


ARAMAIC & GREEK BIBLE COMPANION

THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

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In the spring of 1999 Mina and I spent some days on the isle listening to the delightful lectures of Thanos Karbonis (until his recent passing leader of the Greek Evangelical Church in Athens) on the first section of the Apocalypse. The setting was the island of Patmos itself glistening in the daylight like a gem in the Sea and by night approach through the eastern Mediterranean its main town appeared like a city coming down from heaven. Thanos' theme was "Christ's progressive victory" and his exhortation was *μνποτι τον κυριον λειπε* "Never let go of the LORD – or as the hymn writer puts it "Never lose sight of Jesus!"

CHAPTER 1

This chapter gives the Patmos vision of Christ as He is now. Traceable references from thirteen OT books contribute to this outstanding word portrait of the glory of Christ our Lord. The book is an unveiling of who Christ is and of His concern with the "called out ones" (the church) and how His kingdom prevails over world order and power. A plethora of scriptural prophecies find their ultimate fulfilment in end time events and the return of Christ. At the head of this – most significant document with its high order relevance for the future as it proceeds from Israel's return to the Promised Land is a full-blown portrait of Christ Jesus as He now is. It is vital that we like John respond to our living Lord – in particular to his voice. I have highlighted the "sights" and "sounds" of the book to emphasise its practical teaching.

Background The time of the vision was the two year persecution by *Domitian* AD 95-6 ended after the emperor interviewed the sons of Jude – brother of our Lord, who convinced him Christ's kingdom was not of this world. The cave in Patmos (a volcanic island named after a mountain in another island and the name has links with Artemis – the goddess Diana who was worshipped at Ephesus and world-wide was supposed to raise the island from the sea). The island retains a baptistery near Scala where John is reputed to have baptised followers. At Hora a cave remains – its fissures have traditional links with the voice of the Lord to John. *Thanos Karbonis*, leader of the Greek Evangelical church, interprets "angel" as Gabriel. "His angel" would ally well with the visitations at the incarnation – and perhaps in Gethsemane too. **Things that must happen** *v1-3* John though he is said to have worn a type of mitre in Ephesus remained most humble. He terms himself a "servant". This was affirmed in his lead mine work in Patmos. *Christopaulos*, also a lead miner, the second island father – 14 centuries later gave all his lands to Constantine and was given the 34,000 square metre island of Patmos instead. He made it a monastic place like Iona – a tradition alive even today. While a single 6th C MSS of Mark has been preserved there are actually forty-four 8th century micrographia of John. When John writes "Things that must soon come to pass" [*εν ταχει*] he means "at running pace". God is on the move – He does not loiter. The angel that shall blow the trumpet – if we take the Greek Church's view – appeared as the first century closed. John witnessed both to Christ's word to the church (*Ch1-3 and 4, 16, 22*) and what he saw (*1-22*). The

Lord's' beloved disciple and strengthening angel came together to give us. The blessing of this book has three conditions – “to read and understand”; “to hear and obey” and to “grasp and hold as truth” (v3.) what is written. (The Kethibh or inviolable text of Jewish tradition – hence the warning of *Chapter 22.18-19*. The extraordinary Greeting John writes to “the churches in Asia” has to be appreciated in the light of one whose later life was committed to Ephesus. “Asia” means “rich soil” or “mud”. The idiom is good – for its great swelling rivers deliver rich alluvial soil – and as we have witnessed fertility abounds. So in N.T. times this area was as spiritually fertile as Britain or America today. Asia Minor was the land – bridge on the gospel route to Europe and the world north south east and west. John would appear to have written the vision when he returned to Ephesus. (cf.v.9). He has an actual message to thrill the seven churches of that day – whose locations Mina and I drove to view in April-May of 1999. The messages identify aspects of Christian character which each church must learn and the Lord who “is on the move” amid the candles of testimony has over the centuries since carried the witness through as many eras with a purpose to develop in us all his grace and truth.

CHAPTER 1

SEGMENT 1 1.1-3.22

META TAUTA NO.1

FRESH TRANSLATION BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

“Apocalypse of Jesus Christ that “The God” gave him to display with the right hand to his servants, things essential to occur quickly. (*εν ταχει* – at a swift running pace – John was reputed as a runner) He also gave signal commissioning His angel-commander to His servant John, who witnessed the word of “The God” and the witness of Jesus Christ – whatsoever things he saw. Happy or blessed is the one that reads and knows and those that hear and obey the words of the prophecy and guard the things that have been written in it. For a (*grave*)season is near. John to the seven churches in Asia: grace and peace be with you from the one who is and was and is coming or desires to come – also from the seven spirits that are in close to His throne – also from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead (of the nether world) and the supreme authority of the kings of the earth. To the one that loved us once for all and washed us once for all from our sins in his blood and created and inspired us to be kings and priests to “the God” and His father. The **GLORY and the bodily strength **SOVEREIGNTY OR VICTORY** belongs to him into the ages of ages or for ever.” (Apoc.1 1-6)**

Like Paul, John adopts the phrase “grace and peace”(v.4) as the blessing of God “who was and is and is to come”; the blessing of the seven – fold Spirit of God – *Isaiah 11.2* and the blessing of Christ risen, our great high-priest – heir of all things enjoyed in Glory and First above kings of the earth (v.5) (*Athens had 9 Archons – the first of which was above the king Nero, who slew Peter & Paul, was long gone, Domitian had now fallen – Nerva had succeeded – Christ remaining among the vicissitudes* John as an aged Christian pays beautiful homage to the cross. Jesus loved us once for all and washed us once for all in His blood (v.5) and has made us forever a kingly priesthood (*the Alexandrian Text with its “kings and priests” is not followed by modern translators – who substitute “a kingdom of priests”. I have used the phrase from 1Peter2.9 – as rule and prayer seem intertwined in our eternal future*) to God His Father. To Him belong Glory and the power to hold firm into all ages. All this John affirms with a robust “Amen!”(v.6)

The writings of *Daniel* (7.13) and *Zechariah* (12 10-12) are cited immediately following early verses in v.7 concerning the visibility of Christ at His advent and glorious return. The joy of Christ's coming with clouds to be known of His saints and His advent to Olivet are both drawn together at the outset as equally sealed in his desire for (a) His church and (b) for Israel.

THE APOCALYPSE SOUNDS IN SIGHTS AND SOUNDS – MARK THEM WELL!

THE FIRST SIGHT of the Apocalypse is “Amen, behold He wants to come with clouds (v.7) [*“clouds” νεφέλος has “the fleecy clouds” of spring and the “thunder clouds of armies”*] and He wants [*ερχομαι “comes” or “desires to come”*] to be recognised universally and He want the repentance of all Israel. To this John adds a robust “Yea, Amen”. Behold (*ιδου*) reflects the Hebrew word for surprise (*hnh*) and what a surprise the rapture will be!

THE FIRST SOUND of the Apocalypse (v.8) is the voice of the “I am” whose glory shines from Gospel and Apocalypse. This mighty description links *Exodus 3.14 & Isaiah 6.1 & 41.4*. It is the victory message of revelation – cf. *1.4, 4.8, 11.17, 16.5, 21.6, 22.13*.

John adds the famous “Alpha and Omega” statement of Christ. Just about this time the letter OMEGA was being officially written differently – instead of being a “bigger **O (Ω)**” it was made a “double **oo (ω)**”. **As the world considered the last letter of the alphabet God revealed His last scriptural word.** John speaks of the “I am” in a manner that extols his “victory”. The word PANTOCRATOR is used often in the text of the Apocalypse – distilling the emphasis of **victory**. He has emphasised that Jesus is not coming to a scene of defeat world wide but to register his victory. The victory scene is not yet complete. You will note in *Matthew 24.14* the same Greek word **τελος** is indicative of the victory besides the completion of the message. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be heralded in the whole inhabited world for a witness to all the nations; and then the end purpose and **victory** will come. [*ηξει – a verb with only “future tense in classical use – chosen to show a future “coming” – a word often associated with the arrival of mature old age – or the army that marched from Rome*] The glorious visionary meeting with Christ in fulfilment of *John 21.23 vv 9-16*

Introduction

John writes as one who shared the joy of fellowship and the bread of tribulation and in the circle of the kingdom of heaven on earth and patient waiting for its appearance from heaven. What has changed? Perhaps our commitment!

I make the comment promised earlier based on the words “I was” [*εγενομην*]. John had been in Patmos where the Lord met him and the visions that he later writes down were first received. *Thanos Karbonis* sagely commented in giving the general framework of the book that Christ's victory is “progressive” and in this it resembles Exodus – where plagues release the grip of world power slowly and surely. He also commented that “I was living” is equivalent to “I was” or “**used to be**” in *past time* in the limited circle of (the bare inhospitable volcanic) Patmos. Christ the victor met him and the command we have in v.19 is emphatic of the directive given in v.11

(1)Verse10 On the Lord's day is the day of “victory” and very significantly as *Thanos* emphasised it is the prophetic “Day of the Lord – “a day of darkness and not light” a day of terror and suffering and His glorious appearing – cf. *Joel 2* –especially “and afterward” (2.28) – Joel's *Hebrew* is *AHARE CEN* “After these things” – Joel predicts trouble and Messianic blessing which modern man and the 21st century church must

write back into its theology. Peter's Pentecost sermon was Joel-centred. Christ must have been emphatic after his victorious resurrection on this prophecy – and remains so in speaking to John.

(1) Verse 11. **Write (a) the vision of the Lord down** – given in past time but as real when the instruction was later given – for the benefit of the church through the ages, **(b) Write the “things which are”** – again continuing earth realities as to the church, and **(c) Write the things “after this”** [*μετα ταυτα* – *John's phrase received from Jesus for “immediately subsequent”*] – **AN AUTHORITATIVE MARKER PHRASE GIVEN BY CHRIST** and vital to the order & interpretation of the gospel and the Apocalypse (cf. Jn.2.12, 3.22, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 19.28, 21.1 Rev.4.1, 7.1, 7.9, 9.12, 15.5, 18.1, 19.1)

(1) JOHN HEARD A GREAT VOICE 10

The seven church locations or “lamp-stands” were Ephesus, Smyrna [*Strabo believes the city was named after an Amazon called Smyrna and means “myrrh or anointing oil, incense or drug”*], Pergamun-“citadel” and its inhabitants (*Strabo*)“burgers”, Thyatira – otherwise “Euhippos” or “good horse”, Sardis – “red ruby” of love, Philadelphia – “brotherly love”, Laodicea – “victory to the people”.

(2) JOHN TURNED TO SEE 12(*the person*) “the voice of whom” or “whose voice” was speaking. The word for speech here is “chatting” so though the voice came from far away as trumpet calls carry it was close and intimate. It was also one that thrilled – which is conveyed by the word “to see” [*Βλεπω*].

(3) BEINGTURNED JOHN SAW “a likeness to an heir of man”13 He saw one who had all the future of man's glory in his beautiful person the first sight of the apocalypse. He had a kingly robe-coming from the breast and not the waist – known as an “Uphaz (*Indian*) belt”. He was girded with Gold – kingly and godly sign. He stood in the midst of the lamp-stands – all shone light upon Him and were Christ-centred in their ministry as the church must ever be.

(4) HIS HEAD AND HAIRS WERE WHITE 14 We complain when our hair is white. Both His head and hair were as cotton wool – as fallen snow, and His eyes as a flame of fire – from Daniel's ANTIQ YOMIN “Ancient of Days” whose hair is as AMAR “Wool” and his eyes as “a flame”[*LAPID Daniel 7.9 &10.6 signifying “a man highly esteemed”*]. This shows that Christ had resumed the seat of glory – being exactly as Daniel beheld Him 4 centuries ago.

(5)HIS FEET WERE AS BRONZE IN A FURNACE 15 – AYIN

NEHOSETH(*Hebrew*) “eyes of polished bronze”- beautiful and strong – and notice this – both before and after suffering. His voice as that of great waters *QOL HAMON* (*Hebrew*)“turbulent waters” or as a delightful alternative “singers”(tuneful) or “commotion of the bowels” (*merciful*) cf. *Daniel 10.6* The Greek *φωνη* means “loud and clear” whether it be a “battle cry” or the song of the “sweet nightingale”.

(6) HE HELD 7 STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND 16 and from his mouth came a double edged sword and his face was as the sun shining in its strength. Here is the might of Christ to keep his servants, the irresistible might of His word (*compared to the Thracian sword*) and the power of His presence. In *Job 9.9 and Amos 5.8* the *Pleiades* feature as from the hand of their maker – the one who works miracles and can

pass unseen. In old time *Taurus* was connected with the flood and the *Pleiades* with the Ark of Noah. So Christ is the one who saves – the seven churches as He saved the seven souls of ancient time.

(7) JOHN FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD 17-18 He placed the hand that held the stars and kept the saints upon John, saying “Fear not, I am the first and last, and the living one, and I became dead, and behold I am living on into the ages of ages, I am confident, and I have the keys of Hades and of death. The ALPHA & OMEGA take us to *Isaiah 44.6-8* and *Isaiah 48 6-12*. In the first Christ is the one who pours waters on the thirsty of Jeshurun – the beloved parched land of the Dead Sea – He is the one who calls his “witnesses” – the one who alone call “foretell what is to come”. In *Chapter 48* He is the “I am” who laid the foundations of the earth and who is the “son” of *v16* sent by the Sovereign Lord and accompanied by the Spirit – in both chapters He is the REDEEMER.

