no-one was able to number once for all. These were people from every nation tribe people and tongue, standing in adoration and worship and joy in before the throne of God and before the Lamb-getting very close to God and to the Saviour-though multitudinous. They need no seats-there are no crowd controllers-they never fall exhausted-wonderful experience. They had clothed themselves in white stoles-the mark of completion-and held victor's palms in their hands. On the Jewish feast of tabernacles on earth palms and fir and myrtle had been held. The celebration portended here is stupendous by comparison. They shouted as one man, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." And all the angels had been standing in a circle or corona or possibly scattered everywhere in the circle around the throne (we will have to wait to see), inside the crowd of the redeemed the twelve elders and inside that again -the living creatures.

PARENTHESIS (2) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

THE QUESTION THAT HAS TO BE ASKED! WHO ARE THESE IN WHITE ROBES?

Before we read of the most terrible traumas of earth in this segment the felicity of the church in heaven again greets the reader's eyes. Christians may glibly say-why should God reveal so much of the trouble on earth? We don't need to know that! That is why we have the heavenly scenes running concurrent. There are a series of things taught in this scene that the LORD considers the church now needs to know.

And all four orders of creation fell on their faces and they worshipped God saying "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever, Amen".

(1) **We need to know** that the circle now comprehends like a **hunter's circle** multitudes the Saviour has searched for INDIVIDUALLY and brought to Glory.

(2) **We need to know** that all the redeemed are in heaven and we may say of this great throng that they are clad to enter the battle in heaven that precludes the final contest with Satan on earth

(3) **We need to know** that we will be taken from the face of tribulation.

One of the Elders had asked me, saying, "THESE CLOTHED IN WHITE STOLES OR ARMOUR-WHO ARE THEY AND WHERE **HAVE THEY COME FROM?**" (The Greek verb is **ηλθεν** which is in the **aorist** form-and is typically so used by Homer Theocritus Aristophanes the LXX and Alexandrian literature. The effect is "These came in a once for all "catching up")

John replied "Sir, you clearly perceive who they are!"

He said in a classic reply, "THESE ARE THEY **WHO HAVE COME OUT OF** (CF NOTE BELOW) GREAT TRIBULATION AND THEY HAVE WASHED THEIR STOLES, AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB." They had been in battle on earth and in the circle of the blood of the Lamb-of those who witnessed to blood-they were caught up from Great Tribulation.

(4) **We need to know** how close to Jesus we are and shall be. The saints (**and martyrs**) are recognised as "soldiers of Christ" from the theatre of the spiritual warfare on earth. They are greatly loved and for this reason they are **in close** (Greek =**ενωπιον**-in close) to the throne.

(5) **We need to know** that full surrender and commitment is called for. They are continuing to give their all (Greek=**λατρευουσιν**=to expend massive resources-as when rich nobles on earth supported a war or engaged a national choir) in service day and night in the temple of God-the inner HOLY OF HOLIES.

(6) **We need to know** that the honoured witnesses of the last days and the martyr group will be shepherded to various joys of heaven and he will lead the way to ever living fountains of waters-i.e. the "head streams" or "springs" of life itself. Mysteries will unfold for them.

(7) **We need to know** that the questions of suffering and tears that ever flowed will be understood and joy supernal will reign in the Father's house.

The word for "wipe away" is not merely a matter of fact manner. The Greek is not **εκλειπω** but **εζαλειπω** meaning "to obliterate" or "wipe off the map". Here is supreme tenderness and comfort for people who came out of the most terrible period for the righteous in all of history.

(8) **We need to know** that EVERY (GUARDIAN) ANGEL was here to witness these great entrances prior to the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem.

(9) **We need to know** that all martyrs and witnessing saints are under the Shekinah (v16) -their labours are over. We are all to be treated as those who loved not their lives-as witnesses. We shall abide in Glory.

A NOTE ON THE SENSE OF "OUT OF" TRIBULATION

The term "out of" has three general connections. It may mean out of a given location; out of a given period or out of in terms of origin. However in composition the sense of "removal" prevails. **The nub of the answer is that they are not continuously emerging out of great tribulation but they came in a mass exodus** He that is seated on the throne **will spread his tent** over them-so they abide ever near Him. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the sun fall upon them nor any heat. **The effect of his clause is to make clear that their destiny is not to resettle on earth.**

REVELATION 8

SILENCE IN HEAVEN

Such awe accompanies the judgments now in train that heaven finds the matters shortly to come breath-taking. If when we get there this is to be our attitude let us make certain that we even now study the serious and awesome wrath which is to cascade upon man during the time of "the seven trumpets" and afterwards. It is important to note that the angel's mark the warfare man conducts but what "happens" is very much human warfare.

THE SILENCE AND THE THIRD TRUMPET 1-2

There was silence in heaven as if for half an hour. There were **seven angels** standing before God. This "stand" was a singular once- for- all end time ministry. The silence is a happening-a pause to mark the solemnity of war **εγενετο**. The trumpet **σαλπιγξ** was used as a "war signal"-so we have divine messengers in a given order who received trumpets to sound in historical order. What else happened in that short space?

ANOTHER ANGEL 3-5

An **eighth angel** came voluntarily and took his place at the incense altar, holding a golden censer. Much incense was given him. Incense is burnt in honour of a person- in this case the Lord-that he might present the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before God. The angel took the censer-full of fire and tossed it upon the earth. So for the **THIRD** of **SEVEN** occasions in all in this book we learn of voices and thunder and lightning and an earthquake or serious change on earth-i.e. **"war-cries, aerial action and a shaking of the foundations on earth"**.

FOUR ANGELS SOUND THEIR TRUMPETS 6-12-FOUR SERIOUS TRIBULATION CHANGES

Preparation was made to sound... There was no hesitation. **Unavoidable struggles of mankind under an angry heaven are to event with devastating consequences**

ANGEL'S TRUMPET ONE

"Pelting hail"**χαλαξα**- mingled with blood smote mankind. The sense is hostile. The hail from heaven is hostile to life on the earth where it falls. It is to destroy 33% of trees and green edible and other vegetation. In **Ezekiel 38.22** there is a significantly similar reference relating to God in protecting Israel during a tribulation war... Reference to the 7th plague of Hail in **Exodus 9** is also interesting. This trumpet marks acute diminishing of man's food supply triggering famines.

ANGEL'S TRUMPET TWO

The second angel sounded and a **mountain** was cast into the sea. 33% of the **κτισματα or living ones with souls** i.e. "men" died and 33% of the ships were destroyed. This is through the collapse of a **great power**. 33% of the sea-the Gentile factor-was involved in this war. 33% of the shipping was destroyed. We are being told of a conflict exceeding the two world wars in casualties. The cost in lives alone could be as great as 2 billion. In **Exodus 7.20** the plague of blood resulted in "fish" death but this is more than serious -a serious punctuation in heavens' praise is understandable in view of this war.

ANGEL'S TRUMPET THREE

The third angel sounded and a great **star burning as a torch** fell on 33% of the rivers and fountains or sources of water. The star was "wormwood" and 33% of the waters became "wormwood" or poisonous and **many of mankind** died from consuming the waters because they had become venomous. The theatre seems to be worldwide **Jeremiah** predicted that Israel would eat "bitter food and poisoned water" **8.15** - scatter them & send the sword after them. The widespread impact on potable water could only give rise to disease and death.

ANGEL'S TRUMPET FOUR

With the sounding of this trumpet 33% of sun moon & stars were struck by heaven sent calamity **πληγη** so that day and night lost 33% of their light. So the 7 X33% set of catastrophes took place. **Isaiah 13 9-10** exactly predicts such an event as a punishment on the "world for pride" in a day that **God makes man scarce as gold**. And in a time of earth shaking and heaven trembling occurrences.

ANOTHER ANGEL OR "EAGLE" IN THE "MERIDIAN" OR MIDDLE HEAVEN

We have seen seven angels stand and heard four of them blow their trumpets so far. The next **sight** is of an "eagle" (**αετος 8.13**) -perhaps 'darting' would be the better term. It is another sign of the times. This activity is neither in the heaven of the birds nor in the heaven of God but in the in between area-the heaven of the stars. It speaks of a high flying earthly power. This power is an "eagle power" and is not hard to designate in our present day.-it seems to be America

This eagle has a message for mankind as well. It spells out three "woes" by reason of the voices-which earmark the "war cries" of the **trumpet** of the three angels about to blow on their trumpets.

So **9.11, 9.13 & 11.15** are known even by the great of the earth.

- (1) AMERICA would have awareness of and participate in the war of Revelation 9 in respect of abyss-oil or smoke
- (2) AMERICA would be deeply involved in the Euphrates "loosing" of a **2million man war for an hour a day a month and a year to slay 33% of mankind (which to hazard a very broad guess might by now would have reduced from 6billion to 4.5 billion. Thus humanity might be expected to reduce by 50% by mid-tribulation period-giving some idea of the ferocity of the calamities of these days which feature in their climax the Armageddon struggle.**
- (3) AMERICA (prior to the tribulation) generally held to the view that the world is Christ's and He would reign and as Finisher of all He began He would be glorified. It was an enlightened nation bible-wise and fully warrants the "eagle" designation for "its long view" and "power" and "stellar" programme and war-involvement.

Ezekiel 32.7-8 speaks of the "snuffing out of Egypt" and covering of the stars. Related references in **Joel 2.10 & 3.15** speaks of the Day of the Lord when an army or air strike planes leap over the mountains and the Lord will be a refuge on a day when the sun is darkened-these texts relate to v12-so this is solemn & penultimate history

SURVEY OF THE FOUR ANGEL'S TRUMPETS & THE EAGLE FLIGHT

The warfare we read about in Chapter 8 may very well be totally integrated. The world is going to enter sooner than later the run up to that war. Second let us we constantly take heart from the incense and the mercy seat-and look to our Lord in these terrible days. What can be said is **that 66% escape by His great mercy!**

REVELATION 9

*This chapter records the trumpet blasts of the 5th and 6th angels. 15 OT QUOTES SUPPLY RICH BACKGROUND. The trumpets 5-6-7 encompass three woes (cf 8.13) The Greek **ουαι** is akin to the Hebrew **מַיָּא** i.e. the **most terrible word** in the Hebrew vocabulary-suited to **GREAT TRIBULATION***

A STAR FALLS

This is not the angel of 20.1-rather his adversary. He "had fallen" (dramatic perfect-K.L McKay Tyndale bulletin 1972"Syntax in exegesis). The fallen angel makes a dramatic impact in the current war with far-reaching spiritual implications. He uses "the key of know-how. The key to earth's oil is to be in the hands of nation(s) under the tutelage of evil or fallen angelic power. "The shaft of the abyss" **φρεαρ της αβυσσου** is a most apt ancient choice of words to express apparently endless "oil-shaft /reserves". Aristotle & Aristophanes use the word "Abyss" for "the unfathomed" or "immense wealth" **Quotes 1-2 Genesis 19.28 & Ex 19.18** speak of **רַיָּא** & **נִב** Sodom's "incense" and Sinai's "fury". Both are compared to smoke from a foundry-the Greek is **καμινος** Hebrew **נִב**. So iron & steel & oil merge in this prophetic statement. What we are reading about is huge arms supply to feed the wars no raging which adds to the environmental disaster. This **first woe** affects visibility and air quality seriously the sun is darkened-a massive **TRIBULATION ENVIRONMENTAL MUTATION** has come about.

