

REVELATION

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this commentary is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this commentary can be changed if deemed necessary.

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Books by Eric Neumann

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Revelation Preface

Before we can understand what is going on in Revelation, we must first understand what God revealed to Daniel, specifically the 70-weeks timetable of Daniel 9:24-27.

In this timetable, God tells Daniel that “seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24). In other words, it will take seventy weeks for God to take away Israel’s sin and give them eternal life in God’s kingdom on earth. These weeks are broken into three time periods: 1) Seven weeks to build Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25), 2) 62 weeks for the Messiah (Daniel 9:25), and 3) A one-week covenant between the Antichrist and Israel (Daniel 9:26-27).

Daniel 9:26 says that “after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.” This is a reference to Jesus Christ’s crucifixion when “He was cut off out of the land of the living” (Isaiah 53:8). This means that the first 69 of the 70 weeks (7 for Jerusalem plus 62 for the Messiah) were over by the time Jesus died on a cross. Based upon how long it took for these events to transpire, we know that the seventy weeks refers to weeks of years, which would be 490 years (70 * 7). The 70th week begins when the Antichrist confirms the covenant with Israel for 7 years (Daniel 9:27).

Note carefully that the events of Daniel 9:26 take place between the 69th and the 70th week, because verse 26 starts with “and AFTER threescore and two weeks,” while verse 27 starts with the seventieth week. What this means is that, once Jesus was crucified, we know that the 69th week was over, and we know that the 70th week will not start until the Antichrist makes a seven-year covenant with Israel.

This tells us that there is a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. The reason for this gap is that there was a mystery which God kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25). This mystery was revealed by Jesus Christ to Paul (Ephesians 3:1-4). This mystery is “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs” of God’s promise in Christ (Ephesians 3:6), “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

In other words, before making the heaven and the earth, God fathered a glory plan (Ephesians 1:17), in which Christ would live through believers so that God may demonstrate His love through us for all eternity. With regard to the earth, God revealed that Abram would father a nation (Genesis 12:2), the nation of Israel. God set Israel “above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6). Israel’s job is to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles to reconcile the earth back to God (Exodus 19:5-6). This is how “all families of the earth [are] blessed” (Genesis 12:3) through Israel. This plan

for the earth is what “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

Meanwhile, God had a plan to reconcile the heaven back to Himself through the body of Christ, and God kept His heavenly plan a secret until He revealed it to Paul in Acts 9. If Satan and his forces knew of God’s secret plan, they would not have crucified Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 2:6-8). In other words, when Satan and 1/3 of the angels rebelled against God (Revelation 12:4), the heavens became unclean in God’s sight (Job 15:15), and God did absolutely nothing about it for 4,000 years! Therefore, when God sent Jesus to the earth, He told Israel that, in order to die for their sins, they must bind Jesus upon the altar in the temple (Psalm 118:22-28) in faith, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Therefore, Satan sought to kill Jesus by a different method, which turned out to be the cross.

By dying on a cross, Jesus “spoiled principalities and powers,” making “a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in” the cross (Colossians 2:15). In other words, not only did the cross bring victory for Israel to reconcile the earth back to God, but it also brought victory for God to reconcile the heaven back to God. The cross was God’s plan all along, but He kept it a secret. Thus, by keeping His plan for heavenly places a secret for 4,000 years, Christ won the victory for God in both realms—heaven and earth.

Then, in Acts 9, God revealed His mystery to Paul and began blessing believers today “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3), having seated us “together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). This was all God’s plan “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

Now, God has not forgotten about Israel or the earth. God promises that “in the dispensation of the fulness of times He [will] gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Ephesians 1:10). First, “the fulness of the Gentiles [must] be come in, and [then] all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:25-26).

Therefore, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, which is at the rapture of the body of Christ, believers need to follow what Paul says in his epistles. The reason is because Paul says that “a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (I Corinthians 9:17) “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12). This makes Paul “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13), which means that Paul’s epistles are written to us today.

Therefore, the information found in the book of Revelation is written to Israel in their program, which means that the things found in Revelation will not come to pass until after the rapture of the body of Christ. This is why there is a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel—to insert the current mystery dispensation.

We should still study the book of Revelation, because “all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable” (II Timothy 3:16). In other words, Revelation is not written to us, but it is still written for our learning. We need to keep in mind that the body of Christ must be raptured up before Israel’s program resumes. Israel’s program will resume where it left off, which means that Jerusalem and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Then, Israel will rebuild the temple and make a seven-year covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:26-27). This seven-year covenant is the tribulation period, which is where the book of Revelation begins. **Therefore, NONE of the events of Revelation will take place before the body of Christ is raptured up to heavenly places, and we MUST read Revelation with this in mind.**

Revelation Introduction

Much like I & II Thessalonians talks about the hope that we have today in heavenly places, the book of **the Revelation** talks about the hope that Israel has in God’s eternal kingdom after the tribulation period is over. Daniel was told to “shut up the words” (Daniel 12:4), regarding the end times, but John was told to “seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (22:10). Therefore, he wrote the book of Revelation.

Revelation 1 shows the Lord Jesus Christ as the one Israel can trust in to bring them into the kingdom. Chapters 2-3 give instructions to churches in the tribulation period so that they may endure unto the end and be saved. Chapters 4-5 show the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring about the events of the tribulation period in order to refine Israel so that they may become “kings and priests” (5:9-10) in God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Chapter 6 gives a summary of the entire 7-year tribulation period. Chapter 7 shows the result of these events will be 144,000 Jews sealed for God (7:1-8) midway through the tribulation period and an innumerable multitude making into God’s kingdom at Jesus’ second coming (7:9-10). Chapters 8-9 give specific plagues God sends on the earth during the last half of the tribulation period as a response to the prayers of the saints. Chapter 10 goes all the way to the end to show that the Lord Jesus Christ will create a new heaven and a new earth to replace the current ones. Therefore, no one should be concerned about the current earth being messed up by a bunch of plagues.