(8) WRITE THE MYSTERY OF THE 7 STARS THAT YOU SAW 19-20
As stated above the book is retrospective instant and prospective in respect of the great opening vision John is told to write it down as a true veritable and sure event; in respect of the churches over which Christ is ever vigilant the instant presence of the Lord in all its earthly progress sure and in respect of the events ahead the prophetic future is destined and equally sure. The “Amen” of *v.18* has not a shred of doubt that His will is going to prevail. This is especially to be made sure to the leaders of the churches then shining as stars and the significance of “stars” is that the chapters that follow show the church not just of the first century but the church that shines on till the Lord returns. The stars are in His power – He will continue to guide his people – though He may move the lamp-stands around the message they carry has continued faithfully to be witnessed in every century since

CHAPTER 2

Messages to four churches in Asia

The messages have a contemporary, composite and chronological relevance. They had direct 1st century relevance – there is something applicable to every church in every age in each message, and the panorama of the Church till Christ returns is given here. Ephesus is the apostolic, Smyrna the martyr church, Pergamos the compromising church, Thyatira the corrupt church, Sardis the dead church, Philadelphia the faithful church, Laodicea the apostate church.

It is estimated there were above 500 churches in the area in Paul’s time-many larger than the seven listed here.

(1)EPHESUS The apostolic church 1-7

A city of 300,000 with a theatre seating 24,500 people.

Write to the messenger of the Ephesian church. These things are spoken by the one who holds the seven stars – that is, the “sweet influence on growth and skill of the sower-ploughman represented by *the Pleiades*”. In this constellation (*Ursa Major*) the two outer stars travel a different way from the rest – like the churches of Pergamos and Laodicea. Jesus walks amid the golden lamps trimming the wicks & pouring in oil. The energy we expend, the muscling into demanding work, the patience shown – are noted in heaven. The church did not carry the baggage of false apostles. The church dis-fellowhipped these masquerading apostles. He welcomed patient waiting for “fruit” [*κοπιω*] and service in the harvest-field for His name – unwearied though

spent – “faint yet pursuing” (Judges 8.4). The Lord’s gracious way is first to commend and affirm. The church had a sad failure to be addressed – the loss of its first love.

Here is a telling illustration of how love dies.

“Their wedding picture mocked them from the table. Such a barrier was between them that neither battering ram of words or artilleries of touch could break it down. Somewhere between oldest daughter’s first tooth and youngest daughter’s graduation they lost one another. Sometimes she cried at night. He climbed into a tomb called the office. She took a course in modern art. Slowly the wall between them rose. For when love dies it is neither in a moment of angry battle nor when fiery bodies lost their heat. No, it lies panting, exhausted, expiring at the foot of a wall it could not scale”.

A REBUKE 4-5

“I hold this against you; you have left your first love”

You have let go [*αφιημι την αγαπην* – “to let fall from one’s grasp”, “to divorce”, “to allow to sail away”] Jesus says “Remember your place of the past” – where you shone brightly for Jesus. The Lord adds, “Repent”. *William Barclay* speaks of repentance as a man “cracking the whip” to bring his life back into line. In bygone years Duffy’s circus came to town in lovely Newcastle by the Mournes. Elephants weighing 5 tonnes and more gave instant obedience yielding ready discipline. Christ warned that if the church took no heed He would come “quickly” as in an earthquake and move the Ephesian candle. In 262AD *the Goths* came as a whirlwind and laid Ephesus in ruins.

A COMMENDATION 6-7

You hated the energetic Nicolaitans. The first ever commentator on *Revelation* – *Victorinus of Pettau* (*Leon Morris* has a note to this effect in the IVP series) thought they took a liberal view of fornication – restoring those who eaten in feasts where *idols were honoured* after 8 days. In 2 Peter 2.15 *Nicolas of Antioch* became apostate and taught that one must indulge in sin to understand it. He & his followers believed such sins did not touch the spirit. Thus erroneous teaching & bad morals led to laxity. Then the message – “listen to what the Spirit says to the churches” – Jesus seeks obedient attention to the word & Spirit. Jesus promises He personally will share at the “tree of life” in paradise with those who live victorious over the world the flesh & Satan. Balaam is back with sexual laxity today. In Ephesus there was a secret tunnel to the brothel today pimps walk the streets.

(2) SMYRNA 8-11

This is the church of the persecutions – there being no other satisfactory interpretation of the 10 days. Smyrna is the third largest city in Turkey today and is older than either Rome or Athens. This church represents Christianity through the period till 313 A.D. This church is unsullied. Smyrna itself died and was revived by *Alexander the Great*.

A later angel of Smyrna was *Polycarp* (115-156A.D.). He made his famous statement at 86 when he was martyred, namely “*Eighty and six years I have served Him and He has done me no ill, how then can I blaspheme my king who hath served me?*” After the death of 11 other Christians the proconsul tried to spare him saying “the games are over” but he yielded to the call, “This is the teacher of Asia, the destroyer of our gods; the father of the Christians”.

To this church the Lord says, “I am the first and the last, the one who became a corpse and is alive for ever, I know your energies, your tribulation, your great poverty (*but you are very rich*) and the blasphemy of so-called Jews – who became informers against the Christians and earned the title “synagogue of Satan” from Christ.

Smyrna had five ornate temples to *Cybele Zeus, Apollo, Aesclepius and Aphrodite*.

Fear not the things you are about to suffer. Look the accuser is ready to throw some in prison to test you, and you will have tribulation 10 days. Be faithful to death – I will give you the crown of life. Citizens were required to sprinkle incense on the fire that burned before the statue of Tiberius. They were persecuted for failure to conform

Historic persecutions:

Nero 64-8 Paul beheaded; *Domitian* 95-96 John Exiled ; *Trajan* 104-117 *Ignatius* burned at the stake; *Hadrian* 117-138 *Clement of Rome* executed; *Marcus Aurelius* 161-180 *Polycarp* martyred; *Severus* 200-211 Empire wide martyrs; *Maximinus* 235-7 Christian leaders killed; *Decius* 250-253 A Severe persecution; *Valerian* 257-260 Bishops *Pion* and *Camprian* martyred; *Dioeletian* 303-313 Attempt to extermination of Christians.

General Douglas MacArthur who called for evangelists for Korea, said, “Build me a son brave enough to face himself when he is afraid, humble in victory, who will know Thee, master himself & reach into the future – then I will dare to whisper, 'I have not lived in vain'” In Smyrna God has such sons!

He who overcomes will not be indicted by God by the change of the second death.

(3) PERGAMOS 12-17

The city was amongst the first to yield to Rome and here the persecution of those who did not hold with *Caesar* as Master of the world was most cruel. The library held 200,000 scrolls. When Alexandria withheld papyrus the city developed *Pergamini parchment*. Famed for the *Aesclepius*' temple erected to the god of healing with the entwined serpent on a staff as its insignia.

In 29BC Pergamum built the first temple in Asia Minor to *Augustus* as god. Here emperor worship was initiated.

This city by 560B.C was ruled by *Croesus* of Lydia. Persia defeated him & divided Anatolia into Ionia, Hellespont, Cilicia & Lydia. *Alexander* defeated *Darius II* and his empire subsequently fell to four generals ruling Greece, Turkey, Syria & Egypt. To digress with prophetic developments in view one has to remember that from one of these according to Daniel 8.8 comes the “little horn”.

(a) **The Lord emphasises “his word”** when addressing the angel of Pergamum.

God's word holds the ultimate power of life & death.

(b) **The Lord refers here to “the throne of Satan”** which links with the altar of Zeus. In 1871 a *German engineer* found fragments from the altar and afterwards recovered many more. It was reconstructed in Berlin. Satan worship began in Babel under *Nimrod & Semerimus*, spreading to Phoenicia as *Ashteroth & Tammuz*, to Egypt as *Isis & Horus*, Greece as *Aphrodite & Eros* – Rome as *Venus & Cupid*. The original Tammuz was slain by a boar and said to have risen. The *feast of Ishtar* had coloured eggs eaten as a symbol of the resurrection of Tammuz & cakes marked with “T”. Abraham left Ur and this devil worship – but in *1 Kings 16.30* Jezebel restored it. This altar-throne of *Zeus (god of this world)* had in the Caesars not only emperors of Rome but “high priests” of this cultus originating in Babel.

The altar was located in Germany during the slaughter of 6million Jews and went to Moscow during the cold war. The Turkish people want it back!

(c) **The Lord honours the martyred Antipas** (“a man against the world”) who for His name was roasted in a brazen bull and would not deny the faith.

(d) **The Lord rebukes the introduction of Fornication.** Balaam advised Balak that where a curse failed the devise of introducing idolatry through marriage would succeed (*Numbers 25 1-9*). The second rebuke is on following Nicolas (*cf. Acts 6.5*) and his acceptance of man as inherently good – only evil as to his material part – which did not influence the spiritual. This led to attendance at pagan temples since meats could not affect the soul – and this in turn to merging pagans and Christians in. Repentance is urged for the church here was succumbing. The sword reminds us of the angel with the sword who opposed Balaam. Obedience gains 3 benefits (1) The “hidden manna” like the afikomen of the Passover is Christ absent in Glory. (2) The “white stone” is a gift to victors at the games – it had their name on. The *ψεφος* was also a ticket opening the public feasts to the victor. A third meaning is the split stone each half in the possession of long-time friends and given to their heirs in continued alliance of heart. The heavenly bridal feast is in view. (3) The “new name” stands for new character. As Christ renamed Peter he will name us too. *Dean Alford* comments from *Proverbs 14.10* “the heart knows its own bitterness, a stranger intermeddles not” i.e. Only Jesus can commend on the depths of victory in the realm where the members of this church dabbled and from which they repented – and His commendation is worth while. This church represents a world church compact or medieval Christendom.

(4) **THYATIRA 18-29**

The town of Lydia – *cf. Acts 16.14*. As a trader it was compulsory to be a member of the trade guild and worshipper of Apollo. The town had been called “Semiramis” and “Euhippia” It was renamed by *Seleucus J* one of Alexander’s generals. Apollo the warrior mounted and holding the battle axe was the city deity. The city produced linen woollen clothing, leather, pottery, copper, brass. Thyatira was a loving but undisciplined church. *Bill Freel* in his useful commentary “*Survival*” calls it “a five-star church”. In the church a self-styled prophetess arose with traits akin to those of Jezebel. She was a corrupting influence. At the end of the century there were 2/3 believers in Akhisar – modern Thyatira. The Spirit begins with the flaming eyes of Jesus – and His feet like shining “frankincense” (*Once in Southern Jordan in a hotel near Petra traders had brought some for sale – it was of a deep bronze hue-not unlike oriental feet*) Bronze was used in weaponry. Jesus is presented as conqueror beyond the Sun-god. A church of deeds; of love; of faith; of service; of perseverance – Thyatira was moving ahead – rising to its opportunities.

THE JEZEBEL STORY

Some MSS read “Your Jezebel” – as if she was the wife of a church leader. Christ spurns fornication & idolatry, promises in the absence of repentance to cast the woman into a bed of suffering, to punish her compliant adulterers, to administer death to her offspring, warning the church that He searches the heart & its sources of action. (*NB v20 cp Rev13 16-18 – prosperity at a price*). False teaching clearly is destructive and it would seem caused the demise of many Asian churches.

Authority socially or over nations must wait for Christ’s kingdom. (*cf. 3.21*) That kingdom will have an iron sceptre and evil will yield to it as pottery. (*cf. Psalm 2*)

THE MORNING STAR As a boy I gained a star & certificate from the Christian Herald magazine. The “star” (*cf. Daniel 12.3*) speaks of Christ and his sovereignty;

his victory (*Rev.22.16*) and the daybreak of eternity– neither you nor I must prejudice this by worldly or Luciferian interests. All of my life I have found it a mighty safeguard against Thyatira’s failure to set my heart on *the appearing of Jesus* (*2Timothy4.8*). This I have found an antidote to dalliance with the world.

CHAPTER 3

(5)SARDIS 1-7

The city of *Aesop* and *Croesus* – who is credited with inventing coin minting. He used plentiful local gold. The city was built at *Mt. Tmolus* – which much like the prow of a ship housed the earliest settlers. Later the valley below was settled. The Lydian people link to the Lud of *Ezekiel 27.10* – Shemite and on account of their use of the bow mercenary supporters of Egypt, Tyre and other nations. *Croesus* or Midas was attacked by Persia and though quite impregnable was defeated because a soldier as he walked from the fort to the lower city dropped his helmet over the wall and gave away the route that connected the fort to the lower city as he retrieved the helmet in full view of a Persian soldier. That night he and a gallant *Persian* band followed the secret route and Sardis fell through complacency. In 214B.C the citadel was again captured –this time by *Antiochus Epiphanes* – employing the same tactics. The city pictures a complacent era in church history when the bible and prophecy counted for very little. Hence the Lord’s warning, “If you do not watch I will come as a thief and you will not know the hour” (*v.3*).