LOCUSTS (FIGHTER-PLANES IN THE TRIBULATION ERA) 3-5

An Exodus reference is implicit **Exodus 10.12ff (cf Joel)**. The locust is "feared in the east"-**"they have military flight array"** are "all prevailing" and "leave a trail of devastation" These came **out of the smoke**-they were produced and fuelled using metals and petro-chemicals-product of the oil industry. These "engines of war" had licence & power like scorpions (cf most recent Roman arrow launching catapult-so named "SCORPION" and referred to in AD80 by Plutarch. They acted on governmental instruction (bed-chamber command)

There was a "constant flowing & changing"-a fluid command structure **πεω v4**. They did not target grass plants trees or men sealed-unlike the insect-a manner of distinguishing them from an insect plague. The capacity to test by terrible trial is not to kill the unsealed but to deliver a painful blow to **a pinpointed target**-as

a scorpion falls on a man. **Quote 4 helps here-Ezekiel 9.4 σφραγίς** a passport-as of those in Ezekiel's time who "cried and sighed on account of sin", that is, righteous persons cf also **Matthew 24.15**) The locusts delivered excruciating blows acting under human government for **5 months**

THE SEARCH FOR DEATH IN MID TRIBULATION PERIOD 6

"Men will set their hearts on death and have a great desire for it **επιθυμῶ**. **Quotes 5-7 help here Job3.21, Jer8.3 Hosea 10.8**. In Job "bitterness digs for death like digging for treasure-rejoicing exceedingly. Evil men choose death before life-says Jeremiah. In Hosea they call on the mountains & hills to fall on them"

LOCUSTS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL 7-10

Some commentators insist these "locusts" are carnivorous insects. The description flies in the face of this interpretation. The "warfare hardware" interpretation is consolidated by their origin-which is oil well based. Insects have no such origin. Again locusts have "no king" but these are ruled by Apollyon-the god of war.

- 1 Like horses with armour-plate-battle ready
- 2 Heads "gold crowns"-they had proved victors before-proven overwhelming
- 3 Faces-frontal view revealed masked men or in a cockpit
- 4 Hair-they had covering -might be anti-radar or simple camouflage -even rotors above flying as hair
- 5 Teeth-for they could devour with sharp shaped missiles/bullets
- 6 Breastplates-metal/iron-cum-steel bodies
- 7 Wings sounded -because engines were mounted there
- 8 Voices-as the sound of horses & chariots-battle velocity sound characterises their flight
- 9 Tails-deadly weapons with forward thrust from the rear like the scorpion-some called "stingers" now exist
the κεντρά (plural) are described as thorns left elsewhere-or spears from being thrust.
- 10 A King-Abaddon/Apollyon= extirpation/god of archery & darts of destruction. Now we understand more about the "fallen star" and how Satan or Apollyon who has but a short time turns industry to his death laden scheme

(2) I heard one voice 13-16

The voice came from the four horns of the incense altar-whence the righteous of earth fled. **Quote 11 Ex 30.1-3**

Helps-this is the reassuring voice right in before God-for priests are silent there! The voice commands the 6th angel to "loose 4 angels bound in the sweet water river Euphrates. This event awaits the destiny signal for "an hour of a day in a month of a year ahead"

(3) I heard the number It releases in battle 2 million campaigning chariot borne troops. John heard the battle calculation

(4) I saw the horses These carriers had men positioned over them in military order; several to a carrier; in quiet composure and chosen ones. The carriers are then described

1. Breastplates wheat coloured /red -and dark blue-and yellow-painted in battle colours
2. Heads -as lions-making explosive noise
3. Mouths-sending out fire & smoke-missile launching vehicles sending out missiles of fire, vapour rising weapons-literally "melt to ashes" and brimstone like poison. Here are terrible sophisticated machines not yet used in such numbers in open combat

Their authority was in mouth and tail. They had tails like snakes which twisted around and spat death. Their licence or orders were received in head & tail. Together with **the locusts** the horses were a second plague-together accounting for the death of **1.5-2 billion** people. This is the greatest slaughter of history-possibly exceeding the death loss of the flood. It is a third world conflict and its rationale is Abaddon. In a world of human government God seeks one thing-repentance. **Four Quotes help us in this gloom Dt32.17 Psalms115 4-7 & 135 15-17 and Dan5.23** where we learn that "once beloved Jeshurun or once righteous people were now just wax proud & fat; the heathen see the rump of the west as trusting in gold & silver; men following unseeing unhearing unspeaking gods and like Belshazzar many in just one generation have turned from the Lord.They did not repent of their

homicide/battle field slaying φονος; their poisons/drugs φαρμακεια; their brothels πορνεια not εταιρος (partner-concubinage) and their κλεμματα or fraud/stratagems of war.

So men thought to force their way rather than repent of their wrong-doing. This is nothing short of Nemesis and it occurs in a time when still on earth are sealed persons-but that itself speaks of the tribulation-cf- **Apocalypse 7 & 14**. The church of the Meshiachim is being prepared. This work proceeds today-it is associated with mercy in **Apocalypse 7.3** and **9.4**-where is the 1st woe. The second collapsed a 1/10th of Jerusalem **Apocalypse 11.13-14**-but the "sealed" herald the kingdom-cf **Apocalypse 14.1** Their location is interesting. Before the throne-prayerful, they are on Mt Zion with Christ; follow Jesus, from many nations -firstfruits

PARENTHESIS (3) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

REVELATION 10

"ANOTHER" ANGEL APPEARS IN THE APOCALYPSE

WE NEED TO KNOW AS THE SECOND PHASE OF THE TRIBULATION BEGINS CHRIST IS SUPREME

For the reasons given below this has to be the "angel of the LORD".

1. His face PROSOPOS -the word used of human form-this messenger is **truly human**
2. His feet are as pillars of fire (cf **Apocalypse 1.15**) as if they had burned in a furnace with a chimney-suggestive as in chapter one of **Christ's suffering**
3. His countenance OPHIS was like the sun (cf **Acts 9**)-cf **The glory of God**
4. His Position-Greek augury looked north Roman **south**. His right on the sea=Gentiles=felicity. Left on land-Israel=sorrow-He shows **sovereign right**
5. He had clothed himself with a cloud- cf **Apocalypse 1.9** and **1Thess4.17** He had **conducted the Rapture**
6. An IRIS or rainbow upon his head. This signified "the messenger among the gods themselves" & mercy
7. The book angel-cf **5.1** cf **5.8** The book is the lamb's possession-**only He alone can reveal the Father** and break the seals
- 8 His strength-V3 When he shouted 7 thunders discussed in their dialect-he **commanded the sealing of revelation**
- 9 He swore EV "in the Godhead eternal creating"
- 10 He swore "no delay" "no lifetimes left" **Time is in his hand**
*(Biblical quotations are key to recognising the "Angel of God". Equivalent action is found in **Deuteronomy 32.40** where God says "I lift up my hand and say 'I live for ever' Again in **Daniel 12.7** the man in linen held up His right hand confirming the 3 and 1/2 years limitation to the rule of the beast)*

THE SEVEN THUNDERS

These "thunders" discussed *something*. It was not to be written so it is not liable to interpretation. What we can say is that God spoke only once on this topic (aorist) and that the sealing (aorist) is once for all. At the time of this discussion the angel made lion-like exertions and shouted. The prophet Daniel is likewise instructed in **Daniel 12.4** to shut up words **till the time of the end**

PARENTHESIS (4) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

THE LITTLE SCROLL

(1)We need the book & the Spirit of Prophecy John took the **Biblaridion** that "opened itself". He uttered a bold request for revelation just as he retained a humble silence where there was no revelation.

(2)We need to preach judgment and grace It was sweet to taste-bitter to digest The "bitterness" is that the message of the book is utterly refused by a whole world government in the last or TRIBULATION days and neglected by the Church Just as Ezekiel's message was well digested and sweet to the prophet -a wonderful story of resurrected Israel (**Ezekiel 37**) and yet it was rejected in its day and rendered a basis for aggravated condemnation.

(3)We need to enunciate the prophetic vision of the Cross & crown-the Saviour and Pantocrator of the bible to the people-we must take up Jesus command before these halcyon days to tell to all "peoples" λαος means the "stone-like" nations- it falls to us to make scripture accessible -and we are bidden to set it in the hands of

Kings and rulers. John Calvin wrote first to Francis I of France. Jesus said "This gospel shall be proclaimed among all nations-then shall the purpose be fulfilled" **Matthew 24.14, Mark 13.10, Luke 24.47 with Romans 16.26**

REVELATION 11

Jerusalem enters as the scene of a 3.5 year contest between the Antichrist who breaks his treaty with Israel in the "middle of the week" and the LORD

(1) THE TEMPLE MEASURED

The mysterious rod

The book of Ezekiel explains that there will be a millennial temple. It will be built in times of trouble.

(1) John tells us the measure will be by a rule -3.05 metres or 10 feet long. The rule (**καλαμος**) will be one showing Jewish "Lictor authority" (**ραβδος**)

(2) John tells us there will be a "holy of holies" and an altar (incense & bronze)

(3) John tells us that Gentile holdings will continue in the sacra in tribulation time for the period of building and establishment

This chapter ends by showing us the ark in heaven-because the glory of this temple is in heaven until Christ's apocalypse after tribulation ends

(2) TWO WITNESSES ARE THEY MOSES AND ELIJAH? -OR ENOCH AND ELIJAH?

These two persons sent from heaven are sent in view of the need to turn Israel back to God. They supplement and perhaps even facilitate the conversion of Jews from each of the twelve tribes. Malachi tells us without a latter day Elijah hearts could not be turned to the future or past blessings. They also defend Israel.

The two witnesses are signs of judgment "olive trees" and "menorahs of spiritual light" in a dark place-as was the original menorah in the holy place. They can command fire, drought and plagues on a par with those of Egypt. Their ministry is three and a half years duration-and brings about profound change in the way God stems human rebellion. It bears with it a warning for those who desire to replace Yahweh in the world He made for His glory cannot evade HIS judgment whilst they seek to wreak havoc even in the latter half of the TRIBULATION saga.

Apocalypse Chapter 11 is central to the apocalypse and vital to the "restitution" of **Acts 3.21; Malachi 4.5; Matthew 11.14; Matt 16.14; Mark 6.5; Luke 9.8,19; Matthew 17.3-4; Mat. 17 10-11**, The response of Israel to Jesus was predictive of the path of future witness-i.e. "restoring the theocracy" in the case of refusal awaited a future witness. So sixty years later than the affirmations made during HIS ministry the Lord owned the coming of two latter day witnesses in the Apocalypse whose prophetic ministry would be accompanied by mighty signs. The **great city** would be as Sodom because fire would fall by their prayer upon the rebellious in it and like Egypt on account of the renewal of plagues against the godless within it.

(3) THE BEAST FROM THE ABYSS

Satan inspires and controls the Antichrist and as in the Master's ministry Satan contested with Jesus at the temple so after millennia the contest is renewed

A "beast" usually depicts "one above or below man". This incarnation of evil has credentials from hell **an unfathomed area** and overcomes two majestic prophets of high moral stature. The fact is this is an all out struggle engaging Satan and centred in "the street of the great city "**where also our Lord has been crucified**". The plaza of their death is in Jerusalem. The war that climaxes in Armageddon (**Apocalypse 16.19**) features **Jerusalem as "the great city"** Clearly the beast is antagonistic to the purpose of Yahweh for Jerusalem and the final setting for his defeat is this city no other.

(4) INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION RECORD OF RESURRECTION

Nothing less will fit this prophecy-because worldwide day and night audience was glued to this stunning scene. The fact is their bodies were not allowed to be placed in the inscriptions or records of the land of their death. These two persons were not permitted death certificates for burial or any record. Here is sign of great antipathy. On November 5 in the year of his death Yasser Arafat was refused the right of burial in Zion and in pending future time a similar by blunt refusal Anti-Christian authorities will deny earthly burial to God's last prophets. The scenario provides for an unparalleled proof of the power of God in TRIBULATION time.