Chapter 11 gives the details of how God saves 144,000 Jews through the ministry of the two witnesses during the first half of the tribulation period. Chapter 12 covers the events from the beginning of Israel’s program to the end to show how Satan took the kingdoms of the world temporarily away from man and how God will take them back forever and give them to His Son, the man Christ Jesus. Chapter 13 shows Satan’s all-out attack of the believing remnant during the last half of the tribulation period by instituting

the mark of the beast and having the Anti-Christ (the beast) and the Anti-Holy Ghost (the false prophet) to form a false trinity with him as Anti-God.

Chapter 14 shows that those, who endure unto the end, will stand with the Lamb in the kingdom, and God gives warnings to the earth through angels just before He destroys the wicked at the end of the tribulation period. Chapters 15-16 give details of the seven, last plagues God pours upon the earth. Chapters 17-18 show the religious (ch. 17) and economic (ch. 18) power, known as Babylon, that is over the world in the last half of the tribulation period, being destroyed by God. Chapter 19 shows Jesus' coming to destroy all those aligned with the Antichrist and to marry the land of Israel. Chapter 20 reveals that God's eternal kingdom on earth is broken into two segments. The first is 1,000 years long, in which Satan is in a bottomless pit (20:2-3). During that time, Israel goes to all the Gentiles with God's law (Matthew 28:19-20). The Gentiles respond by taking hold of the Jews (Zechariah 8:23) and going with them to Zion to learn the law of the Lord and to worship Him there (Isaiah 2:2-3). However, because He rules with a rod of iron and destroys the Gentiles who rebel against Him (Psalm 2:8-12), many Gentiles will not want to be in God's kingdom. Therefore, when Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit, many Gentiles join forces with him (20:7-8). They are destroyed at that time (20:9-10). Then, all unbelievers from mankind's history are resurrected to be judged and cast into the lake of fire to be in torment forever (20:11-15). All that is left, then, are believers. Therefore, God establishes a new heaven and a new earth (21:1). The holy city, new Jerusalem, which is detailed in chapter 21, comes down from heaven (21:2), and Israel, as the Lamb's wife (21:9), dwells with the Lord Jesus Christ on earth forever. Chapter 22 ends the Bible, showing Israel and believing Gentiles dwelling in God's earthly kingdom forever with no more curse of sin to bother them. Praise the Lord!

Summary: Revelation gives details of end-time events that will refine Israel so that they are saved and live forever in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

Key passage: 21:3-4 (3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

1 Jesus Christ reveals end-time events to the little flock of Israel so that they may endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved. This chapter is a summary of the Revelator, Jesus Christ, so that they may be confident that what Jesus reveals to them is true and that He has the power to bring about God's promises to them. It is also a reminder to the little flock of the faith they need to believe that God will bring about the things He will begin to share with them in chapter 4, so that they will be willing to endure the persecutions of the tribulation period and be saved at the end.

1:1 It is funny to read the title in my Bible “The Revelation of St. John the Divine”, when 1:1 says it is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Also, 1:1 identifies John as “His servant John,” and not as St. John the Divine. Therefore, the correct title is: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ through His servant John.” However, getting rid of Jesus Christ and elevating John to a divine saint feeds the pride of man; thus, man makes the title read: “The Revelation of St. John the Divine.”

Note that “God gave unto” Jesus Christ this revelation. Jesus is the mediator between God and man, because He is the only One Who is both fully God and fully man. So, God knows what He will do, He tells the God-man, Jesus Christ, what He will do, and then Jesus Christ reveals God’s plans unto His servants, which is Israel. The information goes from God to the God-man (Christ Jesus) to man. Thus, Christ Jesus is the “mediator between God and men” (I Timothy 2:5).

Jesus Christ gives the revelation of God to “His servants” (1:1). Today, in the dispensation of grace, we are told that we are “no more a servant, but a son” (Galatians 4:7). Therefore, we know right away that the book of Revelation is not written to us today in the dispensation of grace. Leviticus 25:55 says, “For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” The instruction in Revelation 7:3 is to seal “the servants of our God”. Then, in Revelation 7:4, we see that those sealed are 144,000 “of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” Therefore, it is clear from 1:1 that the Revelation is written to Israel, and NOT to us today. (Revelation 21:7 shows that Israel will be God’s sons in His kingdom on earth, but they are still servants at the time of the writing of Revelation.)

Revelation is written, concerning the “things which must shortly come to pass” (1:1), i.e., the 7-year tribulation period and the events afterward, all relating to ISRAEL’S program and not to us today in the mystery dispensation. We should note that God did not reveal these things to Jesus Christ until after His ascension, because Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 24:36 that He did not know, at that time, when His second coming would be. Thus, God the Father waited until after Jesus Christ completed His work before He revealed end-time events to Him. Jesus Christ, in turn, sent the revelation to John by His angel, so that John could write it down, which would be how God’s revelation comes to the tribulation saints. (As God, however, Jesus would have known of these events during His first coming. I do not know how to make sense of this. I just trust it is true, because God says so.)

This verse says that these end-time events “must SHORTLY come to pass,” yet here we are, almost 2,000 years after the writing of this book, and these things have not yet come to pass. This is proof that the mystery, revealed to Paul in Acts 9, was not yet made known. These events must SHORTLY come

to pass, according to the 70-weeks timetable of Daniel 9:24-27. However, that timetable was interrupted with the mystery program. Therefore, once the mystery program is over at the rapture of the church, Revelation 1:1 will again be true that these end-time events “must SHORTLY come to pass.”