(a) Significantly the Lord speaks as giver of the Spirit’s benefits and guide to His church.

(b) The Lord is very well acquainted with the energised work of this church, that they have a great name. “Sardis” from the Greek means “red” – the equivalent Hebrew is Man-ADAM This people came from Shem – Noah’s son – but bore no resemblance to the great preacher of old who built a ship to save souls. The sardius was the first jewel in the Jewish high priest’s breastplate – and was associated with “love”. The Lord said “Sardis – you are dead”. Spiritual life isn’t there much less love. The works were in the past – there is no current story.

(c) There were remaining features of life about the Sardis church. The command was put support under these in the hope that like a trap to be harnessed to a horse they could be used again. Truth received is to be obeyed and kept and to lead to change. The alternative is crisis at the coming of Christ. The “unknown hour” statement constitutes a warning to the nominal and traditional but moribund church of later time that sits lightly by biblical truth – but the reference here in the first instance is to Christ dealing in judgement with a local congregation by removing the lamp stand.

(d) Even in Sardis there are notable people who have not “soiled their garments” by joining in lifeless ceremonial of a mystical or impure sort. There will be people in heaven from Sardis. Those who are faithful will walk in purity – hence “white”

(e) Those names will remain in the book of life (*Rev.13.8, 17.8, 20.12 & 15, 21.27, 22.19*) which is in heaven. cf. *Daniel 12.1* and *Luke 10.20* with Hebrews 12.23 The victor – who is not overcome by the enemy-but remains vigilant and lives righteously, will not only be registered in God’s book but also confessed before the Father and the angels.

This message is good for the church everywhere and in all ages.

There is a good story about *Croesus* – who was told by the philosopher *Solon* in answer to his question, “Who is the happiest of men?” – “*Tellus* of Athens”. *Solon* continued, “You are the wonderfully rich Lord of many nations but until I hear that you have closed your life happily I cannot answer you” How did Croesus end his days? Well,

Cyrus attacked and almost burned him with the rubbish of Sardis – and he was saved by calling out “Solon Solon Solon”. The oracle responded to his unhappy state by saying “*Croesus* is suffering for other’s sins.” Others failed in their vigilance. Let us then learn not to fail others and not to fail Christ.

(6) PHILADELPHIA 8-13

Philadelphia (*modern Alashehir*) lies in a fertile valley watered by the river *Cogamus*. The kings of Pergamum built it as a communication centre for cities in the Lycus valley. It was named by king *Eumenes* in honour of his brother *Attalus* – he had his head on one side of his coins – his brother’s on the other.

Philadelphia is the centre of a volcanic region – not far from the Turkish *Olympus* on the slopes of which my wife and I drank a welcome cup of tea brewed over burning gas spewing out of the slopes of that mountain.

(a) Christ describes Himself as “the holy one”; “the genuine one” [*αληθινος*]; the keeper of the key of David i.e. Messianic hope; the one who opens; the one who shuts.

(b) BEHOLD A DOOR OPEN. He is aware of their energised work. Every church has WORK of a sort to show. The Lord gave them an “open door” as a mission church-reaching all who passed west or east – to and from the Lycus valley cities.

(c) BEHOLD JEWS CONVERTED Their power to multiply was “very small” [*μικρος*] but they guarded God’s word and did not deny Christ.

But God is currently giving them those who broke with the synagogue of Satan – so called Jews.

(d) BEHOLD JEWS KNEELING aware that God loved the Christians.

(e) They kept the word of longsuffering and God will guard them in the hour of trial, coming on the whole world, to try once for all the earth’s inhabitants. (*This future trial is a harbinger of trial to be expected by the church of the latter day – which begins again the evangelisation of the Jews. cf the free church embassy to Israel in 1839 and the 20th century progress in this field.*)

(f) BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY The warning of the Lord’s act of taking away the lamp stand is a figure of His return for the church. (*Notice the 19 mentions of the church in Revelation 1-3 after which it is nowhere seen*) The Victor’s crown – the conqueror’s crown is in mind.

1. Christ promises to make victor’s “pillars in the temple of God”. *Trajan’s* priests placed a pillar in His temple with their names on it. On earth great shaking – in heaven a permanent temple.

2. Christ promises that on us the name of God will be written. We will never forget whose we are – it will be a permanent mark more real than the Jewish mezuzah.

3. Christ further promises to write the name of New Jerusalem on the believer and

4. Christ promises to write His own name on us. So we have a Christian name or a family of God name and as holy city name. We have a triple name running like Adonai Salem ... All the millions of saints in eternity will have personalised names the meaning of which will be given them by Jesus Himself. All churches should listen and learn from this message.

(7) LAODICEA 14-22

Known earlier as Dios-polis (city of Zeus) – it was named after *Laodice* – the wife of its *re-builder* Antiochus. The name means “Justice of the people”. It recovered after the *Mithridatic War* and again re-emerged by its own effort after the earthquake of AD

60. Banking and black wool dealt it a good hand. Its medical school produced collyrium for the ophthalmic industry.

The water supply of Laodicea ran in surface channels a few miles from nearby Hierapolis. During our *1999 spring visit to Pamukkale* in Turkey our host diverted water from the higher source of the hot water a few kilometres distant to fill her small swimming pool after Friday prayers – providing a delightful warm dip. At the rear of the caravansary ran another stream of cold water. En route to Laodicea the first lost its heat and the second warmed up. Laodicea's waters were ill tasting and emetic.

(a) The Lord's presentation – "I am the *Amen* – the faithful one – the genuine one, the source of God's creation."

(b) "I know what you do or what you earn – you are neither cold nor hot" There was no distinct "chill" in their faith nor any distinct "zest". "I am ready to vomit you out".

(c) "You say, 'I am wealthy and have immense riches and no need'" "You don't realise that you are wretched [*ταλαιπωρος* – where a callus forms joining the fractured ends of a broken bone.] Smyrna was also rich but preferred to be known as "poor". Laodicea boasted it could restructure without external help after earthquake. The church is compared to a man after a fall. Such settings led in those days to deformity and limping.

The church is pitiable – "it would bring tears to the eye" – it is incurable.

The church is like a beggar who crouches. Beggars were considered divinely protected. Christ said "Blessed are the "poor" [*πτωχος*]

The church is afflicted with misty sight – poor vision.

The church had only an undergarment – nothing for winter's cold breeze.

It is true there is no direct commendation – but there is the divine compassion shown. The picture here is of the modern church – good membership; generous giving; ornate premises, broken, pitiable, without vision and for numerous reasons naked before God. There was, *Strabo* tells us, a fine market just out of town. The Lord has just what they need. He wants them to get "alongside Him" [*παρα*] verse 18. A closer walk with God would solve all their problems.

For their poverty the untainted gold of character; for their short-sightedness the Lord offered the anointing of the Spirit for their spiritual nakedness not raven black woollens but the white garments of His righteousness.

Christ urges that He rebukes and disciplines "friends". He calls for a zealous speedy turn around.

Behold I have stood at the door and I am still knocking. If anyone hears let him open and I will come in and have a mutually intimate time of refreshment and fellowship.

As ever "victory" is in view in the church. The Lord will award the victor with "a place on the throne of God" – Why ever such a preferment? First let it be understood that the eastern throne was large – and would accommodate others than the monarch. It was a special favour to sit beside the king where an honour was to be bestowed. Of all the divine promises to the churches this is perhaps the most delightful.

Campbell Morgan sagely pointed out that "someone in Laodicea had to make the difference; someone had to see the need" someone had to quest what Christ offered. After all it only took a few lepers to save Samaria. Despite the energetic praying of Epaphras and the faithful teaching of John hardly anyone would instigate a move from the core worldliness of the time to good and holy living. There is about Laodicea a hardness and a dragging of the feet in things spiritual.

A little girl once surprised the class of which she was part replying to the question, “What are the characteristics of salt?” Her answer was “It causes thirst!” and “It melts ice!” “Have salt in yourselves” said the master.

CHAPTER 4

Heaven –what it will be like when the church is called home!

SEGMENT 2 4.1-6.17

META TAUTA 2

CHRIST AT THE DOOR 1

I used to obtain tracts from a Hull fish merchant who signed every cheque “*John 6.37 Tether*”. These tracts featured Christ standing at the door knocking – plaintive loving look directed to our eyes – which seemed to say “will you bend every sinew to bring the light to those for whom I died & gather fruit?”. In our great hall of learning at Oxford (*Keble College*) and in our great national cathedral (*St Paul’s*) this appeal to British intelligentsia and all-comers in the form of *Holman Hunt’s* painting “The light of the World” constitutes “the” challenge to Britain in this last church period.

QUOTATIONS & BACKGROUND TO THE REST OF THE BOOK

There are 594 O.T. references in all in the Apocalypse and 38 in this chapter traceable through *Aland, Black, Metzger & Witgren’s* apparatus to the United Bible Societies’ Greek N.T. I find 2 other references. The references spread is as follows:-
Law(3):*Ex3.14, 19.16* History(6):*1Kgs22.19, 2Ch18.8(X3)* Prophets 21(Including Ezekiel(10) Daniel(5) Amos(2) & Isaiah(4) Psalms(3):*Ps47.8(X3)* Writings 1 *Esther 1.1d* LXX. There will be no detailed attention to references and allusions chapter by chapter although the writer has consulted them in the course of studying the movement of thought in the book.

There are 32 “sights” in the book (*with two ‘sub’ views in Chapter5*) The perspective also shifts between heaven and earth. There are **nine time changes** in the entire book of *Revelation* marked by **μετα ταυτα** statements. Two occur here in *v.1 & v.2*. These John understood as rapid successive scenes kaleidoscoping into one another. He used the literary device both in the gospel and in the Apocalypse to achieve immediacy of change from one set of circumstances to another.

1. A DOOR HAD BEEN LEFT OPEN IN HEAVEN

Closing doors prevents prying eyes – but this door is opened for us. It is a “vision” door, that is, one that enables us by interpreted symbols to see the time period of verse 1 (*linked to 3:20*) and The exercise of Christ still standing (*cp 3.30, 4.1, 4.2*) (*literal.Greek “One placed Himself on a throne”*) as believers are called home (*v.2 ff*) shade into 5 further exercises of angels. First(*7.1*) The exercise of the angel from the east applying world control till Gods work among Jews grows – set at today’s % it would be 2.4 of the national population ; *7.9* The exercise of the lamb healing hurts; *9.12* The exercise of 4 angels in the Euphrates or Iraq/Iran area with its domino effect on earth for several years; *15.5* The exercise of 7 angels with God’s wrath handed over by the “living creatures” *v.7* leading to a humbling of the beast or superpower and a crescendo in Iran/Iraq involving the East and resulting in the Armageddon conflict & the long promised “shaking “ or earthquake that puts Babylon on notice; *18.1* The exercise of the angel with great authority ends the last short-lived alliance of *17.12* and Babylon falls silent in death – ushering in *19.1* the Lord’s rule with Hallelujahs in heaven. From heaven’s perspective these are the priorities right ahead between the door opening of *4.1 & 19.11*. Let’s take the chapter verse by verse!

CHRIST STANDS TO POINT OUT ESSENTIALS

The Lord stood to welcome Stephen. He compels a lukewarm church by the passion love and force of his call to Laodicea and by showing us the excitement of heaven. From 3.22 the call of the Spirit is a still small voice whose strivings are dampened by judgments (*the emphatic call of the epilogue 22.7 testifies to its presence*) Here too is the trumpet-more about which awaits the reader of *1Thess.4.6*. So what follows the rapture in heaven? You are a Christian? It is of high interest to you!

2. WE SHALL BE CHANGED 2

“I was in the spirit” says John. That says everything! Immediately *ευθεως* – in a straight vertical taking up – as Paul says “in a moment”. No jet lag. “A throne was placed (*not automatic – behind the unseen Father*) and one placed Himself on it” (*Middle voice*) – awesome!

3. WHO IS THAT ONE? 3

The “discernible view kept in sight” [*ορασει*] is as ‘a jasper (*diamond*) and sardius’ The definite article masculine is used so the NIV “carnelian” is an error being the “feminine blood red seal” alternative to the “brown male seal stone”-which the AV accurately translates. Just ask – “Who seals?” The quote from Ezekiel 1 “like a man” agrees.

The significance is “Here at home is our risen ascended Lord – who can bear any hurt and go on – and yet who retains indelible marks – this much “diamond” shows. The sardius shows that by death & rising He has sealed His church.

The rainbow or iris [*a full circle of green about the throne*] speaks of mercy & courage that defies fear. This is a throne of mercy for the redeemed. Love and brave hearts are all about it. What an experience we are headed for!