(5)THE BEAST'S COUNTER INFLUENCE-A SECULAR GODLESS PALESTINE

At this time there is continued Palestinian Jewish rivalry for possession of the Holy Land. The enterprise to circumvent Jewish covenant rights continues till the dawn of Christ's glorious kingdom. Then all who remain shall worship Him
Those who in the wake of this "war" or struggle are "coming to

settle" **ΚΑΤΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΕΣ** the land under the beast will be "cheering" over the dead prophets-a very terrible insult. They will further act in respect of their victory by giving legacies and legal privilege to each other. The two prophets were gone and they had "tested the genuineness" of the settlers **Βασανίζω**

(6)THE AFTERMATH

The Spirit of life from God entered into these two prophets and they stood on their feet. Typically world media who had been concentrating on this fascinating if gruesome occurrence were shocked. Fear gripped them. They saw both palpable evidence of God, of resurrection and of heaven **at a stroke**. Besides they suffered judgment-7000 "names" **or infamous ones** died in **a great earthquake** and a tenth of the city fell. This was like Egypt under the Passover-as if the angel of death visited. This was like Sodom for the disturbance of the earth itself. This is the **second woe (for the 1st see Chapter 9 11-12)**

PARENTHESIS (6) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

(1)We need to know heaven has determined on Christ's millennial rule in the city. The blast of this trumpet was accompanied by **"great voices in heaven"** saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our God and His Christ and He shall reign eternally"

(2)We need to know that the Church "in heaven" will support the millennial rule. The response of the 24 elders was immediate. They fell in worship at the throne. "O Lord God PANTOCRATOR who was and is and is willing to go on we give YOU praise for YOU have taken YOUR great power and YOU are sovereign once for all.

(3)We need to know the church triumphant lives for Christ and prophecy. The nations were in an orgy of anger and YOUR anger has come and the time of judgment for the dead-and **to give reward to YOUR servants the prophets** and to the saints and to those who fear YOUR name-small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.

(4)We need to know that Christ is the Lion of Judah. The vision concludes with the "artillery of heaven"-**"lightnings and voices and thunders and an earthquake and a great hail"** The stage is set for the Lord's coming to be once again at the centre of His people and to be the fear of His enemies. The "Long expected divine event" of Christ's kingdom begins unfolding in earnest.

REVELATION 12

SEALS TRUMPETS AND BEYOND

Between the 7th seal and the 7th trumpet a period spanning 2 judgements comes and goes. The first, a 5-month long war resulting in **the death of 1/3rd of those on earth**. Then the eastern peoples enter the later struggle that engulfs Jerusalem. Meantime **an earthquake shakes Jerusalem -with 7000 resultant deaths**. These judgements reflect the failure of nations to repent and Jerusalem's failure to open their hearts to the message of the two prophets sent by God.

The **third woe follows-an unprecedented earthquake** which ends warring and heralds Christ's coming. We have seen Jesus as High-priest in **Chapters 4-5**; as one whose wrath demands reverence in **Chapter 6**-especially **v16**-and in **Chapter 7** especially **v.17** as the compassionate Lord; thereafter as the Judge who moves towards speedy process **10.6 & 11.15-16** In **Chapter 12.5** we view Jesus' rule as immensely strong-**"He will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre"**

(1)THE WOMAN

Further developments in the battle of Satan with Israel are now revealed.
The identification of the "woman" is as Harry Ironside said, "momentous". She is Israel. From one of her daughters came the Christ child. The prophet **Isaiah (66.7)** tells how this nation gives birth before she travails to the Christ. The prophet then speaks of the travail when Israel brings forth a nation of heirs in a day. Astride the moon and radiant in the sun-this nation is resourced with the entire

Old Testament and the New Testament glory beams upon her in the latter day. The twelve tribes are her "STEPHANOS" or distinction and honour because by miracle & through holocaust God preserved them all (cf **chapter 7**)

(2)THE DRAGON

Another sign was seen in heaven. A fiery dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns. The image is identical with Daniel's 4th beast as to its horns. It represents the last system of political power before Christ's rule. Daniel does not refer to 7 heads. John says very clearly that the heads had "diadems" -that is, they had **political authority**. Matthew Henry observes that Augustus divided the Roman Empire into 10 provinces-the heads are the hills-where the rulers and mighty of the empire lived (**Apocalypse 17.9**). Current New Order plans to divide the world in ten government areas are ready to be implemented pending the establishment of a unitary authority-which as yet is sketchy and notional though one candidate with a link to Mohammed and credibility at the Vatican seems ready to take on such a role. The dragon held all the levers of power, the woman all the clarity of religion and truth.

Bill Freel in "Survival" -a clear and attractive commentary on the Apocalypse - speaks of "Portents" or "things of great significance" and comments usefully with a reference from **Isaiah 9.15** "the prophet that teaches lies is the tail"-so as in **v4** Satan's deception swept 1/3rd of the stars from the sky. He who is associated with the fall of angels (cf **v9**) is also associated with deception and corruption in the church. As earlier chapters attest there was incipient deception in the church in its pristine years and that process increased in momentum to medieval times. Yet Satan's greatest stratagem was foiled by the miraculous incarnation of Jesus Christ and the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Lord (cf **v.5**)

Just as Israel was cared for by God in 42 locations in the wilderness after the foiled pursuit of Pharaoh so Israel will be cared for by the Lord for 42 months during her time of GREAT DISTRESS. Satan may disturb many stars but our Sun of Righteousness and the pure shining testimony of the saints of Jesus will remain. The God who prepared a place for the early Christians under persecution and the Huguenots in England, who prepared a place for his ancient people from the steppes of Russia to the wide plains of America will prepare for them in the time of Jacob's trouble -this is the promise of God (**Apocalypse 10.6**)

PARENTHESIS (7) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

Of all views of heaven we least expect this one-but it will happen and its aftermath leads to the greatest war ever-the Armageddon. Satan says good bye to heaven for ever and his options shorten over 3.5 years till he is thrown into the lake of fire.

(3)WAR IN HEAVEN -ABSOLUTE ANGELIC COMBAT 7-9

(1)We need to know the Church shall take her stand in heaven-following her captain the lamb. The provision of stoles **στολος** or "soldiers' array" to the tribulation martyrs suggests **heaven is on war alert**. That was **Apocalypse 7.9**. We read of the outbreak of just such a war linked to the final earth struggle in declaration "War took place in heaven" **Apocalypse 12.7**.

(2)We need to know Michael the archangel stands for Israel and will overcome Satan Michael and his angels fought a decisive once-for-all battle against the devil-pushing him further and further from God's presence-where he delighted to inveigh against man. That ground was held by praying martyrs now-the fallen angels had no "familiar place" in heaven. They were strangers and their leader-the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the one calling himself Diabolus -who accuses saints-and Satan-who opposes God, was thrown out of heaven with His angels.

HEAVEN ERUPTS AWAITING THE SIGNAL INTERVENTION OF GOD ON EARTH

SCRIPTURE WARNS OF THE UNPARALLELED VENOM OF THE SERPENT

(3)We need to know the effectiveness of those who resist to blood. Heaven erupts in joy with the coincidence of four great blessings now known-Salvation in its full sense, the exercise of outward power, the emergence of the kingdom and the introduction of the rod of God's power.

"I heard a great voice in heaven saying, "Now at this very moment salvation and increase of power and the kingdom of our God has come and the authority of his Christ for the accuser of our brethren who accused them day and night before our God is cast down. They gained victory over him **through the blood of the lamb** and through the word of their **witness as martyrs**. So the martyrs in heaven overwhelm Satan. He has far overstepped his rights.

The martyrs began this great victory.

1. Loved not their souls-and died for Christ
 2. Rejoice O heavens and those who enjoy the close tabernacle & shekinah of Christ
- Woe to you who dwell in Israel and in Gentile lands (or the land and the sea)**
Diabolus has come down near you holding great wrath or fuming rage, perceiving that he has a little moment (to injure and slander)

THE DEVIL'S CAMPAIGN

(1)PERSECUTION

When the dragon perceived that he was cast down to the earth-or Israel-by Michael the prince who stands for that people-he persecuted the woman who bore the "man-child"

The people of Israel find AN EAGLE to support their fledgling state

Two wings of the **great eagle** were given the woman. Clearly this represents protection. It is hard to avoid the thought since the perilous days spoken of for Israel are up ahead-that this eagle represents the support of AMERICA or Jewish America. The nurturing of this nation for the "time times and part of a time" or the 42 months or 3.5 years from the presence of the serpent is linked to a special "place" This suggests to the modern mind an airlift and fundamentally terrible TRIBULATION circumstances in Israel.

(2)SATAN'S TORRENT OF ANTI-JEWISH PROPAGANDA

The serpent threw water from his mouth-or vomited after the woman that he might bear her away with the flood. This is the characteristic diabolus ploy-a spate of slander and venom against this ancient people of God.

THE EARTH REBUTS THE TIRADE

This does not succeed because the earth opened her mouth and swallowed the slander. In other words the wider world or the settlement in the land gave help to Israel and countered the surge of anti-Semitism released by Satan.

(3) THE DEVILS WORLD STRATAGEM AGAINST ISRAEL

The devil then moved away from Israel to war with the remainder of Jews world-wide who were living by the law of Moses and also Christians-i.e. the Messianic Jews. This group of positive Christians is the hope of other Jews-and so Satan directs his main opposition at these positive and good people

REVELATION 13

INTRODUCTION

THE PENULTIMATE RULE OF TERROR THAT PRELUDES CHRIST'S REIGN

Chapters 12 & 13 are strongly related to **Daniel 7** -which unites them to the events of that prophecy. Daniel 7 incorporates both the coming of the Lord or "rapture"(**Daniel 7.13 & 1Thess3**)and the Apocalypse of Christ to rule (**Daniel 7.27**) has to be interpreted as either con-joined (a mid-tribulation framework) or evidence must exist in support of the pre-tribulation view. Prophetically the post-tribulation view is anomalous since it defaults on God's continued interest in the Jew and His covenants with Abraham. It would be fatuous to give consideration to a-millennial ideas in the present context because it knows of no "Great Tribulation" and yet as I have shown in **the exordiums** the Church Triumphant reverses this earthly theological reposit absolutely. For it the "sovereignty of God" necessitates Rapture Tribulation and Millennium. The 21st century church in UK follows rigidly the early reformers concept of history and Luther's notion of the church as replacing Israel in the scheme of things. It is disingenuous -first because Augustine transferring the millennium where it never could be first to a **post-Constantine period** then to **1000AD** and subsequently the church dropped it like a hot potato. Today's a-millennialists propose an unacceptable interpretation that this earth is not destroyed (**2Peter 3.12**)and an equally unacceptable transfer of all millennial promises to this earth as our long-stay eternal home.

THE RELEVANCE OF REFERENCES FROM DANIEL IN APOCALYPSE 12-13

Chapters 12 & 13 of the APOCALYPSE carry 17 allusions to Daniel's night vision

CHAPTER 12

- (1)**Chapter12.3/Dan7.7** The fourth beast-which spans a long period
- (2)**V4/Dan8.10** the slow growth of the antichrist
- (3)**V7/Dan10.13**the growing antichrist-even in the world as John the divine says in

New Testament times

- (4)**v.7/Dan12.1** the general protection of modern Israel by Michael-evidence of which is seen since 1948
- (5)**v14/Dan7.25 & 12.7** the stratagem /gentile device that is explained in Dan.9.27 refers to the final Jewish crisis
- (6)**v17/Dan7.7 & 21** The emergence of the antichrist and his temporary success before the Kingdom comes in power

CHAPTER 13

- (1)**13.1,2/Dan7.3** The four winds and emergence of the procession of power-Babylon Persia Greece Rome developing
- (2)**v.5/Dan7.8, 20, 25, 36** The full provenance of the horn or antichrist
- (3)**v.7/Dan7.7, 21** The fourth beast and the horn
- (4)**v.8/Dan12.1** The short-lived universal kingdom of the beast
- (5)**v.15/Dan 3 5-6** A reference to the sort of Babylonian draconian law on worship or death-to be used by antichrist.