1:2 As a further explanation, John is not superhuman, because he wrote this book. He was just called by God to record the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1:3 The blessing is not pronounced upon someone who only reads or listens to the book of Revelation. In order to be blessed, they must read AND “keep those things which are written therein.” The book ends by saying, “blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (22:14). If ISRAEL reads and keeps the commandments in this book, they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11). Instead, they will trust in God to give them eternal life in God’s kingdom on earth. This is what keeping those things written therein means. It does NOT mean they have to obey the Mosaic law in order to be saved. Since “there is none that doeth good” (Psalm 14:1), even Israel’s best “righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, salvation must be by faith, not by works. When Israel trusts in God to impute His righteousness unto them per His covenant with them, instead of aligning themselves with the Antichrist, they will receive eternal life. Eternal life is the blessing that is pronounced here.

Today, people think they are blessed just by reading the book of Revelation. However, God is looking for faith (Hebrews 11:6), which means He is looking for believers, not just readers. Besides, the blessing pronounced here is not for us today, because it is for Israel’s dispensation, not for the Body of Christ’s dispensation. Today, we receive eternal life the moment we recognize we are sinners and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin. Therefore, God has ALREADY “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Praise the Lord that we do not have to endure unto the end, like Israel does, in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22 and 24:13).

Also, note that “the time is at hand” (1:3). This cannot refer to the mystery dispensation, because there is no revealed timetable for that, like there is for the prophecy dispensation. This tells us that the book of Revelation was written before Acts 7. If it was written after Acts 7, the time of the 70th week of Daniel would be “on hold,” not “at hand,” since the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 put Israel’s program on hold. It will be “at hand” again after the rapture takes place, which is when the mystery dispensation ends and the prophecy dispensation resumes. Most people say that Revelation was the last book written in the Bible, but this cannot be the case, due to the “time stamp” of the kingdom being at hand found here in 1:3.

1:4 The seven churches in Asia are identified in 1:11. Individual instructions to these churches is given in chapters 2-3. These must have

been literal churches that existed at the time John wrote this. Otherwise, how could he address the letter to non-existent churches? These same churches must also exist in the tribulation period so that the specific instructions, given in Revelation 2-3, will help them to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 10:22). Otherwise, chapters 2-3 would not be in this book, as they would be instructions to people, who will not exist. Most Christians, because of their failure to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), see the 7 churches as being symbolic of 7 church ages during the dispensation of grace. This is a case of trying to make the Bible fit man's religion, rather than just believing what the Bible says. You cannot arbitrarily say that certain Bible passages are symbolic. After all, how do you know which ones to take seriously and which ones to dismiss? Furthermore, the seven churches are said to be in Asia. Asia is a literal place. Therefore, if you say that the seven churches are symbolic of seven, church ages, you must also explain what Asia is symbolic of.

You may wonder why Jesus writes to the seven churches in Asia, since His people are Jews. Shouldn't they be in the Middle East? Well, God promised to scatter the Jews among the heathen during the fifth cycle of chastisement (Leviticus 26:33). This fifth cycle was in full swing when Jesus came the first time. In Jerusalem, the Jewish religious system had so corrupted Jews there that the Bible says that Jesus, "came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Therefore, in order to reach "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), Jesus spent His ministry in a portion of Israel that was so far removed from following the Jewish religious system that it was called "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matthew 4:12-16). Therefore, it should not surprise us that, during the tribulation period, Jesus' churches are also in a Gentile area, i.e., Asia, instead of in Jerusalem.

The grace-and-peace greeting is similar to greetings given by Paul. This does not mean they are written to the same group of people. It just means that God extends the offer of grace and peace to man, regardless of dispensation. For Israel, in the tribulation period, grace means receiving whatever they ask from God so that the lost sheep of Israel may be saved (Hebrews 4:16, I John 5:14-15, and Matthew 10:6). Peace means having peace with God through believing God will give them eternal life in God's kingdom on earth, if they trust in God to fulfill His covenant with them. The offer of grace and peace comes from the Lord. We know this because 1:4 says that the offer is "from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come," and 1:8 identifies this person as the Lord. "Which is" describes God's existence. Because God has no beginning or end, He always "is", or, as He says in Exodus 3:14, "I AM." God always "is", because He always exists. The "which was, and which is to come" part describes His presence on the earth. He was here at His first coming in Matthew-John, and He is to come at His second coming (Revelation 19:11-13).

We can contrast this with the beast, i.e., the Antichrist. Revelation 17:8 says: "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Halfway through the

tribulation period, he is killed, and Satan resurrects him as a beast. His being killed means “he was.” His being resurrected means he “yet is.” However, his eternal state is in the lake of fire, which means he “is not.” Therefore, Satan’s eternal state is “is not,” while the Lord’s eternal state is “is”.

A lot is made out of “the seven Spirits which are before His throne” (1:4), but the explanation is simple. Angels are ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14). Revelation is written to the seven churches in Asia (1:4). Matthew 18:10 says that the angels constantly behold God’s face, meaning that they are before the throne. Therefore, the seven spirits are seven angels of the seven churches, ministering to God for the 7 churches. Grace and peace come from the Lord Jesus Christ, and they also come from the seven spirits or angels because they are ministering that grace and peace to the churches for God. They are called “spirits”, here, rather than “angels”, to signify that “the Spirit” (2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 12, 22), Who is God (John 4:24), is speaking to the churches.

1:5-6 Grace and peace also come from Jesus Christ (1:5). This emphasizes His humanity, while 1:4 emphasizes His deity. In other words, His eternal existence in 1:4 shows that He is God, while Him being “the faithful witness” shows that He is man.

He is called “the faithful witness” (1:5), because He, “before Pontius Pilate[,] witnessed a good confession” (I Timothy 6:13). In other words, He did not deny His faith in God when He was brought before the ruler of the land. As such, He is a good example for the little flock to follow, since they will also be brought before rulers, during the tribulation period, and be asked to deny their faith in God (Mark 13:9). Believing Israel will not take the mark of the beast or worship his image if they look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of [their] faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

Christ’s reward for being faithful to God was that He is “the first begotten of the dead” (1:5), meaning that He is the first to be resurrected from the dead and receive His glorified body. Therefore, the little flock can rest assured that, even if they are killed for their faith in God, God will resurrect them from the dead.