4. AGE IN HEAVEN? 4

Yes and no! There are elders but *μικροι* *Isaiah 24.23* here quoted is a word indicative of “vigorous” persons-though drawn from earth time – many it may be from ancient Christian periods. Their number links with the priesthood of believers – so they are the chorus (*cf. 1Chron 24 1-19*) who lead the church’s sincere desires in glory. These thrones & the bow like satellites circle the throne of God so there is no behind and before to be stated just one *κυκλοθεν* “moving cycle. They were “invested” with brilliant white robes (*cf. 7.9*) Such at Athens were on approbation of conduct. These are given by grace like Joseph’s gowns to his brothers. They had crowns of gold – not for games – but conduct of serious business of the kingdom.

MORE ABOUT CHRISTIANS – MANY JUST NEW TO HEAVEN! 5

AWE AND EXCITEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS IN GLORY

Just as the Holy Spirit “proceeded” in the church era so now believers watch in awe enthralled as lightnings thunder and voices “proceed” from Father & Son and via holy angels. (*cf. Ex.19.16*) “voices” is an ancient term for “battle-cries”. This is on earth a period of final conflict with dangers for those who cross the line of God’s will as serious and instant as at Sinai. This also is an era of unprecedented fear on earth We now focus on the church “in close to the throne” [*ενωπιον*] in the shape of the “candlestick” symbol. It represents “not by might or power but the completed work of the Holy Spirit” (*cf. Zechariah4.2*). It is referred to throughout Revelation 1-3 which depicts the church on earth in its historic phases. In this latest heavenly age the church

is nourished by the 2 olive trees – or latter-day prophets of the tribulation(*cf. Rev 11.1*) The candlestick on earth represents the eyes of God seeking His own – in heaven the burning zeal and excitement dancing in the eyes that mirror and extend the Lord’s exercise as He “perfects his work”.

UNDERSTANDING “GLASS” 6-7 LEARNING FROM “THE LIVING ONES”

(a) And “in close” to the throne “a candlestick” and a “sea of glass like crystal”. There is no “before” or back and front to this throne – just one circle of redeemed humanity. We who are accustomed to elaborate stage sets on T.V.

This is magnificent beyond belief. Glass was first made in the sand land of Egypt – the believers in glory were people of faith – the “heirs of faithful Abraham”. Now reflecting Christ perfectly they are transparently pure – this much glass teaches us. Crystal teaches us too – it is proverbial for “holding on to and giving up”. They have given up everything for Jesus – left their earth home (*whatever the pull*) and found their place at the throne [*for those who want just a cabin in the corner there – something bigger awaits*].

(b) 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 [*γεμονα*] 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 the world that is heaven and the world that is earth where the action is.

To better understand the “living ones” study Ezekiel 1. Each 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). John introduces us to the theme of the **four gospels** as derived from the very nature of God reflected in these living ones. But stay with the “flying eagle” [*πετομενω i.e. vast forward movement*] and the heavenly things – the progress of Christ and the gospel in human history. John writes the only sequential gospel.

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT EVER REIGNING 8

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 ruling. These living ones reflect God’s activity sympathetically and in worship displaying absolute harmony of presentation and greatest celerity. Like the elders they cycle intimately round the throne. They have no “day and night” rest or pause but cry as the seraphim of Isaiah 6 “Holy Holy Holy”.

Special note: They lead worship of the “Pantocrator” – a word whose 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.

WORSHIP IN ITS ULTIMATE FORM 9

To miss *Revelation 4* is to miss the cardinal feature of worship. Christ is our “Perfecter” whose thoroughness and care into eternity will ever enthrall 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*].

OUR GREATEST LEADERS 10

We don't know who they are – but John had to be called up for the occasion and we know his diffidence. These thrones were reserved – Jesus once told John's mother. We will wait to rejoice in God's wise good pleasure. **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 friendship as a way of “throwing” praise. The Lord gently and lovingly puts them back on the noble heads of his adoring elders.

WONDER OF WONDERS

As leaders worship their theme is “You are worthy LORD to receive the expectations of the perfected, to receive honour who paid the price for us and for whom we gladly gave all whatever it cost – and best of all You are to be lauded for creating once for all – though it meant a cross and for the power you have shown increasingly to make us after your perfect will and purpose – within the all things which the elders knew would be completed & perfected.

Our wonderful Lord is “thorough”. He appeared on earth as a carpenter. He said “My yoke is easy”. He will have earned every breath of praise we can muster in heaven. GLORY, HONOUR, BLESSING, POWER to the one who perfects – to our Lord Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER 5

See the tribulation material after 5 & compare references: Total references -35 Distribution: Torah 2; Historical 7; Prophetic 16; Writings 10. “Then” in the NIV translates “and” in Greek. There is no time in heaven – but the earth history is immediately following the church age (cf. 4.1). John records three main “sights” here – the first of which is the “book”, the second an “angel”, and the third a “lamb” (vv1.2, 6)

THE THRONE OF GOD 1

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 sitting on the throne. Bible history from the time of Ahab and Micaiah (*1Kings22.19*) and Isaiah 6 presents God as enthroned. We take little notice of this – perhaps imagining our creator lives a gracious but uninteresting life-style – but quite forgetting that He is totally committed to being on line – being available to us 100% of the time – that is extraordinary love and it is in His nature to be infinitely patient. The reference is to Christ in particular – so after a daily peripatetic ministry in Galilee he has patiently ministered to his people over 2 millennia cp. *Psalms29.11* and *Isaiah 6.1*. In these contexts we find that God can reign in heaven and appear without moving from his seat before his subjects on the earth. There is an extraordinary interpenetration of the whole universe possible for the throne and our God – which opens the option of movement and throws light on omnipresence. So this throne is a throne of grace where prayer is received; and a throne of mission from which angels proceed; and a throne of sovereignty which may represent itself at will in the created world.

THE BOOK 1-5

It is described as written on both sides. The book on the right hand of the One on the throne is a “small book” [*βιβλίον*].

But it is a “full book”. It is a double sided papyrus or possibly “written backwards from within” – suggesting it is in Hebrew and the seals open therefore historically from first to last – though penned from last to first. So we have a unique book that was written by one who knows the end from the beginning. It was written and sealed by the writer and is clearly in God – its author’s hand. It has seven sections or chapters into which we emerge at this point. That it is little and full suggests there are many events pending and that it carries seven seals – suggests they completely resolve history in terms of the divine will. The mystery of how their seals are opened is now to be declared.

FURTHER DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE LITTLE BOOK

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 diminutive transliterates as BIBLION]

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 *Genesis 49.9-10*. 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 characterized 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 MICAIAH 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 ANGEL RECOGNISED 2

The angel was strong for battle. He was a herald and spoke with a loud voice. It would seem his voice affected the three estates of heaven earth and Hades.

Worthiness was the requisite to wrench open in one act each seal and to even want to look therein. John wept greatly because he knew from sight of it that this book was written on both sides and was complete. No one had been found worthy to read it or to look it. The use of “look” is not just to “recognise it” as important or “to long to see it

open” although the latter is important. The use of this word speaks of one ready to look the contents and its terrors right in the face. The search of heaven was the Father’s search – who held out the book to His right where the Son had his age-long session. To revert to 4.11 the elders gave glorious hint that the creator who said “Let us make man” was worthy because he sustained the creation in life and created all – including themselves “*once for all*” to take the glory, the honour or prize and the increased dimension of power. At first the latter seems incongruous-till we recognise the “crown rights” of the lamb are not till this great development fully realised-Satan has contested His power-but his unworthiness has become evident.

THE ELDER WITH THE SPECIAL TASK 5-7

One of the elders is saying to John, “Recognise – look! The lion of Judah the root of David has gained the “*once for all*” victory.

That act ended John’s weeping and he continues to expound the sequel.

The response of the lamb

Then John saw in the centre of the throne right in the face of 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 *Genesis 49.9-10*; also by the act in *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 *Rev.5 6* standing central in heaven . Our Lord is here characterised as complete in power and complete in understanding of 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 Israel’s latter day witnesses and body of martyrs from the earth.

As in the case of Micaiah 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 four living creatures mirror Christ’s loveliness and nature and form the inner circle surrounding the throne.

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 v.6. 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.

THE 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.

THE 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 *Psalms 47.8, Isaiah 6.1 and Ezekiel 1 26-27*.

THE TWENTY FOUR HEAVENLY ELDERS 8

The scene is set: the Father is on the throne; the lamb has received the book and in front of the throne the 4 living ones and 24 elders stand with harps and vials on the sea by the throne.

(a) They are represented as encircling the Lamb – in the third circle of power and privilege.v6

(b) When they fell before the throne they held golden bowls of incense of prayer and harps. The former incense ministers especially in *Chapter 8*. 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.

Their song indicates that the “redemption of the body –the homecoming of saints to glory is a reality and has come to be v.9 – they have come from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 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

(c) John continued to watch and the sight he beheld was of many angels in a fourth wide circle. The angels are numbered at 10,000 X10,000 and 1000 X1000's – that is hundreds of millions and millions besides. This power is awesome. This host assembled – coordinate 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 who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength”

OPENING THE SEALS – WARRANTS A NEW SONG 9-12

The 9th verse takes its colour from 6 psalms: –

1 *Psalms 33.3* Sing to Him a new song for He created and His purposes stand firm

2 *Psalms 40.3* speaks of Christ coming to earth and proclaiming Gods will in the great assembly

3 *Psalms 96.1* proclaims his coming as earth's judge

4 *Psalms 98.1ff* speaks of His coming to remember Israel and to judge the earth

5 *Psalms 144.9ff* speaks of the people who are spared captivity

6 *Psalms 149* finally speaks of the ultimate judgment of nations by the saints.

O.T. PROPHECY ILLUMINATES THE MATTER

Isaiah 61.10-11 declares prophetically that the bridegroom is coming – the bride is adorned with jewels and the sovereign Lord will make righteousness spring up in the earth like seed in a well prepared garden.

Daniel 7.10 affirms that equal numbers as stated by John stood before the Lord and that He came with “clouds” and returned before the most high and was given authority over all nations. Daniel is speaking of a gathering of saints and of the books opened for the gathering of saints and the judgment of nations.

THE LIVING ONE: THE PRELIMINARY PRAISE OF ALL CREATION 13-14

The **entire sympathetic creation** falls in adoration of Him who lives for the ages of ages. God alone has age long life that knows no beginning. The glory of an eternal being who could enter time and die for man is unsurpassed in wonder and worthy of continuous worship. When Christ comes again the evidence is there for an irreversible order of righteousness. The era of grace has yielded to the era of glory. Human government has yielded to the sovereign rule of the Pantocrator.

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.

CHAPTER 6

SIGNALS THE ONSET OF FAMINE DEATH & WAR

This chapter 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 1-2

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 horses in Zechariah's prophecy stand ready to ride in the last days of uneasy world peace.

THE SECOND SEAL 3-4

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 [*μαχαιρος* – already by *Xenophon's* (400BC) 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 [*σφαζω* – cutting the jugular]

THE THIRD SEAL 5-6

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 [*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 7-8

The fourth living creature (*represented by the eagle*) said, “Behold a grey or fresh green horse [*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 [*ρομφαια* 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 9-11

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” [*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 12-14

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. We should say “the age” or aeon*) 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 [*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 15-17

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 – whilst 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.

CHAPTER 7

SEGMENT 3 7.1-7.8

META TAUTA NO.3

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 *Isaiah 13.13; Joel 3.16; Haggai 2.6 & 21; Matthew 24.29; Mark 13.25; 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 1

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 [*γωνιας* "right angle"] positioning is to be read from above [*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 [*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 2-3

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 (*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.

SEALED JEWS WITH A GLORIOUS MISSION 4-8

These angels then joined in the greater ministry of sealing the 144,000 v.4 [*Greek ρηδ*] 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 Issachar 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 4 7.9-15.4

META TAUTA NO.4

**(NUMEROUS SAINTS AWAY FROM TRIBULATION – 7TH SEAL 9-12
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 much 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! 13-14

THE QUESTION THAT NEEDS TO BE ASKED!

WHO ARE THESE IN WHITE ROBES?

TRIBULATION SAINTS

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 *ἦλθεν* 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 [*ἐνώπιον* – *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” [*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 *ἐκλείπω* but *ἐξάλειπω* 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 – FOUR SERIOUS TRIBULATION CHANGES 6

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 7

"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 8-9

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 10-11

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 poison or radiation seems to be distributed worldwide. Jeremiah predicted that Israel would eat “bitter food and poisoned water” 8.15 – scatter them and send the sword after them. The widespread impact on potable water could only give rise to disease and death. *Moderns automatically think of nuclear causes in such a connection – and who could avoid that awesome thought?*

ANGEL'S TRUMPET FOUR 12

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 13

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.

America would have awareness of and participate in the war of *Revelation 9* in respect of abyss – oil or smoke

America’s withdrawal from the Euphrates war theatre is a type of “loosing” which can only create a power vacuum drawing in the eastern powers. **A 2million man** war force is reserved 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 7 billion to 4.6 billion with a death rate of 2.4 billion souls*). 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.