THE OMITTED EVENT THAT PRECLUDES THE KINGDOM

As this analysis shows there is nowhere in these chapters a reference to Daniel 7.13 (cf 1Thess3.16-17) when "***the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven and returns to the ancient of days-being borne back into heaven by the throng of the redeemed***". That is because it has taken place before the tribulation story begins. Paul teaches Christ's Parousia is His first "appearing". This is also taught clearly by the Lord in his parable of the Wedding banquet. The real answer to the church's whereabouts is to be found in **Revelation 3.20-5.9 where those taken home "sing anew in glory". This is strongly substantiated with the Exordium confirmations of the Church in heaven**

In **Daniel 7** the writer tells us that the old kingdoms lived on but the fourth was taken over by a power which had been long growing and used ultimately draconian religious principles-but he does not designate when the Saviour comes-nor but **he does say that he takes up His authority after his coming back from the earth** (Daniel 7.13 & 14) and thereafter ruled in an age-long kingdom which continued eternally.

REVELATION 13 -Exposition of six gifts

THE BEAST 1

The concept of "THE BEAST" comes from the Greek prose word **θηριον** which signifies both the "brutal and cruel" and fabulous monsters like the sphinx or centaur. The Hebrew term would be "living creature". The Spirit of God is showing that democracy will cease and Satan will dominate the final years of human government with a **tyrannical regime**

I saw A BEAST or reptile emerging from the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. The sea in **Daniel 7.2** is named "The great sea"(Hebrew=YAMA RABBAH) i.e. the Mediterranean Sea-and though Babylon and Persia arose close to the Persian gulf the "night vision" relates their latter day rise or re-emergence to a western not mid-east locale.

The seven heads and horns are explained in **Apocalypse 17.9-12** as having a Rome centred significance(may be developed from "The Treaty of Rome")and **also** relate to seven forms of government running in relay and eventing in the final development-and the horns represent the last rulers combined in what may be a Euro-centred world regime of the last days. Swete sees the "sea" in general terms only as a "seething cauldron of national and social life out of which great historical world movements arise". The information of **Apocalypse 17** is, I believe, adequate to a more specific application.

A DESCRIPTION THAT RELATES TO THE PAST AND FUTURE 2

THE BEAST viewed was like a panther or leopard (Greek=**παρδαλις**) with a bear's paws and a lion's mouth. The comparison with a "panther" suggests a stalking or monitoring power-watching and waiting-with its intelligence network. The composite nature of it is also in mind as

- (a)**the leopard** incorporates "black and white" so modern states mingle racial characteristics. Also the power of
- (b)**the bear** (associated with the north and Russia) and the power of
- (c)**the lion** (Britain & associated nations. Britain like Babylon adopted the lion emblem)The dragon gave the beast -his increasing power; his seat of power, and his great authority. The dragon is always Satan in apocalyptic contexts.

THE BEAST'S EMPIRE SURVIVES AN APPARENT MORTAL WOUND 3

I saw one of the heads **as if** slain unto death a (Greek= $\pi\lambda\eta\gamma\eta$ "plague" cf **v14**) was healed. The whole earth as it looked back at the blow wondered. Hence emerged **worship of the "dragon"** who gave the beast authority-and they worshipped the beast, saying "who is like the BEAST", who is able to destroy him once for all in war? Thus imitation of resurrection power evidenced in Jesus and in the "appearing" or "Parousia" will replace the old-time gospel truth with infernal worship for a period .In this way a power edging its way to primacy ultimately as in v.2 and v.5 obtains political and religious dominance. The dragon's **GIFT (1)** of a mouth or WAR-MOUTH led to "blasphemous" utterance. Second, **GIFT (2)** political "authority" was given the beast **vv4&6**. However this authority was to be short-lived-only 3.5 years. This "beast" empire will rise in the second half of the seven years of these segments.

HOLY ANTAGONISTS OF "THE BEAST"

1. GOD AND THE REDEEMED

The BEAST blasphemed in the presence of God and blasphemed his name-Jehovah and his tabernacle-and here is the most significant interpretative detail. The tabernacle speaks of Christ as come and returned for a short time to glory. The tabernacle also speaks of the **dwelling of the martyrs in the extended throne tabernacle of Apocalypse Chapter 7.16**. That this is accurate is plainly stated in **v.6b** "He blasphemed those whose tabernacle was in heaven" who doubtless were slain through the agency of the beast in its rise to power. All of this action suggests an earlier act of opposition to the beast which rendered its religion especially blasphemous

2. HOLY ONES ON EARTH

The BEAST was given **GIFT (3)** to carry war to the saints (Messianic saints & Israel) and to obtain victory over them. The beast was given **GIFT (4)** authority over every tribe tongue and nation. All who "settle down on earth" after the already catastrophic events -will worship the beast-all that is-whose names are not written in the book of the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

For those pinned down by this end time terror God says, "If anyone is to go into a body of prisoners -to prison he must go with others, if is to be killed by the bent sword -he must so be killed. Here is the patience and faith of the saints." (Compare **6.11 and 13.10**) Holiness is best defined as living sacrificially. True holiness modelled by martyrs.

A SECOND BEAST

Then I saw another beast coming out of the earth.

This beast created these things

1. It created its own **authority** It had two small horns like a lamb, and made a noise like a dragon-since dragons were reptiles or fabulous snakes. It "invented" for itself the authority of the first beast right in its presence.
2. It created in the earth and those now settled in it **worship** of the first beast, whose plague had been healed.
3. It created great signs- **fire should come from heaven** in the presence of men-mimicking the Holy Spirit & prophets
4. It deceived those dwelling or settling on the earth through signs given **GIFT (5)** of Satan for it to do in the presence of the beast that had the stroke by the assassin's weapon and lived.
5. The master stroke of Satan was to give **GIFT(6)the beast the capacity to bring "life" or "spirit" into the image of the beast**-so the second principle of this halcyon period is what Satan believes is his ace card- an act of CREATION. This copy of the tyrant makes a sort of TRIUMVIRATE or trinity OF EVIL-the beast -his image and the dragon. Failure to worship the "image" or "son-type" creation is visited by death.
6. THE FINAL ACT OF TYRANNY IS TO MAKE ALL-TINY CHILDREN AND GREAT PERSONS, IMMENSELY RICH AND BEGGARLY POOR , FREEMEN AND SLAVES-THAT A MARK SHOULD BE GIVEN THEM ON THEIR RIGHT HAND AND ON THEIR FOREHEAD-A MARK SUCH AS IS PUT ON COINS SO THAT EACH IS KNOWN TO BE A MEMBER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE BEAST.

The stamp or mark of the cruel power is going to be essential to market exchange or barter. Each must then have either the character or number of the name of the beast to trade.

He who has the nous-the wisdom let him count the number of the beast-for it is the number of man, and his number is $\chi\xi\varsigma$ The mark or name or number. John says "Here is wisdom, let he who has a purpose count the number of the beast for it is the numerical system of man and his number is 666 the number spells triple shortcoming. He cannot create by new birth, he cannot give the Holy Spirit and he cannot resurrect but he will qualify as antichrist through these imitations of the real thing.

PARENTHEIS (8) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

REVELATION 14

CHRIST STANDS READY ON MT ZION 1

(1) **We need to know** that no cruel empire shall long stand in the last days-Christ is Victor! I saw and behold a lamb standing on Mount Zion, with Him 144,000 with the name of **the Father** written on their foreheads.

(2) **We need to know** the LORD will re-match the Christian and Jewish believers in glory and fill up their understanding of how He brings in His kingdom. Jewish persons first referred to in **Chapter 7.5-8** are more fully described in the ensuing verses. They earn recognition from the standing Christ for their witness as martyrs. Their appearance in heaven shows them enjoying the company of the raptured church though they were taken each in his own order by the oracle of death as martyrs -though some believe they may be separately raptured as a body- during the period of the trumpets -being united to the saints in glory (7.9-15.5)

John heard a voice from heaven as of many waters and as of mighty thunder

(3) **We need to know** that the "new Song" which unites Jew & Gentile-the "Song of Moses and the Lamb" rejoices in our **Exodus from the Egypt of this world** and gives praise to God as Pantocrator for the joyous experience of **"endowed perfection"** John then heard the voice of singers singing as they harped in the circle of their harps-and they are singing as if a new song in before the throne and before the four living creatures and elders.

THE HARP BEST REFLECTS THE DEPTH AND SWEETNESS OF MAN'S PRAISE

The lyre or harp had 7-9 strings and man has 8-9 ribs. The $\kappa\iota\theta\alpha\rho\alpha\iota\varsigma$ the harp, the $\kappa\iota\theta\alpha\rho\varsigma$ is the chest -from both rich deep praise is derived. Here the instrument associated with heaven is the harp or psaltery-whose ancient associations with God's praise and man's frame render its mention most fitting. God made us for His praise-cf. Ephesians 1.12

1 And no-one could learn the song except the 144,000 (to "get accustomed to"/ "to perceive" (cf. language of sacrifice)

2. Who had been purchased from the earth.

3. These had not become defiled with women-for they are unmarried /chaste.

4. These follow the lamb wherever he goes in union.

5. They were purchased from among mankind, a first-fruit offering to God and to the lamb.

6. In their mouth no subtle scheme was found

7. They are without spot close to the throne of God

These saints of the future sound a challenge to purity and warning against the flesh to modern man. John 23rd drew near to death -a man of outstanding morality and virginity- he had been "living for Jesus only" so let it not be said that grace has a short reach.

A RUSHING ANGEL-THE GOSPEL PERSIST -ITS MESSENGERIS IN A RUSH-HE HAS 3.5 YEARS 6

John saw ANOTHER ANGEL "flying" or "rushing" in the meridian of heaven-right above **at midday**-with all the light-**having the gospel for the dispensation or the age** to proclaim as good news once for all to the settlers of earth-and every nation and tribe and people and tongue. This messenger of the air waves is firmly lodged in the tribulation era-and the second half of that period-not in the last revival age of the church. It is quite thrilling to know that the world under judgment remains still God's world -a world that is offered mercy.

JUDGMENT IS SWIFT-THE LAST WARNING 7

He said in a loud voice, "Fear God , and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgement is come-worship Him who made the heaven and earth and sea and fountains of water."

HUMAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS DRUNKEN SPREE ENDS LIKE BABYLON'S LAST DAYS 8

ANOTHER(SECOND) ANGEL followed, saying "Babylon is fallen is fallen-the great city-for from the wine of her passion/principle of life she has made all the nations drunk". We may consider that the land which was Babylon in Old and New Testament times is the Iraq of today. It has much oil wealth-but it would seem the bible is speaking of it as the initial seat of **human government**-WITH THE ASSOCIATED PRIDE AND POMP AND PROVISIONS -especially idolatry & living for the flesh- which percolated internationally by the idolatrous Zodiac and the ancient religion of Nimrod and Semiramis

SODOM LIKE JUDGMENT PREDICTED 9-12

A THIRD ANGEL followed-saying with a great voice, if anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or his hand-he will drink the wine of the passion of God poured out -unadulterated in the cup of His wrath, and he will have been tested in fire and brimstone(fire burns what corrupts and sulphur fumigates-so the process ends idolatry) before the holy angels and the lamb. That this form of trial (Greek **Βασανος**=a stone to test gold by touch, hence testing the genuine by trial. The parallel is Sodom [**Genesis 19.5,16,24**]where it was either "hand of angels" or "fire and brimstone"-so here where angels have no brief to save judgment follows) The smoke of their touchstone trial will ascend eternally. Those who receive the mark of his name - worshippers of THE BEAST & his image have no rest day or night. **Here** is the patience of the saints . **Here** are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. So **13.10 & 14.12** state "Here is the patience of saints". The first picture is of poor imprisoned and executed martyrs-the second of the end of antichrist. The death of martyrs and their cry to God has in this **intervention** its answer.

PARENTHESIS (9) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS HEARD 13

(1)**We need to know** that at whatever time-now or in the tribulation to be "in Christ" at death is to be assured of heaven. The one who commanded John to write was God-and the word was His word. He assured the aged saint that all through history from the moment (Greek=**αρι**=at this moment) he was living into the future "to die in the Lord"(and this is confirmed by the Spirit of God) is to rest from labour and the energised works of Christians will be like disciples left behind.

HEAVEN'S ARMIES WILL ARRIVE 14

(2) **We need to know** that the king is coming to rule the earth. "Behold a white cloud". Homer uses the "cloud" in the Iliad of an army. Here we have a "joyful happy and felicitous group and above or over them one like the "son of man". He was crowned with the gold of victory and he held a sharp harvest sickle in His hand.

THE TEMPLE OR ARCH ANGEL CALLS 15-17 This angel screamed, "Send in your sickle (3) **We need to know** that the Lord will not come before His time-as He sent prophets He will send many angels prior to his final return.

The angel sends in the sickle(Greek=**δρεπανον**=scythe/sickle)-for the hour of summer harvest has come. He that had placed himself on the throne above the cloud or saints cast His sickle upon the earth and the earth was reaped. It is significant that the temple angel carries God's response to the incense of prayer and the Great intercessor or mediator now acts as judge in a war He Christ begins in heaven and concludes on earth.

AN ANGEL-HERALDS THE FINAL HARVESTING OF TARES

A FOURTH ANGEL in this series of messages comes actually from the holiest in heaven-where Christ exercises power-in immediate response with a sharp sickle.

MASSIVE MID-EAST BLOOD SHED

Yet another angel-THE FIFTH from the incense altar who had power over fire shouted (Greek=**κραυγαζω**=calling cf dogs baying for judgement.)

1.Send your sharp sickle and harvest when ripe the grape cluster of the vine of the earth

2.For **her heavy bunches of grapes** are being chewed up or are fermenting strongly

And the angel sent his sickle **into the earth**(Israel)and harvested the cluster of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the passion & principle of God- and the press was trodden outside the city(Jerusalem) and the blood of the winepress came to as far as the bits of the horses mouths(the phrase may mean when the horse is feeding-which represents a very terrible slaughter) and to a distance of over **180 miles**(1,600 stadia)-that is as far as the borders of Iraq Syria and Egypt. More about this **intervention** and associated events - the great battle of Armageddon-that **marks the climax** of the Tribulation as Ezekiel's war **marks its inception** can be found in **Apocalypse 16.16**

CHAPTER 15

DIVINELY DESIGNED PLAGUES FOR MERCILESS MEN

The sign we are about to encounter spelt the end of slavery to Satan. The 10 plagues delivered Israel from Egypt. These 7 deliver Israel from the power of the beast and his system

"I saw another great and wonderful sign in the heaven-**seven angels holding the seven last plagues**, for in them the wrath of God was fulfilled." The plagues themselves are described in Chapter 16 -but here they are clearly linked to God. The last days before the Lord comes to the earth will see sever judgements meted out.

MARTYRS COMMEND GOD'S METHODS

This "sea" is quite unlike that on earth. If it were simply crystal the victors would find it hard not to look at themselves-but that it is mingled with fire -it is a great reflector of Christ's sacrificial work-and to those who crossed to eternity through His blood here is a vivid reminder that their transparent holiness, standing and eternal security came through His sacrificial work -hence the "harps of God" for the praise of Christ. The tabernacle had a "molten sea" -and Solomon's temple added a sphinx emblazoned on it-suitable sign of "risen life". And I saw as if a sea of crystal mingled with fire. Those who conquered the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name, stood on the crystal sea, holding God's harps. This connection links the harp with prophecy. David sang and his song was prophetic. This possibly explains why the earlier song of 14.3 was mysterious. Here the conquerors sang the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song here is a victory song relating to the Lord's defeat of the beast much in the way the Song of Moses rejoiced in the Lord's defeat of Pharaoh.

"Great and wonderful are your works, O Lord God the Almighty Victor"

(Greek=παντοκρατωρ)PANTOCRATOR

"Righteous and genuine are your paths, O king of saints"

"Who should not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name, for YOU ALONE are HOLY,

"For all the nations will come and worship before you for you have made plain your judgements to amend wrong"

This great statement acknowledges the victory of the death and resurrection of Christ and indeed His judgement.

This statement commends God's methods and systems which He has ordained

This statement reminds us of His alone holiness

This statement prophesies that the whole world will recognise God's righting of wrong.

SEGMENT 4 15.5-17.18 μετα ταυτα

(THE SEVEN VIALS- MYSTERY BABYLON)

The final deadly vials of divine wrath bring (1)land based sores(nuclear contamination?);(2)sea corruption with death (3) River & reservoir ruin with further death (4)Solar flares with cancer bearing burs (5)Sores on the Beast's seat with nuclear or chemical poisoning (6)on the Euphrates boding the Armageddon and (7)In the Air -highly suggestive of a Nuclear winter.

JUDGMENT WITHOUT DELAY 5-8 James 2.13

The temple of the tabernacle of witness in heaven was opened. For the first time since Calvary the absolute righteous rule of God will run world-wide-and evil will be summarily judged. **No longer will men say, "There is no God"** with impunity or conviction-only in utter defiance. The witness to His holy ways will become overwhelming.

PARENTHESIS (10) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW

(1) **We need to know** that destiny is settled in the Holy Place SEVEN ANGELS came out of the holy place. They were as priests in the sanctuary. They came from beyond the veil and were endued with linen-which is called the "thread of destiny". These angels held human destiny in their hands.

(3) **We need to know** that there is reflected radiance in heaven just as illumined the face of Moses They were clad in shining robes-they had come from the presence of God-and reflected His glory. They were bound around the breast with golden girdles. This speaks of the heavenly and a ruling role God gives them

(3)**We need to know** that God cares to establish justice and judge the rebellious. tasks and Now John had earlier seen the angels holding the plagues. They had come out from God with them, but notice that one of the living creatures gave to the seven each a golden vial full of the passion of God who lives into the ages of ages.

This means that the plagues were not the end -they fell with the eternal passion of God which lasts eternally.

(4) **We need to know** that there is wrath prayer cannot reverse. The temple or Holy Place was filled with the smoke. There is no ministry of appeal or mediation now. The "consuming fire" of divine wrath was utterly awesome and until the plagues were completed heaven. When as in **1Kings 8** Solomon dedicated his great temple the place was put beyond bounds of the priests **1Kings8.11** by the glory cloud of God.

(5)**We need to know** that Israel is the apple of God's eye. Nevertheless during that time Solomon made his great intercessory prayer for Israel asking that prayer stop plague and contain defeat and issue in forgiveness. The only murmur is the statement of acknowledgement of the "angel of the waters" and "the altar" or martyrs acknowledgement in **Apocalypse 16.5-7**

This period described further in **Chapter 16** has only one parallel-Calvary. Then judgement in a remorseless way fell upon the Christ of God for our sin, now righteous judgements come upon merciless persecutors

REFLECTIONS ON THE SONG OF THE LAMB

Heaven is a place of song and praise. John's spiritual adventure with the angel of God "in the Spirit" teaches us lessons redolent with deep spiritual meaning.

(1)**THINK** what it will be when God acts decisively in answer to prayer and according to his sovereign timing to rid the world of its last servitude. The seven vials prepare for a freedom that democracy never won-from the pride of nations and the deception of Satan. God as in **Exodus 9.14** sends "all my plagues"

(2)**THINK** Redemption in the time of Moses came by the sea and by the fiery pillar. We have crossed over beyond our fears and separation from God in His holiness through the blood of the lamb and by the work of the Holy Ghost we have come to know the presence of the Lord. In heaven our song will be of the lamb who bought us.

(3)**THINK** Those harps -ancient instrument of the prophets -still symbolise prophecy in heaven-foretelling as in **v.4** that "all nations will come and worship before the Lamb"

(4)**THINK** of the references in this chapter to the psalmist-prophet:-

Psalm 92.5 "Great are your works -your thoughts very deep. It is good...to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night...to the melody of a harp. **You, O Lord are exalted for ever**(David presents the eternal exaltation of the Lord and the prophecy sets him singing. **The righteous shall flourish as a palm and these planted in the house of the Lord shall be fruitful like trees.** God's enemies shall be scattered

Psalm 111.2 The works of the Lord are great-sought out by those who have pleasure therein. They are steadfast **for ever and ever...to Him belongs eternal praise**(David foreshadows our song in heaven)

Psalm 139.14 I am fearfully and wonderfully made.. and when I awake!(David speaks prophetically about the **resurrection to eternal life** as he sings)

Psalm 145.17 David blesses the Lord "gracious and compassionate" "faithful to all His promises" "near to all who call on Him" and he concludes with a prophecy of the judgement and eternal praise of God-a recurrent theme in his singing..."**all the wicked He will destroy...let every creature praise His holy name for ever and ever**"(LEYOLAM WE AD)

Psalm 86.9 Here David-opposed by proud and violent men urges in face of present revolt from God that **all nations shall come and worship before Him**".

(5)**THINK** about the tabernacle in heaven-containing in an actual sense what the old tabernacle symbolised in its manna, its tables and its rod. In heaven is the very Christ of God-his righteous law and the sceptre of his power

(6)**THINK** of the linen of the angels and the saints-clothed with the "thread of destiny" and praying towards the downfall of Satan's kingdom and day when His glory is revealed.

(7)**THINK** of the "smoke" significant as in 1Kings 8 8-10 and in **Isaiah 6**(always with **Isaiah 53**) of "God dwelling on earth" and of "**the Lord high and lifted up**" among His people.

REVELATION 16 THE WRATH OF GOD

GENERAL COMMENT ON THE SEVEN VIALS/PLAGUES

The scene of judgment starts with a great voice from the temple. This voice "exceeds" all other sounds in the universe and is the ultimate in command-its command is final and both the procedure and the timing are instant upon its summons. The "VIALS" can describe drinking cups or funerary urns-and they do indeed relate to the death of men and the votive offering of their lives

This chapter seems neat enough but the subject of divine wrath is complex. In the chapter one of the 15 warnings of Christ occurs. It sits in between the sixth and seventh outpourings and it is specifically about watchfulness and holiness in the sense of moral purity-it reads "*Behold I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed*"

Each vial is in an angel's hand-and the outpourings are given a sequence. The bowls are poured on specific sites of a similar sort or on specific locations. These are "the land"; "the sea"; "the springs"; "the sun"; "the throne of the beast"; "the great river Euphrates" and finally the "air". Only one of these locations is not a recognisable geographic description, namely the throne or "seat" or "bishop's chair" or the beast. If it is related to "Satan's seat" in the last days of human government or the Pergamon throne we might instance Europe. If we compare with **Chapter 13** the scene of the beasts rise is the Mediterranean. So generally we have seven locations. The fourth vial poured on the "sun" affects the earth in such a way as to affect the rays of the sun when they penetrate the atmosphere.