God did not just raise Jesus Christ from the dead, but He also made Him “the prince of the kings of the earth” (1:5). (He received the abundant life, not just a mediocre life (John 10:10).) This means that He is over all the powers that be, as seen in Philippians 2:9-11. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Therefore, the little flock can rest assured that Jesus Christ has the authority to overthrow Satan and his kingdom, which is being run by the Antichrist during the tribulation period, and set up God's eternal kingdom on earth. The little flock, then, knows that they will rule with Christ if they keep their faith in God throughout the tribulation period (1:6). Therefore, grace and peace are being offered to the little flock by the God-man, the One with the power to give them the kingdom and the One Who suffered like the tribulation saints did. As such, He is acquainted with their sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-4). "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

In case there is any doubt that Jesus Christ will save the little flock and give them authority in the kingdom, the rest of 1:5 and 1:6 tells the little flock just that. It is through Christ's perfect life that they are washed from their sins by His own blood (1:5). This shows that, REGARDLESS of dispensation, the means by which believers are saved is ALWAYS the blood of Christ, even if, as in the case of believing Israel, they are not given the gospel to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins, as we are today in the dispensation of grace.

Christ's blood makes believing Israel holy so that they can be "kings and priests unto God" (1:6). "And His Father" is added to the end of this phrase, showing that Jesus Christ, through His suffering and perfect life and sacrifice, was God Himself. As a result of being the perfect God-man, He has "glory and dominion for ever and ever" (1:6). The little flock, too, then, can be assured that they will rule with Him.

Note that 1:6 says that the little flock are "kings and priests". They are priests in that they go out to the Gentiles and preach the gospel of the kingdom to them in the millennial reign (Matthew 28:19-20, Exodus 19:5-6, and Isaiah 61:6). At the same time, the world will be divided into 12 areas, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8), and the Jews will rule over the Gentiles. This is how they are also kings. Of course, Jesus Christ is the high priest and the king, ruling over Israel. Thus, He is "the prince of the kings of the earth" (1:5).

Contrast Jesus with Satan, who was "the prince of this world" until Jesus cast him out by the cross (John 12:31). Jesus said to Satan from the cross, "Who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me" (Isaiah 50:8). Jesus then triumphed over Satan and his forces on the cross (Colossians 2:15), resulting in Jesus Christ becoming "the prince of the kings of the earth," instead of Satan (Luke 4:5-7). "For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jeremiah 31:11).

1:7 God reminds the believing remnant that He will come back to the earth. They need to continue to have faith in that promise so that they do not end up bowing down to the image of the beast or taking his mark.

Note that “He cometh with clouds” (1:7). In the tribulation period, apostate Israel will say, “Lo, here is Christ, or there” (Matthew 24:23). If that “christ” does not come with clouds, then he is not the true Christ. Someone may say, “Yeah, He came in the clouds, but you missed that. He’s on earth now.” Israel should not believe this, because “every eye shall see Him” (1:7) when He comes. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (Matthew 24:29-30a). He cometh “as a thief in the night” (II Peter 3:10). He is “the true Light” (John 1:9). Therefore, if the world sits in complete darkness and Jesus comes in the clouds, every eye will see Him in the clouds at His second coming.

“They,...which pierced Him” (1:7), would be the nation of Israel, as they took personal responsibility for Jesus’ crucifixion in saying, “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matthew 27:25). The ones, who crucified Him, were part of the “generation of vipers” (Matthew 23:33). Their children, then, would be a continuation of the generation of vipers. I believe this verse is saying that both those in hell and those on earth, who are part of this generation of vipers, will see Jesus’ second coming.

Zechariah 12:10 says, that, at that time, Israel will mourn in bitterness over Him. This phrase, in Zechariah 12:10, says that this mourning is part of the spirit of grace and of supplication that God will pour upon them. This indicates that Israel’s mourning is one of saved people, feeling sorry that their sins caused the Savior to be pierced. Unlike their fathers, these mourning Jews will receive salvation, because they will trust in God to give them His righteousness, instead of trusting in their own righteousness to save them.

“All kindreds of the earth” (1:7) will also wail because of Him, since all families of the earth are saved through Israel (Genesis 12:1-3). Therefore, when Jesus comes back, every one will see Him in the clouds, and all believers, throughout the whole world, will mourn over Him. Therefore, when someone tells the little flock, during the tribulation period, that Christ is over here or there, they should not believe it, because no one, including unbelievers, will miss Jesus’ second coming. In fact, John will later tell us that, when unbelievers see the sign of the Son of man in heaven, they will say “to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:16-17).

1:8 Israel should not get the feeling that Satan's kingdom will never be destroyed. God is the One Who began this world, and He is the One Who will end this world. He always exists as God ("which is"); He came to earth once ("which was"), and He will come to the earth again ("which is to come"). Moreover, He is "the Almighty" (1:8), which means that, when He does come back, He will overthrow the Antichrist, Satan, and his kingdom. Daniel's vision describes Jesus' second coming as "the God of heaven [setting] up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

Therefore, Israel should put their faith in the "things which do appear" (God's kingdom), rather than in the "things which are seen" (Satan's kingdom) (Hebrews 11:3).

1:9-10 John is an eyewitness to the end-time events, through the Spirit transporting him into the future, so that he could write these things down for those, who will experience the things in this book. This is what "the Lord's day" (1:10) means. "The Lord's day" is a reference to the future time of God's judgment of man. It does NOT refer to the Sabbath day.

John is their "companion in tribulation" (1:9), because he experienced trials for His stand on the Word of God and for testifying of Jesus Christ, as evidenced by him being exiled to Patmos. He is a companion in the kingdom, since he does have eternal life in the kingdom. John endured his tribulations by the patience of Jesus Christ working through him, because his life is hid "in Christ Jesus" (I Peter 5:14). The in-Christ life is also how the little flock will endure the trials of the tribulation period. Therefore, John is an example of a member of the little flock, who endured tribulations, in order to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. This should encourage the little flock going through the tribulation period, that, if John endured, they can endure, also.