America (*prior to the tribulation*) generally was appraised of 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 *v.12* – so this is solemn and 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 1-2

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 or reserves”. *Aristotle & Aristophanes* use the word “Abyss” for “the unfathomed” or “immense wealth” Quotes 1-2 *Genesis 19.28 & Ex. 19.18* speak of ριφγ & ιν[Sodom’s “incense” and Sinai’s “fury”. Both are compared to smoke from a foundry – the Greek is καμινος Hebrew מַב. 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** – products 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 AD 80 by Plutarch. They acted on governmental instruction (*bed-chamber command*) There was a “constant flowing & changing” – a fluid command structure *ρεω* 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 σφραγις* 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 *επιθυμew*. Quotes 5-7 help here *Job 3.21, Jer. 8.3 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 7-12

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 – that might be understood as anti-radar cover or simple.

Camouflage – even rotors above flying as hair

5 Teeth – for they could devour with sharp shaped missiles

6 Breastplates – metal or 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 *κεντρα* (*plural*) are described as thorns left elsewhere – or spears from being thrust

10 A King – Abaddon/Apollyon OR extirpation/god of archery and 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

Breastplates wheat coloured or red – and dark blue – and yellow – painted in battle colours.

Heads – as lions – make explosive noise.

Mouths – sending out fire and 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 *Dt.32.17 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 and 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 or battle field slaying *φονος*; their poisons or drugs *φαρμακεια*; their brothels *πορνεια* not *εταιρος* (partner-concubinage) and their *κλεμματα* or fraud or 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 – first fruits.

CHAPTER 10

PARENTHESIS (3) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW! "ANOTHER" ANGEL APPEARS IN THE APOCALYPSE 1-2 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 foot is on the sea or Gentiles or felicity. Left on land or Israel or 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 *εν* "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 3-7

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 8-11

(1) We need the book & the Spirit of Prophecy John took the *Βιβλαριδιον* 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 and 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 1 King 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*

CHAPTER 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 1-2

The measuring rod presumes there is something to measure!

The book of Ezekiel explains that there will be a **millennial temple**. A temple may well be built in times of trouble but substantially enlarged with Christ’s advent since the topography changes.

(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*) and will be used as a measure of the millennial house –cf my commentary on Ezekiel.

(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? 3- 6

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 7-8

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 9

Nothing less than **international television networking** 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 10

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” [*Βασανιζω*] of the settlers.

(6) THE AFTERMATH 11-14

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). This woe appears to affect Jerusalem itself.

PARENTHESIS (6) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW! THE SEVENTH TRUMPET 15-19

(1) v.15 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) vv.16-17 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) v.18 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) v.19 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.

CHAPTER 12

SEALS TRUMPETS AND BEYOND

Between the 7th seal and the 7th trumpet a period spanning TWO JUDGMENTS comes and goes. **The first is a 5-month long war resulting in the death of 1/3rd of those on earth.** Then in the second, 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 1-2

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 RED DRAGON 3-8

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! 9

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 INTERVENTION OF GOD ON EARTH SCRIPTURE WARNS OF THE UNPARALLELED VENOM OF THE SERPENT 10-11

(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.

Loved not their souls – and died for Christ

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 4-14

(1)PERSECUTION

When *the dragon* perceived that he was cast down to the earth – or Israel – by Michael the prince who stands for Israel – 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 15

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 16

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 17

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 – A PRELUDE TO 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 & 1Thesalonians 3*) 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 riposte 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 sadly, Luther's notion of the church as replacing Israel in the scheme of things is unthinkingly adopted. 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 a-millennialists often sadly fall back on the unacceptable solution first proposed by millennial dawn *Jehovah Witnesses* giving it as their interpretation that this earth is not destroyed (*as stated in 2Peter 3.12*) and argue for 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 CHAPTERS 12-13

Chapters 12 -13 of the Apocalypse carries a number of references and allusions to Daniel's night vision and a fuller study of the references gives useful background to aid our understanding these chapters.

CHAPTER 12 – REFERENCES

- (1) *Chapter 12.3/Dan 7.7* The fourth beast – which spans a long period.
- (2) *v4/Dan 8.10* the slow growth of the antichrist.
- (3) *v7/Dan 10.13* the growing antichrist-even in the world as John the divine says in New Testament times.
- (4) *v.7/Dan 12.1* the general protection of modern Israel by Michael-evidence of which is seen since 1948.
- (5) *v14/Dan 7.25 & 12.7* the stratagem /gentile device that is explained in *Dan. 9.27* refers to the final Jewish crisis.
- (6) *v17/Dan 7.7 & 21* the emergence of the antichrist and his temporary success before the Kingdom comes in power.

CHAPTER 13 – REFERENCES

- (1) *13.1, 2/Dan7.3* the four winds and emergence of the procession of power – Babylon, Persia Greece and Rome develop
- (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.

VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION 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 is also used of fabulous monsters like the sphinx or centaur. The Hebrew term would be “living creature”. The Spirit of God in choosing such a term demonstrates with prophetic urgency that democracy will cease and Satan will dominate the final years of human government with a tyrannical regime. John says “**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 (EUROPEAN) significance** [*perhaps some future development of or derogation 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 [*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. Such power provided with world wide intelligence must be America
- (b) The bear (*associated with the north and Russia*) and the power of
- (c) The lion (*Britain & associated nations. Britain like ancient 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 3-5

I saw one of the heads as if slain unto death a [*πληγη* “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" 6

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 7-10

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 or that commitment that *does not hold life dear* when Christ’s honour is at stake is modelled in the Apocalypse by martyrs who willingly shed their blood.

A SECOND BEAST 11-20

Then I saw another beast coming out of the earth.

This beast created these things.

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.

It created in the earth and those now settled in it worship of the first beast, whose plague had been healed.

It created great signs – fire should come from heaven in the presence of men – mimicking the Holy Spirit & prophets.

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.

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.

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 *νοῦς* – the wisdom let him count the number of the beast – for it is the number of man, and his mark [*χξς*] or number is 666. John says "Here is wisdom, let he who has a purpose count the number of the beast for it *is the numerical (& business) 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.

REVELATION 14

PARENTHESIS (8) WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW!

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 2-5

The lyre or harp had 7-9 strings and man has 8-9 ribs. The Greek word “harp” is *κιθαραίς*, the word “chest” is *κιθαρός* – both may be the source of rich and deep praise. For such reasons the instrument of choice 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” or “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. Pope 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 or 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” [*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 αρτι* “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 15-16

This angel screamed, “Send in your **sickle**. This may well be the single reason for the involvement of the Russian republic in the war of the later day. Some speculate on a “hook” like oil or access south but it may as readily be God’s decision to end Russian world thrall and endangerment. The Lord has determined on harvesting!

(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 [*δρεπανον* “scythe” or “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 17

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 18

Yet another angel – the fifth from the incense altar who had power over fire shouted [*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 1-4

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”[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, v.4a

“All the nations will come and worship before you for you have made plain your judgements to amend wrong” v.4b

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 OR SEQUENCE 5 15.5-17.18

META TAUTA NO.5

(THE SEVEN VIALS – MYSTERY BABYLON) 5-8

The final deadly vials of divine wrath bring:

- (1) Land based sores (nuclear contamination?);
- (2) Sea or ocean corruption with death
- (3) River and 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
- (7) In the Air – highly suggestive of a Nuclear winter.

JUDGMENT WITHOUT DELAY 5-8 cf 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 ABOUT JUDGMENT! 7-8

(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. John had earlier seen the angels *holding* the plagues. They had come out from God with these vials, and 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 outpoured plagues were not the end of the world– they fell with the eternal passion of God which lasts eternally on the apostate.

(4) We need to know that **there is wrath that prayer cannot reverse** (cf. *Ezekiel 14.20*). 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 *1Kings 8.11* 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 contains 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** of 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" [*Hebrew 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 *1 Kings 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 OR 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 [*Χαραγμα*] of the beast. The Greek word often 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 *Psalm 16.4*. “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” *Psalm 63.3-4*. “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” *Psalm 141.2*.

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 *Exodus 7.17-21*. 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. *Deut.32.4* “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 – *Psa19.137*

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 *Isaiah 49 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 [*κρίσεις*] is called “crisis” and we read in *Psalm19.9* that such “crises” are essential to bring evil to book. We could understand that the 2004 attack on *Jelija* 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 *εις* changes to *επι* indicating that 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 *Exodus 10.21* 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* Jeremiah 50 38 & 51.36.

An attack crossing this territory is divinely encouraged from the powers of the sunrise. *Genghis 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 and the American involvement and phased withdrawal are preparatory of this ultimate scenario.

The “frog like” hidden persuaders are preparing the day of divine judgment – and the Pantocrator [*Παντοκράτωρ*] “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 the war of *Ezekiel 38-9* decreed in scripture.

VIAL SEVEN 17-18

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. Isa2.19-20, Ezekiel 38.17-23, Joel 3.16, Haggai 2.6, 7, 21 Matthew 24.29, Mk13.25, Luke7.24*) This matter is a further end-time decree and it will be epic, devastating and geo-physical) .

THREE URBAN JUDGMENTS FOLLOWED: 19-21

- (a) The Great city – Jerusalem 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 – many folds in the earth’s crust were gone. 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 *Mardocheus* 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 “old” in that it has been forecast for thousands of years and is no doubt related to setting the earth in a state more akin to its primal order. 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 these 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

THE PURPLE WOMAN & LATTER DAY WORLD SYSTEM

(1) SIGHTS AND SOUNDS 1-2

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 antiburgher – not in cahoots with or obliged to **the state** though in prayer to God for benign influences and divine over-ruling. *Prior to the*

advent of the New Testament church with her message of another kingdom and the modern technocratic revolution and, indeed, the Reformation – with its call to separate church and state the imperial power of Rome and the magisterial power of Popes most influenced how life was lived. The angel says that a lady sins in her alliance with kings – a relationship that draws mass populations in its train. A world movement will be built with misplaced passion and pride.

(1) THE FUTURE OR EURO POWER – A DEEPLY FLAWED FINAL EURO WORLD MODEL & (2) SIGHTS AND SOUNDS 3-6

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 economically and spiritually** and it would seem like all lively faith is gone – so the earth is a veritable wilderness. Our LORD said **“When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth?”**

“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 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 *Chapter 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” [*καθημενες*]. 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” 17.11.

4. THE DRESS OF THE WOMAN Her chosen colours – purple and scarlet – are colours derived from the suffering haemostoma 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 [*τιμιω λιθω*] of the crucified Lord and the pearls of many who suffered. So her dress and its ornaments suggest 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 IS 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 & SIGHTS AND SOUNDS (3RD RANGE IN THIS CHAPTER) 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 & SIGHTS AND SOUNDS 4TH RANGE IN THIS CHAPTER 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 you or cause *to flow before you* [*Greek ρεω*] 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 HYAH 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 situation, then, is that several forms of the supposedly binding modern Euro treaty terms succeed one another until that of the little horn prevails. Historists who fit the apocalyptic events of this book

into the “long time frame” see the “horn” as “Roman” power supplanting earlier forms of government and take little interest in understanding how a modern world dictator could emerge.

FORMS OF POWER – PRIOR AND POST THE PRESENT REAL POLITIC 11-13

The beast that was and is not, he is both the eighth and also he is from among the seven – and he goes [*ὄπαγω*] with companions into destruction.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: (1) the 1970 analysis of *Dr. Fred Tatford* followed the sage nineteenth century French exegete *Godet* closely; *Tatford* 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 AD 476 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) *Faussett* 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 *Artaxerxes2 (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 *cfv.11*)14-18

A wise comment of the late *Dr. Tattford* 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 (*Acts 5.39*) – 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 (*cf. 17.1*) 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. Luke 12.39*) – 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.” It has to be noted that the judgment is by “fire” and nuclear disaster affecting Europe cannot be ruled out – indeed it is virtually impossible to avoid this understanding from the Hebrew context of *Ezekiel 39.6*. **“I will send a fire among them that dwell carelessly in the “coastlands”.**

CHAPTER 18

SEGMENT OR SEQUENCE 6 18.1-24

META TAUTA NO.6

(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.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN THIS SEGMENT

EMPHASIS ON SCRIPTURE REFERENCES IS EMPHASIS ON FACTS NOT SYMBOLS

The 8 bible books listed above are quoted in a set of **49 references** in the chapter. 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 is set for this 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) such as those that anciently lost business at the fall of Tyre now at the close of the longest and**

greatest ever commercial age stand off from a ruined Babylon – their shipmasters aghast.

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 or COCCINUS double-dyed entity". The link of the woman – originating and still associate with the "seven heads and 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 1-2

(This chapter continues **PART 6 OF THE APOCALYPSE** and **SEQUENCE 6** of the book)

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*. 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 3

They grew rich through trade in "excessive" *στηνους* wealth – desire of an elephant or big time indulgence. The long reign of commercialism will halt with crisis and nuclear war when the cities of the nations fall.

(3)GOD-FEARING PEOPLE TOWARDS THE CLIMAX OF TRIBULATION 4-8

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 win one day. This is a Sodom like inferno and is divine judgment.

(4)THE KINGS ARE TERRIFIED AND STAND AFAR 9-20

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 and 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 21

An assault of war 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 22-24

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.

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*).