VIAL ONE 2

With this plague sores were inflicted on those who worshipped the beast. It resembled the 5th plague of Moses.. The outpouring resulted in damaging and painful suppurating or **WEeping SORES** deepening in the bodies of those men who had the stamp or imprint of the beast. *χαραγμα* relates to money in the secular context. The second reason why these people suffered is because they worshipped the image of the beast. In **Deuteronomy 28** the infliction of a sore that developed from the feet over the whole body was on account of disobedience of enlightened people. The stark alternative of the period was death or receiving the mark and false worship-**Apocalypse 13.15** So the Lord directs His wrath first at the beast's authority and idolatry.

Though this judgment was terrible it may have held out time to recant to those who were pressed in conscience. When in modern times we strive for grace and political correctness of attitude to other religious groups we have to balance this with the Lord's deep disapproval of false worship. Tacit approval of worship of strange gods or syncretism or acceptance of other faiths within the ecumenical context cannot honour Yahweh. His stamp of approval in this is vital. David is adamant here, While others run after other gods, "**I will not take their names on my lips**" he says Psal6.4. "**Open thou my lips** and my mouth will declare your praise" **Psalm 51.15** "**Because your love is better than life** my lips will praise you as long as I live" Psal63.3-4 ."I will fulfil the vows my lips promised because **when I was in trouble** you heard my prayer" **Psalm 66.12,14 ,19** "My lips will shout for joy when I praise you on harp and lyre-**I whom you have redeemed**" **Psalm 71.22** "May my lips overflow with praise for you teach me **your decrees**" "May my prayer be like **incense**-keep watch over the door of my lips" Psal41.2

These are the reasons for exclusiveness in giving Glory to God in Christ.

VIAL TWO 3

The second angel poured out his vial into the sea. The fact of "body sores" or "ulcers" universal is conceivable-nuclear exchanges would entail such effects in

survivors. The fact of **THE SEA BECOMING ONE GREAT BODY OF DEATH** with blood streams seems poetic-until we review **Exodus7.17-21** In the first plague the Nile water mingled with blood resulted from the death of everything in the Nile. All the fish and sea creatures will die under this wider judgment. The waters of the Nile in the first instance smelt foul. This judgment in Egypt related to infanticide-and its bearing on the sin of abortion -the modern equivalent-may be surmised. End of last millennium statistics show that 1 in 4 American pregnancies end in abortion. Illegitimacy birth rates vary from 20% in USA to 70% in some countries.

VIAL THREE 4-7

JUDGMENT DECREED-DIVINE WARNING

The third angel is described as "the angel of the waters" . Water nymphs are known within Greek mythology. This is different. This angel has authority over earth's waters. The vial is poured over **EARTH'S SPRINGS AND RIVERS**. The angel said, "Lord, you are **righteous**, as PANTOCRATOR for your past judgment and the instant judgment and the future renewal. **Deut32.4** "A faithful God and just is He -he does no wrong"(Song of Moses)

What Moses did was to let God -the "I am" be God. David also recognised his statutes as right-fully trustworthy-**Psal19.137**

We can also say "He is righteous in His ways, loving to his creatures, near to praying people, vigilant over those who love Him" **Psalm 145.17** Asaph in **Psalm79.3** anciently called for Gods help when blood was poured out by the sheep of the pastures.

This judgment is decreed in **Isa49 22-26(especially 26)** the **divine decree** involves ultimate retribution to those who oppose the Son. The reason for this judgment is given. The Beast and false prophet and dragon of this period had shed innocent blood-the blood of God's holy saints and prophets and deserved to drink blood from the streams-which represented Gods word springing forth and streaming to them in earlier times. There is a voice from the altar of sacrifice. The decreed judgment is called **κρίσεις** we read in **Psalm19.9** that such "**crises**" are essential to bring evil to book. We could understand that the 2004 attack on FELUJA is an epic case of bringing judgment upon an inhumane and brutal group of men-slayers. If men are revolted by the death of innocents God hates and registers the death of innocents. Long ago Amos taught the destruction of Israel's life of pleasure would be visited by invasion and famine as judgment for failure to give thanks for "being taken from the mouth of the lion" and being "snatched as a brand from the burning"-**Amos3.13 &4.13**. It is despising God's provision for salvation that issues in judgment.

VIAL FOUR 8-9

There are no O.T. citations to help us understand this judgment. The preposition **εἰς** changes to **επι** this vial was poured "upwards" in the direction of or **AS FAR AS THE SURFACE OF THE SUN**. The effect is to make the earth a cauldron. Men burned in fire-which now occurred and also lived as in a cauldron and blasphemed the name of God who had authority as far as these plagues -but they did not repent nor honour the name of the one who set these plagues-cf **Apocalypse 6.16** "The wrath of the lamb" or give Him authority over their lives or Glory as the creator of all things. This plague which we may see hinted in global warming is a judgment on the self-sufficiency and lack of repentance and worship of man's part. This is a judgment which must befall a civilisation which trusts to mammon or science and in a literal sense it is a foretaste of the hell of being without God-where there is no slaking of spiritual thirst.

VIAL FIVE 10

The fifth angel poured his vial right on and as far as **the throne of the beast**. Like the last judgment this was highly specific. The object of judgment was the world ruler and his realm. **HIS KINGDOM WAS PLUNGED INTO GLOOM AND DARKNESS**. This darkness in a sense reflected the unwanted light of the gospel and its proponents. In **Exodus10.21** it is the weightiest plague in that it disables rule. Yet Pharaoh will not allow freedom to the Jews as the beast of the latter days will not allow it to the godly of these last terrible times even under the most stringent test. Thus this is a judgment against rule which prohibits worship. The members of this last world power would rather bite their tongues or express objection with their lips than repent.

VIAL SIX 12-16

The sixth angel poured out his vial again quite specifically on **THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES**. Its water had been dried up... (In 9.16 we read that 200million troops were held back as early 21st century developments in this Iraq area appear critical to the last war-and now they are released with the resulting death of a third of mankind) The river is described as "great" and the wonder is that it is "a dried river bed". Now both Herodotus and Xenophon attest this word ξερος indicates "a dry river bed". Now this vial was poured on the river-so the judgment meant that the course of the river through modern Iraq where it flows was interrupted or ended. This amazing act is described in more detail in Isaiah 11.15. The 1st Gulf war allied attack was named "desert storm". This divine act is called "scorching wind" and it is not clear whether the Americans used this scripture as a code name but here God shows he is conversant by decree in his sovereignty with modern military operations and will himself effect something more than Cyrus or America could do-He will divide the Euphrates into seven readily crossable rivers so that men could paddle across it. **Isaiah 11.15** also **Isaiah 44.27** Jeremiah predicted the utter fall of the earlier city of Babylon-which came about under Cyrus **Jer50 38 & 51.36** An attack crossing this territory is divinely encouraged from **the powers of the sunrise**. GHENGIS KHAN did push west long ago but this context is in the context of final judgments.

UNCLEAN SPIRITS -A SUGGESTED SOLUTION TO THE CONUNDRUM OF THE THREE FROGS

From the dragon the beast & false-prophet they proceed to call reinforcements. Their sources of help are earth's kings -who might generally be described as the United Nations and those in particular from the Roman or economically centralised world area-**οικουμενης** that today might be described as the EU bloc-but new or different parameters and inclusions will doubtless be involved. What future features these sets may display is not clear but the essential involvement is now possible to understand. The frog represents a military colour and is an unclean reptile. Three different factions eventually liaise with the **dragon-Satan** -"the sharp-eyed adversary of God's will" and with the beast-a world force or movement separate from Europe it would seem and related to a power being **hunted down** in the earth, and the **false-prophet**- who deceives or deludes or speaks false about God. These frog-like spirits it would seem arise from the river just judged and are also so described because of their military colour. This appeal is in a global context . The earlier Iraq-Iranian conflict is like a pre-run of this ultimate scenario. These hidden persuaders are preparing the day of divine judgment-and the "pantocrator"-the one who is able to bring everything under his victorious rule-will be glorified. **Amos 4.13** shows that the PANTOCRATOR can reveal to man **his thoughts**-so this is an ancient statement to Gods glory-understood in the area of divine decree and itself lucidly prophetic. The Amos context takes us to the Day of the Lord-**Amos 8.9**-marked by noon darkness and leading to the "restoration of David's fallen tent"! **Amos 8.9, 9.11**. Within brackets is the first of four final warnings to the world of **Christ's coming**. This statement commends the one who is "awake" and the one who is "takes care of his togas of peace" (his manhood)-that he does not walk around "unarmed" or "practice and teach nudity" lest "they should look longingly at his nakedness". The conundrum here is **"Why should three shrewd minions set about looking for the loose-living in society as they seek to draw people into war?** The answer seems to be that they are no friends of the moral uprightness in the continuing skeletal remains of the " free world" but are delighted both with its submission & weakness and optimistic of the overthrow of Israel. Christ by contrast is fully supportive of the righteous that the bible names "blessed" even in these penultimate days. The **kings** gathered together commence hostilities at the famous location of Armageddon-the hill of Megiddo. This may well be a war prelude and plan related to a struggle which is pre-empted by a decreed act of God

VIAL SEVEN 17-21

THE DIVINE DECREE

The seventh angel poured his vial **"INTO THE AIR"**. This is the atmosphere -not likely " the mist of Egypt" in particular though Egypt called **AERIA** in ancient times. The preposition again is "into" here suggesting a deepening penetration of judgment.

Certainly Egypt was the scene of Moses' plagues. The "voice from the temple" is a quote from **Isaiah 66.6** and it respects the enemies of the Lord-wherever they are centred.

The very same evidence of God as revealed at Sinai-"voices, thunders and lightnings" came from the temple of heaven -from the throne preceded by a great voice saying, "It has taken place" and a **great earthquake**-with no equal since man came on earth". This quake is referred to so often as to be unmistakably related to the climax of this era and the birth of a genuinely new age of righteousness. (cf **Isa 2.19-20, Ezekiel 38.17-23, Joel 3.16, Haggai 2.6,7,21 Matthew 24.29, Mk 13.25, Luke 7.24**) This matter is a further end-time decree and it will be epic, devastating and geo-physical)

THREE URBAN JUDGMENTS FOLLOWED:

(a) **The Great city-Jerusalem** was is three lots or three heritage parcels-today it is Jewish Arab and Christian.

(b) **The Gentile cities will fall-never to rise in the same manner**-levelled by act of God.

(c) **Babylon was remembered before God** to receive the cup of His own soul and spirit as He remembered His Gethsemane and the cup of His swollen anger.

God's wrath is delayed so because Christ the judge knows what it is like to face the sinner's death. From this we can begin to understand the **wrath of the lamb**. This earthquake ended the islands of the world-they were no more. Thousands of destinations are gone in one swoop-"islands" are "floating land" in the Greek language. Like ships they were sunk. Thousands of islands are written off-Majorca, the Canaries, Malta, Caribbean islands -the Bahamas, Ceylon, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, the Dodecanese-the Celebes-and many larger ones -"every island". Mountains afterward were not discovered. Chains of hills were not found-gone many folds in the earth's crust. Landscape was altered for good. The quake was followed by hail which fell in lumps just short of 1 hundred weight. Massive atmospheric icing accompanied this bowl and men blasphemed God for following their sin by judgment.

The **dream of MARDOCHAEUS** in the 1st verse of **Esther in the Septuagint** records a quake following voices where two serpents prepare every nation for war against the nation of the just. In this vision light came-Esther in her time-Christ in His-so after darkness light and a great river came from a little fountain. The Christ at the throne alone like Esther would change the world.