Note that John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (1:10). Our spirits live forever. As such, if we are saved today, we are seen as already being with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). Since our spirits are housed within corruptible flesh, we cannot literally walk in heaven right now, even though God already sees us as being there. Therefore, God took John out of the flesh so that his spirit could witness end-time events, even though they had not taken place yet (4:2).

We are told that the Lord Jesus Christ's voice was "a great voice, as of a trumpet" (1:10). A trumpet is used by a king to make a royal proclamation. Therefore, Jesus' command to John to write the book of Revelation is Christ's royal decree to His servants (1:1) of the things that will happen in the tribulation period so that they can "watch and pray" about these things so "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

1:11 As mentioned in 1:4, there are seven, literal churches that existed when John wrote this book, and they will exist in the tribulation period, as well. Revelation, then, is written to Asia (How many Christians know this? Hmmm...so it is not written to the United States today!), although it is also written to Jews. The reason is because, according to the fifth cycle of chastisement, God scattered the Jews among the heathen (Leviticus 26:23), and this is seen in Jesus' day in John 7:35. Therefore, they are still scattered among the heathen in the tribulation period. (This is why believing Israel says of Jesus that "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).) This shows that any of man's attempts today to get the Jews back into Israel are not of the Lord. Only God will bring them back into their land, and He will not do so until His second coming. Therefore, do NOT give money to Jews today, thinking they are God's people, because, during the dispensation of grace, God boldly says about the Jews that "ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1:9).

As in 1:8, Jesus says He is the first and the last. He begins man's history, and He ends man's history. This makes Him the author of history, which means that, whatever He reveals to John, it will come to pass. John is to write these things down in a book (the book of Revelation) so that God's servants (Israel) in the tribulation period (1:1) will remain faithful to God, recognizing Him as God, since none of His prophecies fail. He also sees the conditions of 7 churches at least 2,000 years into the future. If God knows these things so far into the future, the believing remnant should certainly recognize Jesus as God and be faithful to Him, rather than believing the Antichrist and apostate Israel.

I John 4:2-3 spells it out as plain as day for Israel: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

1:12 The "seven golden candlesticks" (1:12) represent "the seven churches" (1:20).

1:13 It will seem, to the tribulation saints, that God has forgotten all about them. However, He is "in the midst of the seven candlesticks" (1:13). He has not forgotten about them, but He is in their midst, as He promised to be (Matthew 18:20). He is in their midst through His completed Word and through the Holy Ghost given to them to bring all things into their remembrance that Jesus taught them (John 14:26). They will not physically see Jesus during the tribulation period, but He is with them "alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

The reason that 1:13 and 14:14 both describe Jesus as "one LIKE unto the Son of man" is because Jesus was the Son of man, i.e., the second Adam,

when He came the first time. At His resurrection, He received a glorified body, such that those, who knew Him before, had a little trouble recognizing Him, e.g., John 21:4 (“But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.”). Thus, He is “LIKE” unto the Son of man, due to His glorified body looking different than the body He originally had, which was “in the likeness of SINFUL flesh” (Romans 8:3). The fact, that Jesus is clothed with a garment and a golden girdle and is in the midst of the seven candlesticks, shows that He is Israel’s high priest, interceding to God for Israel.

1:14-15 This description of Jesus is similar to the description of “the Ancient of Days” found in Daniel 7:9. In Daniel 7:13-14, we see “one like the Son of man” come to the Ancient of Days, and the Ancient of Days gives the One like unto the Son of man an everlasting kingdom. However, in Revelation 1:13-15, the Son of man and the Ancient of Days are the same person. This is because the Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. As man, He stands as Israel’s high priest to atone for their sins in the tribulation period. As God, He has the power to bring them into the kingdom. As the Son of man, His voice is like a trumpet (1:10), calling Israel to believe God’s Word to them. As the Ancient of Days, His voice is “as the sound of many waters” (1:15), showing that He brings life to believers by His voice, as shown by the river of water proceeding from God in Ezekiel 47:1-9 and Revelation 22:1.

His white hair shows that He is the Ancient of Days. His eyes are like fire to indicate the fiery judgment He brings upon Israel in the tribulation period. (This is the refiner’s fire of Malachi 3:2-3, and the baptism of fire spoken of by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:11.) Only those, surviving that fire by placing their faith in what God has told them, will make it into the kingdom. “His feet” are “like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” (1:15), which shows that He Himself survived the fires of hell when His soul was made an offering for Israel’s sins. (“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:10-11).) Having survived hell gives Jesus Christ the authority to be the judge Himself, as indicated by His feet being like brass (Brass indicates judgment in the Bible.). Thus, we have a further revelation of the Ancient of Days than what Daniel revealed in Daniel 7. For example, Daniel 7:9 has the Ancient of Days’ wheels being “as burning fire.” Now, after going through hell fire as the sacrifice for sin, the Ancient of Days has “feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” (Revelation 1:15).

Also, conquering death and hell gave the Son of man the power over all the kingdoms of the world, such that we now see the Son of man and the Ancient of Days are one person in Revelation 1, when they were described as two, separate people in Daniel 7. Of course, they were really only one person in Daniel 7, as well, since only Jesus, out of the Godhead, has a body. The

Father is Spirit only (John 4:24). It is just that Jesus' being the Ancient of Days was not revealed unto man until here in the book of Revelation.

1:16 Note the power that Jesus has as God. The "seven stars" are in His hand. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (1:20). Thus, He has control over all of the spiritual realm. As the Son of man, He intercedes for Israel's sins (Hebrews 7:24-25). As the Ancient of Days, He sends angels to minister unto the seven churches in the tribulation period so that they may endure unto the end and be saved (Matthew 24:13). "A sharp two-edged sword" comes out of His mouth (1:16). This is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). On the one side, it saves the little flock, because they believe God's Word and receive eternal life in the kingdom as a result. On the other side of the sword, it "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15), destroying the unbelievers for their lack of faith in God's Word. His countenance, shining as the sun (1:16), shows that He is "the true light" (John 1:9), such that, in the kingdom, there is no need for the "light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (22:5).