4. Recompense for Babylon Again Jeremiah spoke of this – “Recompense her according to her work” (*Jeremiah 50.29*)

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

5. 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 the more serious should Rome be identified, as I believe, with continental judgment! Kings feared as the city of their illicit intercourse falls – and without independence they are locked into it.

Distressing merchants whose wares were unwanted

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*)

6. Sorcery v.23 “The magic spell” as the NIV has it is described by *Sciss* 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" (*Luke 4.5*) 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 simplistic irrational a-millennialist teaching with its special pleading and its incredulous efforts to tuck the Millennium into earlier or current history or dump it because like the “stone the builders rejected” they cannot make it fit their ideas. The latest theological “hide” of the a-millennialist is that the exponents fight shy of “heaven”. They don’t much like the “Rapture” and so they dismiss any such visit of Christ and reintroduce the LORD to earth and get this planet with fire in its belly to go on ad infinitum supplying the want of that unseen dimension of heaven. *Without warrant in scripture can we just jump the church back to this earth* for eternity denying that God has ordained the dissolution of this earth and its entire ambient system? Our new bodies are made for a new world and our home is the New Jerusalem which relates to this earth only for the aeon rule of the Millennium or golden age but only ever adjoins the New Earth which appears when this one is burnt up and passes away.

The **Great Tribulation** our LORD promised would occur in the last days but not forestall **His Parousia** which would take place when ordinary life was in full swing. He and for that matter the apostles were categorical about His return to rule in a Kingdom foretold by all the prophets – known in the Apocalypse as **the Millennium** and in the OT as **the aeon**. We are now approaching these climatic 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". The natural sequel is “The Millennium” – a shorter study. To amplify your understanding of eschatology (*the*

last things) I suggest you acquire to the "Eternal State" – a “fourth” CD study and useful supplement to round off your studies.

CHAPTER 19

The marriage feast of the Lamb

SEGMENT OR SEQUENCE 7 19.1-22.21

META TAUTA NO.7

Rev 19.9 The angel said 'Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the lamb.'

Introduction on "feasts" John in the gospel opens with reference to John the Baptist's joy at hearing Jesus for the first time – it parallels his leap within his mother's womb. The apostle takes up **Christ's references to joy** and sets out for us the message of the Lord against the background of the annual festivals which were times of joy and holiday (*cf summer messages*). **In the gospel and apocalypse there are 16 references to "after these things" and we realise that John is racing to some future point in all his writing. That point is the marriage supper of the lamb – the biggest most magnificent gathering of the ages.** Kings and all nations will share in it – small and great will be there – when the saints go marching in. I want you to taste its relevance and live in the light of it. In *Hebrews 12.2* we read that "Jesus for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame. . ." The signs of the gospel are like engagement coins – signs of affection for Israel. [*The movement of thought is traceable in John 2.11, 2.13, 3.25-28,5.1,6.1-4,7.1.2.14.37,19.42,21.7 with Rev 1.19,3.20,4.1, 7.1,7.9,15.5,18.1.19.1-7*]. The "adulterous generation" John confronts yields in Revelation to the "whore" whom Christ judges and now we look at the glory and joy that replaces the world's way of life.

(1) THE JOY OF A SETTLED PEOPLE IN HEAVEN – HALLELUJAH HAPPINESS 1-6

- a. The *double* Hallelujah of the mass multitude of the redeemed. They are thrilled with the experience of salvation from a world of sin – and their arrival in the place of many mansions. They are overwhelmed by the Lamb's victory over the scarlet lady.
- b. The *humble* hallelujah of the highest unfallen and highest "lifted creations" the Living Creatures and elders.
- c. The *long extended* Hallelujah of the redeemed – as thunder– as waters roaring – and note that it is called for by a voice from the throne – calling for praise for "our God.

(2) THE JOY OF A SETTLED THRONE

– the joy of heaven without a courtroom.

Satan has been coming as in Job to accuse the "brethren". Now that issue is closed. The church is around the throne.

Someone who will not even be named – has replaced the "angel of Light" as praise – leader of heaven – and in absolute humility contrasts with that proud spirit *cf. v16* "Worship God" *v.10* Lets look closer

1 Satan said to Jesus – "If you fall down and worship me I will give you all the kingdoms." **In the light of this the guide of v10 eschews worship and rebukes John.**

2 "See -no" He showed him that *he had no pierced hands* – no worthiness

3 I am thy fellow-servant. I hold – I remain firmly committed to the evidences and witness in death of Jesus.

4 Worship God – let's go back to v6 "Praise Him – delight in Him – be proud of Him [*αινεω* "recommend" "show your love" "bring your vows"].

5 Holding the testimony of Jesus – His death and His work on the cross is the "inspiration" of us all – our very life.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB 7-9

(3) The joy of a settled world – the presentation in which bride & bridegroom return In *verses 7 & 14* there are references to the clothing of the church. It is called "fine linen" Notice that this is the dress in which we come back to the world – the purity Christ has given us. I want you to know it is BYSSUS – perfection to the minutest filament. Byssus was that which held the shellfish together in the depths of the sea. It speaks of powerful union. Our union with Christ alone gives purity and joy. It speaks of the depths of our rescue from the sins that beset us. That's wonderful in itself. But we pass to the bridegroom of our hearts.

**The bride eyes not her garments but here dear bridegrooms face
T'is not the robe she weareth but her great King of Grace.**

Take note of the "intrinsic greatness of Christ" in the *middle voice* expressions of this chapter

THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE –THE SECOND ADVENT 11-16

(a) **He settled Himself** on the horse – symbol of victory – not to be unseated & is swift as any Parthian monarchy 11 He calls himself faithful and true. He keeps covenant – He will return. *v.11*

(b) **He clothes Himself with Glory** *v12* and has been willing Himself to interrupt history to judge *v13* cf. 'dipped" Finally lets look at His names.

1. He is "**Almighty**" *vv6 & 15* He who called Abraham to look at the stars has redeemed the church.
2. **He calls himself faithful & true** or the ethical and moral ruler of the ages
3. He has a name none can know – yet is it written – Jehovah – unending eternal one. The mystery that transcends an angel's grasp *v12*.
4. He is the "**word of God**" – *this He calls himself* – the one who speaks to man over all ages & calls today. Here is the power of his sword – the word *πατασσω* mean "decisive-strike" His word is decisive.
5. He has name on his mantle and his thigh *v.16* – "**King of kings and Lord of Lords**"

His mantle of peace describes Him beautifully – He is Prince of peace. His thigh shows both his strength and His great humility– He is willing to suffer for me and to enter into all my life as the servant-king. He deserves the praises of all heaven and all eternity! Jesus, says the commentator, before you I bow!

THE ARMAGEDDON 17-21

The name of this war is found in *Apocalypse 16.16* – but there is no doubting that it is the very same conflict – the final war of modern history with the most devastating results.

Leaders fall in great numbers. Men of all ages and ranks die together. The beast who had established his "mark" (*19.20 & 20.4*) and the false prophet and their followers

were thrust into the “lake of fire”. This war is won by the command of Jesus Christ. It is a real war and it is the ultimate answer to the cries of heavenly martyrs and establishment of ultimate justice and the setting right of the earth according to the word of prophecy and the hopes of earthly saints of all time for the coming of Shiloh to whom all people may gather.

CHAPTER 20 THE MILLENNIUM

(1) SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

John saw an angel with the key of the abyss and a great chain over his hand and arm. He came down [*καταβαινω*] as a mighty wrestler in a step of intervention. He took hold of the dragon – the ancient serpent, diabolus or Satan and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the “abyss” and locked him there and sealed above him that he should not continue to deceive the nations, until the thousand years should be complete.

In *Luke 8.31* the fear of the “abyss” suggests that during His earthly ministry Christ was feared as the ultimate judge of demons. They like Satan fear to meet Christ and know their ultimate fate. Sin and rebellion against the Christ of God set the created being under the wrath of God and there is no remedy – to read this solemn 20th chapter is to dearly appreciate the gospel and see full reason for adherence to the will of God in Christ both in holy living and service and love for the souls of men.

SEGMENT OR SEQUENCE 8 20. 3-15

META TAUTA NO.8

THE FINAL LITTLE CHAPTER OF HISTORY

After that (*the millennium*) we have reference to a second short ultimate thrust of Satan who before the Millennium similarly brought all nations against Israel to try to overwhelm God’s purposes on earth in a penultimate struggle.

In this last section of Revelation – the main feature is the establishment of age long righteousness in the millennium and the descent of the city of God.

With Christ’s descent comes the golden age of His rule from Jerusalem. The prophetic and old testament scriptures provide handsome coverage of the rule of the Lord in the latter day on the earth – something even Job foresaw (*Job 19.25*).

Who will doubt that this “chaining” “locking up” and “sealing” of Satan for a thousand years is factually stated? (*v.3*)

Who will doubt that the synopsis of *vv4-6* and the reign of Christ is going to be undisturbed by Satan and demons? (*v.6*).

Who will doubt that this is a period that has as its end a massive war which leads to God’s fiery destruction of the earth? (*cf. 2Peter 3.12*).

This short chapter falls under the curse of *22.19* – so though men may doubt God’s stated plan or how it can be arrived at from the present historical movement of human affairs – this chapter has testified for 1900 years and stands as holy scripture stating categorically that there is to be a *χιλια ετη* – a thousand years of Christ’s rule on the earth.

It is fatuous to imagine that, for example, the 1000 years could have begun in 800AD with *Charlemagne* – the peaceful emperor. Satan was not bound and up until 1800 there were many wars featuring the Saracens, the Normans, the conquest of Italy by *Otho* and the Huns, the Turkish invasion of the Romans Empire (1050) – Jerusalem invaded 1065 and *William* defeated *Harold* of course at Hastings in 1066. Then the Crusader period 1096-1248 the fifth Crusade. Then there was the Samarqand empire of

Camertlane – the list could go on and on. History shows no sign of long peace in past days – nothing to fulfil *Isaiah 11.6-9 and Isaiah 65 19-25*.

SATAN IS EVER DANGEROUS EVER AN ACCUSER – EVER ANTI-CHRIST 1-10

When the 1000 years should be completed, Satan will have been loosed from his prison. He will go out to cause the nations in the four corners of the earth to swing out of their orbits [*πλαναω*]–”Gog “and “Magog” – the prince of the land of Magog and the land of Magog. This phrase is first found in *Ezekiel 38.2,3,14,16,18 & 39.1,11* and has to do with the peoples anciently called Rossi, Moschi & Tibareni. When we refer back to the prophet we find this nation is Meshech and Tubal (*modern Moscow & Tobolsk*). The prophet in the war we are to associate with Armageddon (*Ezekiel 38-9*) adds Persia, Cush and Phut to them and in *Ezekiel 38.21* that confederation meets their destined defeat in the mountains of Israel. In this the last great battle 1000 years later Gog who is Satan is still the leader and he is still able to move rebellious men and nations against the Christ of God. The numbers committed to this final struggle are described as “like the sand of the sea”. Thus all in all Satan fought in heaven – he fought against Israel and he will fight against God a third time.

This massive army will move across the “breadth” of the earth. They will not come by sea or over mountains but mainly move over great plains. This move must be through Syria and southward to Israel. The flat lands to the south and east may also be used until encirclement of the battle order of the saints and the beloved city is achieved. Jerusalem becomes “The beloved city” in the millennium. It has known the presence of God and was the place of hundreds of years of worship and pilgrimage.

The utter destruction of the hordes is by “**fire from God**”. In a further act of God the devil who took them away from their millennial ordered path was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone – cf. *Revelation 19.20 with 20.10*.

THE END OF THE PRESENT EARTH AND HEAVENS 11b

And I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. Peter alike attests this truth when he tells us the present earth is reserved for fire. Jesus three times said “heaven and earth will pass away”.

The earlier demise of the “beast” and “false prophet” – 1000 years before indicates that other continued testing of their infamy continues. This time Satan is not put in prison but put into an ineffable eternal trial which has one feature that outlasts the present solar system – i.e. “day and night” (*21.1*). Whereas this lake is modelled on the Dead Sea in the day of Sodom’s destruction it is a “salt-lake” “stagnant place” [*λιμνη*] of purifying fire and purifying smoke that speaks of the Glory of God alone. So in the course of this age by age “burning” of examination and question this trinity of evil is tested. The “flame and smoke” bespeaks testing in which neither men nor angels participate. The statement of *Genesis 3.4* “You will not die” comes back to haunt Satan. The “stagnant lake” is one into which only the dead come – in this abode created to make holiness all encompassing – the longest trial the universe ever will know continues unceasingly. The trinity of evil will know pain in their being and endure testing. The verb “**They will have been tested**” [*βασανισθησονται*] does not give any in this “lake” a *Penelope’s thread* back to life. **The power of the second death is absolute. No traveller returns.** In face of this “weak future passive” verb on **testing** we must leave the matter of eternity with God. More than that we cannot say though there can be no other touchstone than Christ for the soul. Ezekiel speaks of

nations of people joining others in Hell so human beings are consciously there for long ages. Our hearts fail us to think of the sorrows and ruefulness and terror of the place – the verb governing **testing** is in the future passive and can be taken as living with utter irreversible failure or dying in utter fear and despair.