This earthquake is described as "so old" in that it has been forecast for thousands of years and is no doubt related to setting the earth in an order like its original. It is also possible to render it "so young" in that it is so modern. It was not assumed that in one act of God all could change so entirely. The end of the division of mankind is in view as the geography of the world is here reshaped for the millennium.

The Hail of Egypt constituted the 7th plague and is a "full force" judgment -but one that stops short of wiping man out. Hail of even a more severe sort is the final discipline of Babylon before the ultimate burning of Babylon which we have in Revelation 18.18 with its massive smoke.

CONCLUSION

What we can say is that the world is in for great change in the latter days. There is to be **massive geo-physical and political change** and to bury our heads in the sand and deny it is to affront the God of Judgment who has promised He has measures sufficient to bring to book the errant nations and to bring back His own and to re-establish **his Millennial rule** and righteousness upon the earth.

The patience which we now exercise should not lead us to complacency but rather to "watching" and "being as soldiers of Christ" who in the event of Satanic moves in international affairs will keep faith with Almighty God and maintain holiness of life in the light of **His coming as a thief** to take His people home.

REVELATION 17 6

A WORLDLY KINGDOM

One of the seven angels holding the phials spoke to John and said, "This way, I will point out to you the judgement of the great whore-who has settled her constitution or established herself on many waters. Kings committed adulteries with her and those settled on the earth have become drunk from the wine of her adultery". Here in the fifth section of the book we meet this strange woman who has massive world power and *three sections on* we meet the "bride of Christ" in glory

Apocalypse 21.9 The stunning danger is the development of an alternative to the "Bride" who buys heavily into the world's agenda **Apocalypse 2.6;2.15** Luther used the illustration of a "game of cards" and took up the ACE saying "God took the ace card of his lowly servants and defeated the pontifical rule over kings". Primitive Christianity was Anti-burgher. Prior to the modern technological revolution **the advent of the New Testament church**-with a message of another kingdom, and then **the Reformation**-with a call to separate church and state were the two movements that most influenced our living in the West. The angel says that **a lady sins** in her alliance with kings - a relationship that draws mass populations in its train.

THE FUTURE OR EURO POWER

(1)DEEPLY FLAWED FINAL EURO WORLD MODEL ALLIANCE OF RELIGION AND STATE-CRAFT3-6

And he brought me in the circle of the Spirit into a desert. Why does the angel take John into a desert? First the great theocracy of Moses was formulated at Sinai. Second the world in the last days will be in free-fall spiritually and it would seem all lively faith is gone-so the earth is a veritable wilderness. *"There I saw a woman "sitting" or "of settled constitution" on a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy."*

1.The woman is to be contrasted with the "bride" of **Apocalypse 21.9** who is "shown" in stark contrast to this evil system that straddles history and develops over the ages. The ancient desert base of Babel is in Iraq

2. The woman first appeared in the Nimrod Semiramis Tammuz story of Chaldea-giving rise to the zodiac and initiating a system which promoted gods and goddesses-i.e. the root of idolatry, and encouraged immorality. It gave us the concept of the "queen of heaven" and led in to the confusion of Caesar worship and the idea of the Roman "pontiff" or worldly supremo in things religious.

3. The "ten" horns" as in **Apocalypse 13** are powers holding simultaneous authority during the last days of the world system. It is also so that between Tiberius and Domitian Rome had ten Caesars from Christ up until John's time. The "seven heads" are described as "mountains" **Apocalypse 17.9** on which the woman is sat or "constituted"(Greek=**καθήμενες**.) This speaks of the constitution as being centred on Rome -whereas through history her power base had included Chaldea, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome-from which the seventh and last horn-the modern Euro-Rome-which after its wound was to be " the eighth king" **Apocalypse 17.11**

4.The dress of the woman. Her chosen **colours** -purple and scarlet-are colours derived from the suffering HAEMASTOMA and double dyeing. Her garments were inlaid or made ornate with gold and precious stone and pearls. The latter suggests the godly , the precious stone of the crucified Lord (Greek =**τιμιω λιθω** and the pearls of many who suffered. So her dress and its ornaments suggests that wrought for her by her servants-the persecutions of Holy ones.

5.The golden cup. Christ shared a cup-which may have been wooden-but this is golden. His was plain but held the sign of his precious blood. This one gleamed but it brimmed with "the filth of abominations and adulteries".

7. Her name was written **Mystery, Babylon the Great(Great confusion), Mother of earth's prostitutes and abominations**. The passive of the verb to write is used-as if this had been written long ago. Taken together with the desert visit-the very ancient origins of this evil was being instanced. The NIV uses the word "title" - which suggests as in the case of Pilate's words of condemnation of Christ "The king of the Jews" the divine basis of judgement.

(2) THE THREE CUPS DESCRIBE A EURO SYSTEM DOWNGRADE 7

John saw that the woman was drunk. The chapter actually speaks of three cups. The first is the cup of "her adulteries" which seems sweet to the kings of the world system and is indulged in by many. The second cup of "abominations and filth" is held in her hand-which looked pure and refined-but was filled with sin-for this cup she would suffer. The third cup is that of the "blood of saints"(v.6) from ancient time right up till the present.

(3)THE EURO SYSTEM MAKES WAY FOR A DICTATOR 8

When John saw the woman he was astonished. He would naturally admire beauty-but he is astonished and horrified at this woman's drunkenness and its reason-unfeeling persecution of the holy ones -and those who witness to Christ.

The angel asks, "Why are you alarmed?" "I will tell or cause to flow before you (Greek= **ρῥω**) the mystery of the woman and of the beast which is carrying her from place to place-which has seven heads and ten horns."
"The beast which you see was and is not and is about to rise from the abyss and go into destruction(Greek for "go" = **υπαγω**=" in union with" the woman). And those who have "settled down" v.8(this phrase "all that dwell" is often used after the "bowls" because earth dwelling had been unhinged and disrupted). They are well content with such settlement and amazed at the recovery of the system -but their names are not written "on" (Greek= **επι**=for the duration or since) the book of life **from the foundation of the world**-as they look at the beast, the one as a person(Greek=**ο**), which was a system(Greek=**τι**), and is not, although **he is**. It is a sort of enigma. The beast or "living thing"(the concept is based on Daniel's HIAH or "living powers" **Daniel 7 1-7**

Here is the mind that continues to hold or grasp wisdom. 9-12

The wisdom of God is "Here" in this vision-in the bible. The wisdom of God is also "in the heavenlies-it's vision-its guidance by the Spirit". Jesus is the wisdom of God to us.

The seven heads are seven mountains where the woman has her enduring constitution or seat. There can be no doubt that this reference is to Rome ancient and modern. Here the future of our Euro-Rome is declared. **And there are seven "kings"** besides. In other words the horns symbolise two things-in this way apocalyptic symbols are more diverse than parables and can do more than one job. The word was used of "emperors" and is equally applicable to "archons" as Athens had-who were higher than the king-as in constitutional monarchy. It may also refer to judges or supremos and to captains or strategic persons. The one residual factor we cannot dispense with in the concept of "king" is that there is succession and continuity. They may exist simultaneously or at different times but are successive as to the time of their power or represent the continuity of their seat of power provincially (each in his segment of authority).

Scripture clarifies **The five are fallen(once for all), the one is, and the other has not yet come, and when he comes it is essential he remains for a little** The reference here again can be a dual reference to the "short" but not "minimal" time he holds power. It can also be to his "oligarchic" type of administration.-where the state is governed by a small number of people in his administration. The suggestion then is that several forms of power preceded his.

FORMS OF POWER-PRIOR AND POST THE PRESENT REAL POLITIC

THE BEAST THAT WAS AND IS NOT, HE IS BOTH THE EIGHTH AND ALSO HE IS FROM AMONG THE SEVEN-AND HE GOES WITH COMPANIONS (Greek=**υπαγω**) INTO DESTRUCTION.

Something to think about (1) the 1970 analysis of Dr. Fred TATFORD who followed GODET- a sage nineteenth century French exegete. He says, "We see here one of the earlier forms of anti-divine power on the earth, which after being put down by an act of divine power reappears suddenly in the person of the Antichrist himself." TATFORD adds "at the time Revelation was written the Roman Empire had known 5 different forms of government and the sixth was then in being. The empire ceased to exist in AD476 and the seventh form is yet future. So it is the wonder of the revival of an extinct power that is to attract such wonder.

Something to think about (2) In 1947 Oswald Smith onetime pastor of The Peoples' Church, Toronto, wrote under the topic "*The future of Europe*" of a revival of "Daniel's fourth Empire-Babylon... He adds, "I am watching for the 10 nations predicted in scripture and for the rise of the Seventh Emperor." He further muses "What part Great Britain will play we cannot say." He believed "England and Italy will yet be one". Such a build up might well emerge out of the FABIAN vision for Europe but would not the emergence of a cruel Fascist style front from the current politic demand a sea-change in world affairs?

Something to think about (3)ELLIOTT was clear that the eighth head is a "new seventh" sprouting in the original place-chronologically the eighth. ELLIOTT also refers to the 10 **Romano-Gothic kingdoms** extant in 532 suggesting that they have been maintained more or less in the original 10 fold form through subsequent history. Could a simple re-combination take place?

Something to think about (4)FAUSSET took the view that the 10 kingdoms will exist but not be gathered into his support by the beast **till the very last**. This would favour such ten sector global division of the earth as is contemplated by the BILDERBURGHER Group. So it is not in the development phase of Euro union but its swift chameleon-like change that they figure for "an hour" as sycophant minions who "gift their power" in a "purpose"(Greek=γνώμη=a consultation motion or vote) The act of **Apocalypse 17 v.13** spelling the irrecoverable end of democracy. Could this be the shape of the future?

Something to think about(5) Taking the start date for the prophecy of **Daniel 9 24-25** as the edict of Artaxerxes 2 (14 March 445BC) we arrive at the 69th week on 6 April 32 AD. Israel rejected Christ following HIS Mount of Olives presentation to the nation and was overthrown by the Romans in 70AD. In 1948 the Jews who had returned in good numbers proclaimed Israel under providence as a sovereign state. Still the nation remained expectant of her long-awaited Messiah. The city of Jerusalem remains divided and the holy places are trodden under foot of the Gentiles-whose times have not expired. The restoration of Israel is itself notice of the imminent expiry of the times of the Gentiles. **Luke 21.24**. Still the 70th week is delayed-but as soon as this historic week **which occupies the lion-share of the Apocalypse story** begins- the countdown to the kingdom of Christ will begin amid world shaking events. In the midst of this final "week" we are told that the Antichrist will break a covenant he makes with Israel **Daniel 9.27**. This would set that nation at odds with the world and in its perilous isolation it might expect either to be crushed by man or to be rescued by God.

DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

NEW WORLD ORDER (MARKED BY THE EIGHTH HORN v.11)14.18

A wise comment of Dr TATFORD on Daniel 2.41-3 runs "The coalition of rulers and lower classes results in lack of cohesion & dissolution" The Euro-based empire first uses religion as a tool of unification and then as we learn in **Apocalypse 14.16-18** discards the latter unceremoniously and by stages.

The formerly democratic powers will war with the lamb. They will in plain English "fight with God". Long ago GAMALIEL warned Israel of this danger (**Acts5.39**)-and though no peer of this great Rabbi I can foresee the Euro-empire of the future show dereliction of duty to the Jewish people. I can see a leadership emerge that cuts loose from all that is called god plunging the world into a crisis like no other.