1:17 Falling down at Jesus' feet as dead is the typical reaction of unholy man in the sight of a holy God. God laid His right hand on John. 1:16 says that He had seven stars in His right hand. 1:20 says the seven stars are "the angels of the seven churches." Therefore, by laying His right hand on John, He had seven angels strengthen John, much like an angel strengthened Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43). Therefore, Jesus provides strength to overcome John's fear so that John can endure visions of the tribulation period in order to write them down in this book to help the little flock endure unto the end of the tribulation period. The encouraging words from Jesus are: "I am the first and the last" (1:17), meaning that He started Israel's program, and He will complete it as He promised. Therefore, the little flock should "fear not" apostate Israel and the Antichrist in the tribulation period, knowing that God will put an end to their kingdom and set up God's eternal kingdom on earth with the little flock ruling with Him forever.

1:18 The little flock should also be encouraged by God's example as a man. God never dies. Therefore, Jesus' saying that He "was dead" must refer to Him dying as a man. He was dead, lives now, and is alive for evermore, because He won the victory over death and sin (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

The little flock will be persecuted by apostate Israel and the Antichrist in the tribulation period to the point that many will be killed (6:9). However, they will rise from the dead to live for evermore with Christ in the kingdom. This is because of the power of God over death and hell, and Jesus stands before John as an example of this power. His hands have the scars of the crucifixion, and He lives for evermore. Therefore, the little flock can take courage that, even if they are killed for their faith in God's promises to them, God will fulfill those promises and give them eternal life, just like He did for Jesus. Because Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly, the justice of God demanded that He rise from the dead. Thus, He conquered death. As such,

He has “the keys of hell and of death” (1:18). He has the ability to lock up hell and death to keep them from hurting the little flock. 3:7 says that “no man,” not even the Antichrist, has the power to shut what the Lord Jesus Christ opens or open what He shuts. Therefore, when tribulation comes, the little flock can have faith that God is in complete control of what is going on, and He will keep them from spiritual death, because He has promised them eternal life.

At the end of the millennial reign, Jesus will use His keys to open up hell and death and condemn all therein into the lake of fire (20:13-14). Having it settled in the little flock’s mind before the tribulation period even starts, that God has control over everything and that He will give life to those with faith in what God has told them and will give death to unbelievers, will give the little flock the resolve they need to be overcomers of the wicked one and enter into life everlasting.

1:19 Christianity commonly interprets this verse as an outline of Revelation. They say that John is to write about the past (“the things which thou hast seen”), present (“the things which are”), and future (“the things which shall be hereafter”), and then they divide the book of Revelation into those three parts. However, that is not what these phrases mean.

“The things which thou hast seen” (1:19) are the things that John saw while he “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (1:10), meaning the events surrounding the day of the Lord, which is God’s judgment. Hebrews 11:1-3 says that faith is “the evidence of things not seen,” and “that things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear.” What this tells us is that the things that the little flock sees in the tribulation period, because they are of Satan’s program and of this world, are not real things, because they do not last (They are temporal, not eternal (II Corinthians 4:18).). God will destroy the Antichrist and the things of Satan at Jesus’ second coming. The faith response of the little flock is to realize this and trust that the true things are the things of God, which will appear after the tribulation period in God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

Therefore, “the things which are” (1:19) are the things of God that John sees in heaven. “The things which shall be hereafter” (1:19), then, is God’s kingdom on earth. Thus, John is to write about all of the things that happen on earth during the tribulation period and afterward. He is to write about the things in heaven, and he is to write of how the things of God in heaven will come down on earth and replace the things of Satan, which are on earth in the tribulation period (“the things which shall be hereafter”).

In summary, during the tribulation period, Satan’s deception program will be the strongest ever. During that time, “there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). In order to keep believing Israel from being deceived, they need to know of the real

things of God that are going on during the tribulation period (“the things which thou hast seen”), how things operate in God’s kingdom in heaven during that time (“the things which are”), and that these things will operate on the earth when God brings His kingdom down to the earth, beginning at Jesus’ second coming (“the things which shall be hereafter”).

Thus, the little flock will have faith in God’s plan, rather than trusting in what they see of the Antichrist’s kingdom in the tribulation period. This is why the book of Revelation alternates between heaven and earth. John writes about the things which are in heaven now, and what happens on earth during the tribulation period in order for the things in heaven to be brought to the earth in God’s kingdom at Jesus’ second coming.

1:20 Jesus reveals to John that the seven stars represent the seven angels, showing that, even in the tribulation period, when it will seem like God has forsaken them, He will send an angel to watch over each church to help them endure unto the end of the tribulation period.

2 Instructions are given to 4 of the 7 churches in Asia that, if followed, will keep the churches pure from the Antichrist and his system so that Israel will have faith in God and His Word and enter into His eternal kingdom on earth. They must have faith in God in order to have the spiritual ear to hear the instructions in this letter (2:7,11,17, and 29). If they do, they will be overcomers and receive a reward in the kingdom to match what they overcame. As such, the 7 churches, in chapters 2-3, are real, genuine churches that existed in John’s day and will exist during the tribulation period. They do NOT represent 7 church ages during the dispensation of grace, as claimed by most of “fundamental” Churchianity. Because they do not rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), Churchianity correctly understands very little of the book of Revelation.

2:1 Christ’s walking, “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” (2:1), shows that He is watching over all of the little flock in the tribulation period. This means that He sees their failings. His holding the seven stars shows that He has the power, by sending His angels, to give the little flock the grace they need to endure those tribulations. Note that all of the instructions in chapters 2-3 are not written directly to the churches. Rather, they are written to the angels of the churches. God’s instructions to the little flock are given in the other Hebrew epistles (Hebrews – Jude). Revelation 2-3 gives instructions to God’s angels, as a “cheat sheet” that tells them what areas of weakness in the flesh that the angels need to know about in order to help each local assembly of the little flock in each territory.