(3)SIGHTS AND SOUNDS 11-15

The “great white throne” where the Lord sat at the centre of the constituted court of final judgement presents an awesome prospect. Heaven and earth fled from the face of Christ – (*cf. 21.1 & 2Peter3.10*) this is the moment when there is only the throne – God’s heaven and city of God – the physical heavens and old earth remove. They “flee”. There is no “place” found for them.

(4)SIGHTS AND SOUNDS 12

John was given to see the dead – such little ones too – and such mighty ones among them. There they stood before God. The books had been opened. Another – the book of life – was laid open. The dead were judged from the accounts in the first books. With the end of the physical earth and the end of the Hades economy – and indeed the end of “dying” as such – all the creatures who had perished by drowning and awaited their trial in Hades or who had just died with the end of the earth’s pilgrimage – appeared before Christ. Their works [*εργα*] done in the body and the energising factor behind them were examined. Those spiritually dead – those within the orbit of Hades of the dead were cast into the lake of fire. **This is THE SECOND DEATH.** The **book of life** was checked and anyone not found written there was cast into the lake of fire. The second death is that finality which pronounces separation from the life of God in the soul. Our LORD warned us that God can destroy both body and soul in the circle of Hell. (*Matthew 10.38 & Luke 12.5*)

Judgement is “thorough”. The beast and false prophet are dealt with. Satan is dealt with. Finally the last iniquitous hordes that after a thousand years of Christ’s grace and truth are willing to rebel are dealt with. Now we are ready to look towards the things which are eternal – which greet us in the final chapters of the apocalypse. With the assize complete – death as the power of corruption and the spirit.

CHAPTER 21

"Last night I lay a sleeping – there came a dream to me – I stood in old Jerusalem beside the temple there". This is our eternal home. The chapter affords three vistas. We have the throne view vv 1-8; its commoners who are drawn from all over the world and discover how they came there.

1. THRONE VIEW The Holy City as it will be eternally 1-8

God speaks from the throne and we are to believe what He says.

A great herald introduces the statement with the mightiest voice so that the comfort God has planned will be known to the world through John-*the man with the voice of thunder.* **Jehovah Shammah** – God present is there. The last verse of the prophecy of Ezekiel ends thus dramatically [*Ezek48.35*] and **John also comes near the end of his writing on this awesome note.**

No unhappy events or public mourning; no voice of war rebellion or bad taste; no suffering or pain related to work – God’s immediacy is the crowning blessing for one and all. No other place could all tears be wiped away.

THERE FOLLOW TWO STATEMENTS FROM THE THRONE

I. The LORD Jesus says – write it– it is true– this classic historic comfort – everything is to be new-sorrow no more known. A *de novo* earth never before seen with its accompanying heaven will replace the old – which passes away at speed like a flock of birds-to be seen no more. It affords only JOY. This is no remould city-in a remoulded world – it is spanking new – that is from the throne!!

2.The Lord “says” [ειπον] classic historic warning No.2 "I am Alpha & Omega – I give to him who thirsts “snow water”-water of life with spring like character and freely – this life is the reward of Victors & confessors who have kept the faith .

Cowards don't get there (*it's a confessors scene*). Neither those **without faith** – nor **abominators murderers fornicators nor drug dealers (PHARMAKEUSI)** nor those who continue as **idolaters** nor the **deceitful** are found there – their lot is a second death – and their isolation is mirrored by the waters of the dead sea as it was at formation –mingled with fire – perpetual looking back. We need to note the terrible society – the irremediable loss and should note that it only takes cowardice to lead us to hell!

2 MOUNTAIN VIEW – The Holy City as at the beginning of the millennium **9-21** The reason why the angel with the vials of wrath introduces the second section is because it describes the city by way of the comparison of two kingdoms – that of Satan, which is to be destroyed by Judgment – and that of Christ, **whose millennial rule is imminent**. The lion-share of the next millennium belongs to Christ!

Christ stood viewing this moment with the devil at the borderland of two concepts in Luke 4.5. There is presented the STIGME or short term (momentary) kingdom as devised by Satan– the reconstituted Rome of Daniel’s vision (Ch. 7). It has a life of 7 years after the home-call of the ecclesia. The Spirit of God brings John to the very same point – only 60 plus years later. This time Christ who never bowed the knee is on the throne with the future firmly in his grip!!! We have still to reach this point. There follow five “I keep”[*εχω*] statements:

1. The Great city – the Holy Jerusalem settled down [καταβαινω – like a ship ashore] (21.10).It kept the Glory_of God about it. It will never be overthrown – cf. Daniel's kingdom [We might add ‘*alam almiya*’ [Hebrew “until ages of ages”] cf. *Daniel 7. 18-28*. Its brilliance was like a crystal Jasper or diamond or enduring stone.

2. The great city kept its great & high wall. Its security impenetrable-unchallenged

3. Each of the great cities twelve gates – angel were kept by guardians. The plan of God for *Israel* as for *the church* is going to be completed – The written names of the tribes describe the city’s felicity. Praise God (Judah) and look at the Son (Reuben)-O company (Gad) so blessed (Asher) wrestling (Naphtali) with forgetfulness (Manasseh) hearing and obeying (Simeon) and cleaving to (Levi) the reward (Issachar) and heavenly home (Zebulun) with addition (Joseph) of the church (Joseph like Jesus fed the world) – they are the sons of my right hand (Benjamin).The names as easily describe Israel’s joy and completion as ours.

4. The great city holds firmly to its twelve foundations – the truth of the New Testament – which its apostles preached as martyrs for its cause – John himself is said to have escaped from a vat of burning oil by grace. These gave their lives in witness to the lamb that died – dividing the world of the first century among them as

evangelists – and so most fittingly God inscribes their names upon the foundations of the heavenly city.

5. The angel who held a vial (*to pour on the short lived kingdom*) came also with a golden rule to describe the city's size. Not even Ecbatana could compare with her walls for height or cubic dimensions (*roughly comparable to a base the side of which equals the distance between New York & London*) while the height length and breadth were equal. Its walls or security is in-built, not encircling clay or multi-stone construction. The order of its foundations defies that of the world (*the stones reverse the Zodiac formula*).

This city is Christ's – not one built by men birthed on earth – but built by God for those born from above.

Its Jasper reflects Christ's eternity; its sapphire His divine being; its chalcedony – the Chalcedon stone – blue & white – His divine & human nature; the emerald – His courage & cheer centred on heaven's emerald rainbow encircled throne of grace; the sardonyx (*flesh-coloured stone*) His incarnation; the sardius not the carnelian (*i.e. the male not the female stone*) his love and blood shed for us; the chrysolite – golden transparency – his heavenly perfection; the beryl (*aqua-marine*) stone of Spain – His conquest all the worlds troubles; the topaz – historic orange stone of divining – His omniscience and absolute understanding of the Father's heart; jacinth the resurrection stone (*from the youth that legend tells arose from blood*) – His glorious resurrection; and finally amethyst – His temperance and life unmarred by temptation. "Tempted in all points – without sin!" So we leave the mountain view of a kingdom founded on the life and death of Christ – to be reflected fully and eternally in the city home of saints – the Holy City. The bride is rightly proud of her husband.

3. STREET VIEW 21-27

To arrive at the gate and enter this city ought to be the ambition of every man and woman alive – however many other intriguing aspirations distract from the ultimate God-given destiny of man as redeemed.

1. It's not an easy way. Strive to enter this gate – for it is a "great pearl". Christ suffered to bring you in. You may count on it to suffer if you live & testify for Him.

2. It has no temple. It is not Old Jerusalem – nor Jerusalem of today with a poor Western Wall by *Wilson's Arch* – it is **The New Jerusalem**. It has a broad central plaza [*the word πλατεια is used of the width of the Hellespont*] – but **no temple**. It is made of pure gold – clear as crystal – scientists, try as they may, cannot perfect such transparent gold. Heaven will look well and remain good. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its holy centre – to the central throne all heaven relates in worship.

3. It is full of light – but not fading light such as a sun-moon system supplies – but a photo light which penetrates everywhere and into every heart and its wishes. The lamb is the carrier of that light [*λυχνος*] in his eternal humanity to every denizen. The bride of Christ enjoys this city. She has the throne view and is caught up to the throne before the tribulation that precedes Satan's STIGMA or momentary kingdom.

4. There are myriads there – they come from *Tierra Del Fuego* in South America – from *Timbukto* in Africa and *Ballybay* in Ireland – from everywhere – but they will all have been **saved** (*middle voice of the verb*). They will actively have sought repentance and redemption by the blood of **the Lamb (29 times mentioned with affection in this great book)**. The Second Coming of Christ completes redemptive activity promoted through the church.

5. There are the kings of the earth who carry their booty of vision and estimates of worth towards it – making this sort of thing their aim. The verb [*φερουσι*"carry" is a present tense – not of the period in mind – but the period of John's speaking towards the time this city is fully furnished with its citizens cf. 1].

It is firmly stated that the gates are not shut BY DAY for there is no night there. The problem is that the glory of man cannot come in – this is a city where the Glory must go to Christ alone.

They – the kings will carry the inspired vision and estimate of worth that the nations have acquired towards the goal of such a city of the gods – to the very days when the SHORT KINGDOM fails amid judgement.

6. "And there will definitely not wish to enter into it anything sexually unclean – any conduct that sickens or is loathsome, any deceit – only those who have desired to be written in the Lamb's book of life." The scripture uses the subjunctive of negative intention here.

So we learn that the blood of Christ purchases our right of admission to this kingdom – it cannot be realised by human or political authority or victories – which halt at its gate (cf. *The angel with the vial & the golden rod*) It is absolutely and critically bound to the Lamb who claims to be Pantocrator – who will blow this world away with the breath of His mouth and establish the only New Order worth the name.

A The re-emergence of wild political optimism amid the supposed "Safety and guarantees" – and "Shalom Salam" [*peace– peace*] days of which Jesus spoke –are now with us at the end of this century [*& moving into another – i.e.2005*] and emphasis on the millennium needs an *existential shower-bath* of biblical truth but no-one dares to breathe this truth in a smug world. Mighty Angels cry out in the bible – yet the earth goes on regardless. The outlook ahead promises "a rude awakening" when the Lord disturbs this crass worldliness and spiritual malaise.

B The earth cries out in birth-pangs as never before.

Israel has resettled 50 years ago – and the fig tree has put forth leaves – harvest beckons.

C The Empire of the Caesars is reviving and the "surrender" or "handing away" (*diadidomi – Hippolytus' use of the word for "abatement" and Paul's use – the only other use in the NT in Philemon 4 suggests "by decision" i.e. Referendum or vote*) of national powers is imminent (*Rev 17.17*).

D The intention of God [*γνώμη Rev 17.17*] is that when by absolute ceding and handing over (*as of a torch for victory*) occurs the secular powers feud with the woman in scarlet and Christ wrestles the yoke of the last tyrant from the earth – the scene then moves to centre on Israel subsequent to the call of the ecclesia to the Holy City & the visible return of Christ whose iron rod of judgement of nations follows.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT AHEAD IS CHRIST'S COMING AS A THIEF. The events to follow this divine intervention are being enacted now politically. The event high-lighted will trigger the rest and it will shorten the Euro dream. Embittered mankind will move human politico-religious affairs to a new all time low quite untrammelled by the Holy Spirit .The ecclesia will be replaced by Satan – thrown out of heaven. He will play for the stakes in *Luke 4.5* – men will bow where Christ did not. Every Christian should study the **STIGMA [“END-TIME MOMENT]** concept. Follow the **Lamb**. Pray daily!

CHAPTER 22

This chapter brings us to three final and enduring truths of Christianity – the worship of Christ (1-9), the sovereignty of God (10-15) and the necessity of grace (16-21)

(1) WORSHIP 1-9

In the final chapter of scripture Christ is enthroned. Life itself like “water” literally “marches” from the throne as myriads rewarded and judged and serving receive audience and commissions for ever and ever. Here are 12 ceaseless seasons of fruit and healthful leaves. Surely these trees clap their hands and all about them sing the praise of Him who died. The idea of “healing” leaves must be coupled with people joyfully singing for *θεραπewω* is not simply a medical term – it is a worship term – and was used very often of “divine service”. The health of heaven is its joyful song not its riverside hospitals. In this place of worship there is “no *καταναθεμα* – no curse or votive offering – only the offering of the fruit of the lips in praise and blessing. The saved will see their Melchizadek and each like a priest will have his name on their foreheads and serve Him with worship *λατρευσουσιν*. Each shall live kingly for ever and yet unfailingly serve. The Lamb shall beam His light of life and instruction into every soul. Humility shall be blended with every act and governs every heart. The lesson of humility is well learned as John rises from the feet of his angel guide to the words “See that you don’t do that – I also am of your fellow-servants [19.10& 22.9] who guards the words of the prophecy of this book.”

(2) SOVEREIGNTY 10-15

Scripture is divine revelation. John is given a solemn warning “Do not seal the words of this book!” This command I fear is being grossly disobeyed today. Few are willing to open the book – it is as if sealed in many churches. Its truths ought to be spoken of every time we worship and the Lamb is honoured. Special urgent message should from time to time be given based on its great warnings.