(a)**The climax -Disruption & collapse by the glorious coming and revelation of Christ** to rule accompanied by called (welcomed) chosen (selected) and faithful (privy councillors) v15 will just as suddenly reverse the last dictatorship and herald universal theocracy.

(b)**The gradual diminishing of religious power that foreshadows this collapse**
Look at this (1) Hard-headed peoples, the thronging crowds, the ethnic mix, the language groups are like **rivers (cf17.1)** where the whore sits. Europe also **has great rivers** and its capitals are largely sitting by them-as London on the Thames, Paris on the Seine, Berlin on the Spree, Luxembourg on the ALZETTE , Madrid & Lisbon by the TAGUS, Rome on the Tiber, Warsaw on the VISTULA Prague on the VLATAVA, Budapest & Belgrade on the Danube. This serves to focus the geographical context more precisely.

Look at this (2) Peoples hate the whore-they bear a grudge-they loathe their one-time companion

Look at this (3) Peoples desolate her-she feels alone-left out-forsaken

Look at this (4) Peoples take off her robes. This means she is shown to be morally naked.

Look at this (5) Peoples "eat her flesh" This compares with the end of Jezebel.

Look at this (6) Peoples "burn her with fire". This alludes to the death of an adulteress. As this treatment is meted out to a spiritual consort of political rulers it has to be that they have discovered something in this late historical period about the spiritual bankruptcy of the religious system.

THE RAPTURE IS KEY TO THE END OF THE WHORE

There is a predictable way this might come about-when Christ returns for his church and a so called religious establishment is not gathered to glory(cf Lukel2.39)-its very continuance will testify against it. Hence the "vote" which is mentioned twice accords with God's purpose. The kings forsake **religious power** for the **beast**. The apostle says once more, "The woman you saw is the great city-with a **kingdom** above the kings of the earth. Thus Babylon surfaces in the last days in the Euro-seat of

empire as a religion of mystery against which God gives His vote v.17. Strange it is that the BEAST will be preferred to the WOMAN. The BEAST is sinful whilst THE WOMAN is blasphemous, dangerous whilst she is seductive, the beast came from the abyss and goes to destruction while God has written that for her mysteries of religion she will be judged (**Apocalypse 17.1** "I will show you her judgement"; **Apocalypse 17.5** "On her forehead her name is written " and **Apocalypse 17.17** "God's will is her destruction"

SEGMENT 5 18.1-24 μετα ταυτα (THE FALL OF BABYLON)

After epic wars and climactic trials and an earth shake like no other it is uncanny that any order could be restored to the earth by the beast empire-but a command economy and the use of "the number" bring about such reconstruction as would not be possible without Satanic involvement. This last terrible empire is short-lived and falls before the golden rule of the One whose orb and sceptre shall hold sway for a thousand years and then be taken up into a heavenly kingdom cited in a new heaven and earth.

QUOTATIONS IN THIS SEGMENT

EMPHASIS ON SCRIPTURE REFERENCES IS EMPHASIS ON FACTS NOT SYMBOLS

Gen1	Lev1	De1	Ps 2	Is 12	Jer 17	Ezekiel 14	Dan 1 =49
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The above 8 bible books are quoted in a set of 49 references. **Genesis** points us back to a Sodom like end of the present age-**Leviticus** tells us of a religious priesthood corrupted over time. **Deuteronomy** describes Moses calling on nations to rejoice when the enemies of Jew and righteous Gentile are avenged. **Psalm** 137 says Babylon is to be judged, 96 that idolatry will end & equity be established. 12 quotes from **Isaiah** speaks of Babylon fallen and calls in 48 & 52 for departure from the world's style. The merchant theme comes from the Tyre oracle in Isaiah 23.8-the widow theme from Isaiah 47.9 where Men and their children die together-a great tragedy of this sort unfolds in the last age. **Jeremiah** speaks of danger from a **northern alliance** (Russia in this case). He further tells of the cup of madness-the end of all joy and the voice of marriage-as in Israel's captivity-concepts transferred to make emphatic the gravitas and pathos of Babylon's end. Jeremiah also speaks of the "hammered goods" from the west in **Jeremiah 10.9**-articles which are traded from the developed west and sold in Babylon in the latter day. The last word of Jeremiah is "Babylon will sink to rise no more" **Jeremiah 51.64**. The prophet of the nations speaks solemnly.

Ezekiel while living in Babylon gives the exact date for the start of the siege of Jerusalem -15 January 588BC -the ninth year of captivity (based on Daniel's exile)the tenth month the tenth day. So *God has exact moments -a month and a day in mind for judgment*-by parallel with Belshazzar's fall. Ezekiel also speaks of the Arabian princes (Arab nations) as customers of Babylon **Ezekiel 37.21**. Western ships (**27.25**) which anciently traded from Tyre in this prophecy stand off from a ruined Babylon

This chapter contains the epic of the end of human government of the earth. The great city of John's time was Rome. The woman was found "in the desert" (**17.3**) It is here that the woman is established on the "purple/COCCINUS double-dyed entity". The link of the woman-originating and still associate with the "seven heads & ten horns"-the setting foretells future adultery. The "beast" carries the woman around-and is representative of human rule in its final phase. This ruler has ten sectors to his domain.

(1)THE MIGHTY ANGEL

(This chapter is Part 6 of the APOCALYPSE and SEGMENT 5 of this study)
John sees "another combatant angel" taking forward heaven's plan. We have to recognise great authority is vested in this holy angel. This messenger had already brought illumination to the whole earth. The crackle κραζω of this angel's voice is of significance. He makes a faith prediction "Babylon is fallen" The angel has voice like an army for power ισχυς

The Kings This latter-day overarching power is a "place to settle for demons & evil spirits among men" and every "bird of prey". All rulers and emporiums relate to this maddening wine that unites peoples to her.

(2)THE MERCHANTS

They grew rich through trade in "excessive" **στρηνοῦς** wealth =desire of an elephant /big time indulgence

(3)GOD-FEARING PEOPLE TOWARDS THE CLIMAX OF TRIBULATION

The striking call emphasised in this chapter is "God's voice" saying "**Come out of her my people**". This is a statement that will finally draw **Jews** apart from this "beast" and make them part of her judgment This matter of bringing judgment on the world system is not necessarily exclusive of the latest era of the Christian church-it has its inception and foreshadowing even now. The "sins" of Babylon have piled up like latter-day rubbish dumped up to heaven-and God has remembered her unrighteousness

The Lord's voice continues "give her back as she has given; pay her back double for her deeds-testing and sadness.

God sees the heart and hears Babylon say "I am established as queen, I am not a widow, and I shall not see bereavement.

The queen "mother of harlots"**17.5** is to be burned with fire in one day. This is a Sodom like inferno and is divine judgment.

(4)THE KINGS ARE TERRIFIED AND STAND AFAR

The merchants can boast **28 PRODUCTS** including even bodies and souls-the kings are weeping because she traded with them in so many goods and trade is at an end. There is a total trade stop so far as she is concerned-even this is already foreshadowed. The Sea captains stand afar and reminisce that there never was like. Prophets & Apostles in heaven are given to understand the hour and are "cheerful" or "merry" for they sense the end of a system of godlessness-God has judged the crime that originated in her-i.e. in Babylon (That crime was idolatry-cum- persecution -cf Israel's holy vessels desecrated-cf **Daniel 5**) and in the latter day city to where the beast carries this queen of evil rule.

(5)THE BOULDER THROWN INTO THE SEA

An assault of war **ορμη** is now described. A mighty angel picked up a boulder like a millstone for size and cast it in the sea and the effect was likened to the way of attacking Babylon. In other words the final destruction of man-centred defiant rule will be by the millstone of God's judgment on a corrupt mercantile system.

BABYLON'S CHARACTER

Babylon is known by the music of the harp flute and trumpet, technicians, industrial milling sound, night-long illumination, marriages, great salespeople. Then comes the most telling remark-by her compounds of poison "all the nations" were deceived.

This last power grew through deceiving nations and she is a persecuting power from prophetic times and into

This tribulation power may be in the ascendant as presented at this point but its zenith tarries. Its fall leads to a series of "Hallelujahs" (**Chapter 19**)

CAN WE BE CLEARER?

The build up of a new beast driven order and empire is a matter we must hold in view so that we do not settle for the things of the world or the ways of the flesh or the rule of the Dragon. The fact is that idolatry and pride in the form of religion and trade are carried to the seat of this empire by the beast that rules prior to Christ's glorious return. That seat may well be located where great oil wealth lies and where religion largely unaffected by the rapture holds sway.

The fact that God calls His people out of this type of society means the commission of the church is not in view -but rather judgment pending . We know from Jeremiah's last word that this empire's fall completes biblical prophetic ministry concerning nations. We also know from the last verse of **Revelation 18** that **the prophets fell there**-and those who were slain as offerings. This is a power that hates those who do not acknowledge it. It is spiritual and demonic at the same time. The fact that John was carried to the desert(**17.3**) to see it does not diminish its link with the

"seven hills" nor its acceptance as Rome Redivivus. As modern history moves forward we shall be better placed to confirm the nub of world trade.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. **Babylon as a corrupt mercantile and seductive system falls**

The "angel" in v.1 if compared to another facet of the judgement picture in 10.1 appears to be the "angel of the Lord"-cf "He by whose glory the whole earth is illumined".

2. **The wine v3** as wine makes men helpless and vile so this mercantile power renders men spiritually helpless.

3. **The call to separation Jeremiah (51.6-7)** prophesied, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save every man his life-be not cut off in her iniquity". He also spoke of her sins as piled up to heaven like Babylon's ancient tower (51.9)

3. **Recompense for Babylon** Again Jeremiah spoke of this-"Recompense her according to her work" (Jer50.29)

A full or *double* recompense for her persecutions is in store-a fourfold judgement of death sorrow famine and fire.

4. **Mourning over Babylon** As the world system seemed set to deliver perennially it collapses. The fall may be even more momentous than now envisaged-it may be continental!

a. Kings feared as the city of their illicit intercourse falls- and without independence they are locked into it

b. Distressing merchants whose wares were unwanted

c. Mariners who brought cargoes of merchandise from all parts of the modern world To widespread sadness of mankind who had ceased to believe in the happiness God intended as each man "sat under his wine and fig tree" (1Kings 4.25 & 2Kings 18.31)

5. **Sorcery v.23** "The magic spell" as the NIV has it is described by SEISS as "some bewitching attractiveness going along with a mercantile system...meretricious allurements, gathering around it the homage of governments and kings", is the idea". Human cupidity is as ever at enmity with the spirit of Christ.

Thus ends the fifth segment of this study on the Tribulation-spelling out the nemesis of the world of business and finance, the short-lived empire of Antichrist and the "moment of time"(Luke4.5) hurriedly contrived power base of Satan.

EPILOGUE

Whilst there are many imponderables in the above study without moving beyond the brief of interpreting in the context of scriptural reference and in line with the plain sense of scripture I have sought to be faithful as an exegete to the content of the Apocalypse and the context of its drafting.

It is right for the Christian to study with care the heavenly scenes of the Apocalypse -some of which I have not included as the brief does not take in the entire book. Such study acts as a caution against becoming content to accept the heavily slanted viewpoint of a-millennialist teaching -which in its modern twist most curiously and without warrant in scripture jumps the church back to this earth for ever.

The Great Tribulation is promised to occur in the last days which are ushered in by the Parousia. We cannot be a world away from these days and so I have pleasure to commend to you the literally "uplifting" and joyous read of the first CD in this series on the "Rapture". To fill out your understanding of the run up to the "Eternal State" which is another CD study related to these themes I might incidentally commend I suggest you read the "Millennium" a rather shorter study and useful supplement to the other presentations.

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