2:1-7 is written to the church at Ephesus. This is not the same congregation that Paul wrote to with the book of Ephesians. Paul wrote to the Ephesians after Acts 28 to edify them in mystery doctrine. John’s commission is to the circumcision (Galatians 2:9), who are saved Jews living in the end times of the PROPHECY program. Therefore, John writes to Ephesian believers in

Israel's program, both before the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 and after the rapture of the body of Christ in the resumption of Israel's program that is still future.

2:2 The Ephesians' "work" was their going unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel with physical miracles and with the gospel of the kingdom so that they may be saved, since that is what they are supposed to do during the at-hand phase of the kingdom (Matthew 10:6-8). Their "labour" refers to them labouring in the Word rightly divided (I Timothy 4:10) so that they continue to have faith in God's law covenant with them, rather than being led astray by the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Their "patience" refers to them continuing in their work and their labour, in spite of the persecutions they face. Fourthly, not bearing with them which are evil means that they kick out the unsaved, who claim to be saved by following the Antichrist's religion. In other words, they kick apostate Israel out of their midst. Fifthly, they have tried false apostles and found them to be liars. They have used the test found in I John 4:1-3 to determine if someone is of God or not, since "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). They compare the doctrine of the false apostles to the doctrine of God's Word rightly divided. The doctrine of the false apostles points to the Antichrist as the Christ. These people do not confess "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (I John 4:3). Therefore, the Ephesian church has found them to be liars.

2:3 Sixth, the result of 2:2 is that the Ephesians have borne fruit, meaning that some of the lost sheep of Israel have become found sheep through their work, labour, and patience. Seventh, they have had patience with the new believers in building them up in kingdom doctrine so that they may also endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved. All of the Ephesians' labour has been for the Lord's sake, and not for their own. Therefore, God has strengthened them so that they have not fainted, but they have continued to keep God's commandments.

2:4-5 Although the Ephesians are doing everything they should be doing, they have left off loving God and have begun loving the world. They are still reaching the lost, but they are doing so by just going through the motions. They are now trying to increase their church in order to gain the things of this world, rather than the things of God's kingdom. Therefore, although it does not appear so, they are really working for Satan by following the lusts of this world. They need to repent, or change their mind, and go back to following God's commandments. The big thing with God is not that you, in the flesh, obey His commandments, but that you obey them with your soul.

In Amos 5:21-22, God says, "I hate, I despise your feast days....Though ye offer me burnt offerings,...I will not accept them." They may have been obeying the law, but their hearts were not in it. Therefore, their "obedience" was worse to God than the pagan's disobedience. This is the situation of the Ephesians. Although they appear to be obeying God's commandments by

their works, they are really following the lusts of the flesh as the motivation for their works.

Therefore, they need to “do the first works” (2:5). The first works is to get their hearts right with God and change their minds (repent) so that they serve God out of their hearts. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38). If they do not do this, they will end up being just like the pagans. Therefore, they will lose their salvation, as shown by God’s threat to “remove thy candlestick out of his place” (2:5). This first example of the seven churches, then, is not unlike the Christian religion today. They appear to be serving God, but they do so out of the lusts of the flesh, which is no service to God after all.

Conditional-salvation churches like to use these verses to say that you can lose your salvation. However, “do the first works” does NOT mean to do works of the flesh to maintain your salvation, because “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16). Rather, the first works is going back to the gospel, rather than following a false gospel. When talking of Israel in Romans 10:16, Paul says, “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” In other words, you obey the gospel by believing it. Therefore, the Ephesians “do the first works” by changing their mind about following their own flesh and believe the gospel that was presented to them instead. They do not have to do works of the flesh in order to maintain their salvation.

Note also that Jesus says that, if they do not repent, He will come unto them quickly (2:5). Jesus also ends the book of Revelation by saying that He comes quickly (22:20). Churchianity will tell you that “Jesus is coming soon,” but He never says that. Rather, He says that He comes quickly. This means that Jesus is like the right fielder in a baseball game. He may stand out there and not move one bit. However, when the ball comes his way, he must move quickly to grab it. Similarly, Jesus has been in heaven for 2,000 years, and He still has not come back. However, when the time is right for Him to come, He will come quickly to grab up the unbelievers into judgment (Luke 17:36-37) and then bring believing Israel into God’s kingdom on earth (Isaiah 40:11). This letter is written to the Ephesians to save them from becoming part of the former group.

2:6 The Ephesians do have one thing going for them: they hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The only other mention of the Nicolaitans in the Bible is in 2:15, where we see that some in Pergamos have joined the Nicolaitans. Since the Bible only mentions them in this chapter, we do not know what these deeds are, except to say that they are things that God hates. Since some in Pergamos have joined them, the Nicolaitans is probably a group of people, who claim to be godly, as a guise for their ungodly deeds. The Ephesians see right through them and will have no part with them.

2:7 The warning of 2:7 is at the end of each of the messages to the angels of the 7 churches. If they need to have the spiritual ear to hear, that means that the message to each of these angels is not clear to the natural man. God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and He has given them a spiritual message. Therefore, they need to have faith in God so that the Holy Ghost can tell them what these messages mean (John 14:26). The problem is that, if the Ephesians are following the lusts of their flesh, they may use their flesh to misinterpret the message to make themselves think that they are okay in continuing to do what they are doing, when they are really not okay. However, if they allow the Spirit to correct them, they will overcome the evil one (Satan) and his evil band (the Antichrist, the false prophet, and apostate Israel). Being an overcomer simply means having faith in God's promises to Israel under the law covenant, such that they forsake what the world offers them, and endure in the faith until the end of the tribulation period. If they do this, they will make it into God's eternal kingdom.