Three matters are emphasised in this section of the chapter.

1. Those who are justified and living sanctified lives should so continue to His glory. Those who are unjust still and do not repent but flout the will of God will remain unjustified v11.
2. God will reward works wrought from faith and fear of God and sinning v12.
3. Christ is the Alpha and Omega. He is the sovereign and centre of life’s purpose. His will is supreme and by that will we are saved by His atoning death and resurrection and through the sending of His Spirit into our hearts. However *six congregations* of men will live outside His will and have no part in the joy of heaven – they are described as “mangy scavengers of flesh” (*dogs*), sorcerers or addicts, the sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, creatures of lies and pseudo or hidden life.”

(3) GRACE

The Lord describes Himself as “the root and offspring of David”. Before David – yet he was born of David’s line – and the grace of His humiliation led directly to the cross. “Having humbled Himself he endured the cross”. Now He is the “**Bright and morning star**” whose glorious return we dearly would experience. My memories as a boy are of a white-washed cottage in Northern Ireland where I avidly read “*The Christian Herald and Signs of the times*” and joined its “Golden Star Brigade”. The prophetic strains will not fade from my life till I am caught home. It was grace that met me in Primrose Lane – “The lane that time forgot”. In the *Apocalypse 22.17* God

pronounces a resounding threefold “Come” whilst He holds out His glorious free grace to the sinner. That grace demands the acknowledgement of the total authority of scripture and writes the last word of revealed literature as **GRACE** – a blessing for all who keep the words of the soon coming LORD and love His appearing.

THE MESSENGER-GUIDE SIGNS OFF

The response of John to the myriad “sights and sounds” pointed out and shared by the messenger guide is to fall before him as if to worship. The guide eschews the act and says “See panoramically (the throne – the Lamb) – No! I am of your fellow-servants...who hold the prophecies (A Prophet?)” Then the final words from v.12 come with joyful surprise to John who must have been confused “Behold I come quickly...It is I Jesus who sent my messenger...I am the root and shoot of David...I continue to testify to all who hear these words – “Don’t add to them, Don’t take away from them.”...I am coming as soon as possible. To all this John called out animatedly “Even so-come, Lord Jesus!” Then He added the word about that grace he saw in the LORD as He dealt with his aged apostle even on this last occasion he records.

The “messenger guide” introduced “the city” in terms akin to those of Ezekiel who wrote in Babylon. Very much like Daniel he emphasised that the saints would inherit the kingdom for ever (Daniel 7.18,27 & v.5). He allied the concept of last times “after these things” to Daniel 2 .45 – cf Rev 4.1, 7.1, 7.9, 9.12, 15.5, 18.1, 19.1. He points out through the events of apocalypse many who had awakened in glory (Apocalypse 21.9 and Daniel 12) as He himself was promised he would stand in his allotted role in the end. He pointed to a river grander than the Euphrates or any on earth (22.1). The Messenger guide points out that the words of the book are faithful and true (cf Daniel (2.45 & v.6) as did Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar.

URGENT MESSAGE AND CALL TO EVANGELISE

The heart of God is written on the sleeve of this final chapter of Holy Scripture. The message comes over as if the LORD Himself is saying “Please put in a big effort” We have the angelic testimony from heaven (*Revelation 22.9*) to counteract the challenge so often levelled “Nobody ever came back to tell us” – and this is coupled with the urgent testimony of the aged John – the testimony that was to become the “he and cry” of every age of the church – namely “The Spirit and the bride say ‘Come’ and let him that hears say, ‘Come’, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely.”

WHY QUICKLY? [ταχυ]

Why do you hail a taxi? – Because you are in a hurry, of course! In one sense God is in a hurry. It is the LORD here who is saying “Quickly, quickly, quickly[*ναι ερχομαι ραχυ αμεν*]. You need to arrive at a destination and the taxi by definition gets you there-and gets you there quick. The desire of our LORD to return is written into the word “I come”[*ερχομαι*] yet this word does not mean “in the quickest way” but it is a word used in composition for “as quick as possible”. Thus as quick as is agreeable to the work and growth of the kingdom and in a way that goes hand in hand with “rowers overcoming difficulty at sea”. As quick as the truth of His heralds can reach and persuade those He is calling to trust and obey – as soon as the LORD shall have prepared the bride and her retinue.”

HEAVEN IS WORTH IT ALL!

“What do you associate with **the Lamb?**” “Innocence” – “of course!” “Consummate pastoral peace!” “Why yes!” “What else?” “The throne of the lamb!” “Exactly!” “Anything further?” “Mediation – love for His bride – matchless patience!” “Now you are talking!” “Anything more?” “Yes, He was slain before the foundation of the world!” “A precious truth – and still He waits in heaven while preachers preach and churches outreach!” But mark well the urgency of the parables. Those words “the bridegroom is coming” were uttered in our LORD’S teaching [*Matthew 22.2 and 8 and in 25.1*]. He was the one who asked the question about the “wedding garment” and urged his audience to be watchful. Then ultimate challenge of the bible is “You be also ready for at such an hour as you think not the bridegroom comes”.

It is every so hard for a child to say A, B, C. It is equally a struggle for a sinner to say “I admit myself a sinner, I believe it was for me He died; I come and confess myself thankful to hear His call and I gladly turn away from what hurts Him in my living seeking the abiding Holy Spirit to renew my life and fill my days.”

THE WATERSELLER'S CRY

This last chapter is fervently evangelical. Like the sun-kissed wizened old water-seller I watched at the Damascus gate with his huge shining silver flask on his back – a modern version of the same in our LORD’S day with a leather hide bottle – John the evangelist cries out in echoes of *Isaiah 55* “Come buy water – try a cupful freely!” Through the gospel forgiveness is free at the point of delivery though costly to Christ the provider. And what of that form of words “Let him that hears say ‘come’!” It seems, does it not, that every thirsty soul who is satisfied is to also engage as a water-seller.

PRACTICAL BIBLE TIPS!

This beautiful last chapter of scripture has 28 allusions or references to the Old Testament scriptures. Let me set out the exhortation of 7 of these scriptures for the reader-water seller.

- (1) In these last days ‘Don’t allow yourself to be drawn away with the wicked’ (*Psalms 28.4*)
- (2) Don’t set your heart on riches (*Psalms 62.12*)
- (3) Don’t faint in the day of adversity or fail those drawn to death though they seem **past redemption** – which itself is an old idiom drawn from Niagara giving testimony to a point (“*Beyond-redemption point*”) along the lead up to the falls beyond which there were no known rescues (*Proverbs 24.12*)
- (4) Don’t shout “I’m frustrated” “Fed up” – get a second wind – keep at it (*Isaiah 40.10*)
- (5) Don’t view abounding iniquity simply with horror – grace more abounds – be as Great heart in *Pilgrims Progress* and believe that God will raise up a standard (*Isaiah 59.18*)
- (6) Never give up. The Beulah promise is coming. Give the LORD no rest until Jerusalem becomes a praise in the earth (*Isaiah 62.11*)
- (7) Don’t forsake even for one day He who is your life – the fountain of living waters (*Jeremiah 17.12*)

MARANATHA– EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS

FINIS

KNOWEST THOU NOT THAT THY MASTER SHALL BE TAKEN FROM THY HEAD?"

(1) ENOCH WAS TAKEN UP,

(2) ELIJAH WAS TAKEN UP,

(3) JESUS TOOK THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE CHURCH UP.

(4) YOUR LOVED ONES HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY UP THERE.

(5) THE CHURCH WILL BE TAKEN UP AT THE RAPTURE.

(6) THE WITNESSES OF REVELATION WILL BE TAKEN UP AND WHEN THE GOLDEN ERA ENDS TOGETHER WITH THE 144,000 WHO ARE TAKEN HOME.

(7) THE SAINTS WILL BE TAKEN UP BEFORE THE WORLD PASSES AND SATAN MAKES HIS LAST STAND. WE AIN'T GOT LONG TO STAY HERE!

DEVELOPMENT OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

The Gospel of John precisely like the Apocalypse is designed in sections which I have called sequences because the literary **META TAUTA** device used in both books provides a short time-frame related to the first and second advents of our Lord and to His ministry of grace and his ministry of judgment.

FROM ETERNITY TO ETERNITY JOHN 1.1-2.11

The gospel really begins before creation and in John 1 1-9 all through pre-history and to the chief events of creation and before the dawning of God's first acts in the universe Christ was there in the bosom of the Father. The book of Revelation ends with a pure crystal flowing river which is never ending -flowing from the throne of God and the lamb through all future eternity (Revelation 22:1-5). Between these two eternities **the events of the three and a half year ministry** of our Lord Jesus Christ in proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom are recorded in historical order in the gospel of John and the events connected to the divine reward of His whole church [Revelation 1-4] and the judgments with their apocalyptic sequences that are to fall upon this earth in the end-times prior to the full realisation of our Lord's Millennial Kingdom [Revelation 19.1] **are also played out again in a short span of 7 years.**

The whole conception of these two books is stupendous. In John 18:36 Jesus tells Pilate "My kingdom is not of this world." Throughout the book all references to our LORD are through His heavenly name "Yahweh saves". That salvation is provided through sacrifice so he acts as King and Priest. His Kingdom appears every time He is named and acts redemptively in John's gospel.

THE JOHANNINE SEQUENCES IN THE GOSPEL

SEQUENCE NO.1: 1.1 ETERNITY PAST-DAYS OF JESUS & JOHN

SEQUENCE NO.2: 2.12-3.21

SEQUENCE NO.3: 3.22-4.54

SEQUENCE NO.4: 5.1-5.47

SEQUENCE NO.5: 6.1-6.71

SEQUENCE No.6: 7.1-19.37

SEGMENT 1 7.1-12.36

SEGMENT 2 12.37-13.20

SEGMENT 3 13.21-14.24

SEGMENT 4 14.25-15.37

SEGMENT 5 16.1-16.24

SEGMENT 6 16.25-16.33

SEGMENT 7 17.1-19.27

SEQUENCE No.7: 19.28-20.31

SEQUENCE No.8: 21.1-21.25

THE JOHANNINE SEQUENCES IN THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

SEQUENCE NO.1: 1.1-3.22

SEQUENCE NO.2: 4.1-6.17

SEQUENCE NO.3: 7.1-7.8

SEQUENCE NO.4: 7.9-15.4

SEQUENCE NO.5: 15.5-17.18

SEQUENCE NO.6: 18.1-18.24

SEQUENCE NO.7: 19.1-20.15

SEQUENCE NO.8: 21.1 EARTH PASSES AWAY-LIFE IN THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH

The history of the apostolic training and the promise of the Spirit are dealt with in the gospel of John though the main emphasis is on the Passovers and events that speak of our judgment falling on the lamb. The Apocalypse by contrast presents Christ's verdict on His church and the Church's enjoyment of the lamb whilst judgments fall on those who rebelled against His grace.

To miss this simple understanding is to make the book of Revelation into a maze of mystery. It is meant to be as good a guide to the Jews and saints at the threshold of the kingdom era who pass through tribulation as the gospel has been to the saints of the church era who suffered persecution with their Lord below.

The Spirit of Prophecy and the angelic messenger provided the Apocalypse to John from the omniscient Christ. There are over 600 references to the OT in the Apocalypse. It speaks of things real that will happen. It is not a house of symbols. Its New Jerusalem awaits God's saints. Its millennium is referred to in a variety of ways over 60 times in scripture.

The absence of the church from Apocalypse Chapter 4 totally undermines the historicist endeavour to show that the events given occur before the church is raptured. The failure by many Christians to take account of the "catching away" and the true nature of the ecclesia has led to a grotesque disfigurement of the Apocalypse and a belief on the part of some that we live in the millennium. **Others have matched the Chapter 21 to the idea that the earth groans and will be redeemed to go on as our eternal iron ball. Scripture says the creature is expecting like Elisha the "carrying away from over our heads" – the unveiling of the future – and meantime everywhere men who now are**

subject to the emptiness that is life without God because of disobedience groan and travail together in distress. We like them though we have the Holy Spirit and hope of resurrection also groan until placed as sons with the Father when our bodies will be changed and redeemed from this earth at the rapture. The reign of Christ on this earth will indeed occur but our residency and title is to the Zion above **(the New Jerusalem)** and the prepared places where we shall ever be with the LORD. The earth and its fashion are passing away. Heaven and earth shall pass away. The elements shall melt in fervent heat – all that we know shall be dissolved. Our part with Christ is based on the city that has foundations and not on this earth. Our new bodies are not going to be designed for temporary millennial residency but for eternal dwelling in light with God.

The perspective before us in the gospel is the cross by which we escaped judgment and enter glory. The perspective of the major part of the Apocalypse is judgment which falls without remedy on a rebellious world. The glory of both books is the LAMB OF GOD who is the beloved one of heaven and the Saviour of our souls.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass away”
(The words of our Lord Jesus Christ)

Yours sincerely,
Bob Coffey

**Bob Coffey /Aramaic 7 Greek Bible Companion
L'shuvkha Marya (To the glory of the Lord)**