The book of Revelation details the end-time events that result in God reversing the curse of sin and re-establishing the earth to its pre-fall condition. At the end of the tribulation period, God's paradise will be back on the earth again with the tree of life in the middle of it for believing Israel, just like it was for Adam and Eve. When man sinned, God removed man from the Garden of Eden, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22). Living forever in sinful flesh would have been a tragedy. Therefore, God removed man from the garden. However, in God's kingdom, He will remove the curse of sin (22:3), giving saved Israel their glorified bodies. It will be a joy to live forever in these glorified bodies. Therefore, God will then give them "to eat of the tree of life" (2:7) so that they will live forever. God will relocate paradise on earth again, and they will dwell in God's paradise on earth forever, just like God intended with Adam and Eve over 6,000 years ago (2:7).

2:8 At the beginning of each of these 7 letters, Jesus emphasizes a different aspect of His deity that that particular church needs to grasp in order to obey God's commandments and live for Him in the tribulation period. The Ephesians needed to be reminded that God is watching them and has the power to remove them from His kingdom (2:5), but He would rather have His angel help them (2:1) to gain entrance into the paradise of God (2:7).

The church in Smyrna is told that Jesus is "the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" (2:8). They need to know that Jesus is fully God and man. He is fully God by being "the first and the last;" He is fully man by being dead (God cannot die.) but is now alive. Therefore, God became perfect man and conquered death for believers. As such, HE will have the last word. This is important for those in Smyrna to know since, to them, it may seem like Satan is in control. However, God already demonstrated His power over death by raising Jesus from the dead; therefore, He has the power to do the same for the little flock to bring them into His kingdom. Smyrna needs to know this so that they will be able to endure some hard trials that are about

to come their way for their faith in God. This way, they will keep their faith in God until the end of the tribulation period.

2:9 Smyrna receives the best report of the seven churches. Because they have worked for the Lord in spreading the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8), they have experienced tribulation. They are also in poverty, because they have quit their jobs and are spreading the gospel to Israel, knowing that “the time is at hand” (1:3) for God’s eternal kingdom to be established on earth. They have also sold all they have and are living communally (Acts 2:44-46 and 4:34-35), as Jesus commanded them to do (Luke 12:33).

The reason Jesus commanded them to do this is because, once the image of the beast is set up in the middle of the tribulation period, they will not be able to use their economic resources any more (13:16-17). Thus, they will get even poorer. However, Jesus says that they are really rich. James 2:5 says that, during the tribulation period, “the poor of this world” are those “rich in faith.” Therefore, the Smyrna church is poor in the things of this world, but they are rich in the things of God for the world to come.

The reason Smyrna suffers tribulation is because there are members of apostate Israel, claiming to be Jews, who are teaching Jewish traditions and customs, rather than God’s law, to Israel. Physically, these apostates are Jews, but they are not part of “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), because they have not believed the gospel of the kingdom. They teach man’s religion and use scripture to do it (This is how their teaching is “blasphemy” (2:9).), making them “the synagogue of Satan” (2:9). It is great that the church at Smyrna has recognized them as such, because the synagogue of Satan will later culminate in the forced worship of the beast, which will cause eternal death for all who participate in it (14:9-11). Therefore, it is best that Smyrna recognizes this now before the Antichrist blurs the line between himself and Jesus Christ even further.

2:10 It is in the Great Tribulation, i.e., the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, that the trials, that the church at Smyrna are already facing, will get worse. Specifically, they are told that “the devil shall cast some of you into prison” (2:10). This will be done by apostate Jews. Jesus said, “They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.” (Luke 21:12). Apostate Israel will think they are doing God service by bringing believing Israel before the Antichrist and his rulers to be killed (John 16:2). Therefore, believing Israel’s own family members will betray them to the death. “And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death” (Luke 21:16). This shows that apostate Israel is really of their “father the devil” (John 8:44), and not of God, as they claim to be (Matthew 7:22-23).

Now, you may ask, “Why does 2:10 say that they will have tribulation ten days?” The answer is simple: “They will have tribulation ten days.” You may say, “But, I thought the tribulation period lasts 7 years.” Yes, that is true, but God is talking here about a specific group of people. Through the Antichrist, Satan will try this group of people for 10 days, trying to get them to renounce Jesus as the Christ so that he can use them as examples to others to get others to betray Jesus Christ. Satan will inflict great torture on them. Once the 10 days are over and they still have not denied Jesus Christ, the devil will put them to death. This is why God tells them to “be...faithful unto death” (2:10). The great thing about the 10 days of trials is that Jesus promises to “give [them] a mouth and wisdom, which all [their] adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist” (Luke 21:15). In other words, the 10 days will result in the gospel of the kingdom going to the lost sheep of Israel all over the world through the gift of speaking in tongues that Jesus will use to communicate that gospel to those people (Matthew 24:14). Thus, what man meant for evil, “God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20).

Thus, the crux of the letter to Smyrna is, because of their great faithfulness, they will suffer great tribulation. God encourages them to be faithful to the Lord, in spite of tribulation, torture, and death, and God will give them a crown of eternal life in His kingdom on earth.

We should also note that the Hebrew boys in exile in Babylon were also tried for 10 days, and they improved from the beginning to the end of the 10 days (Daniel 1:12-15). Similarly, those from Smyrna tried for 10 days will appear even more spiritually strong at the end of the 10 days, which is why Satan will kill them then, seeing that they refuse to deny Christ.

2:11 Again, the warning is given that only the spiritually strong will have faith in God’s Word to them that will sustain them through the entire tribulation period without worshipping the devil. Just like each letter starts with a different aspect of the Lord that that church needs to have faith in, each letter also ends with a different reward the kingdom saints will receive for overcoming Satan. In 2:7, because the Ephesians were in danger of being left out of the kingdom, their reward is life in the kingdom. Here, in 2:11, because Smyrna will be killed by the devil for their faith in God, their reward is that they will “not be hurt of the second death” (2:11), meaning that they need to fear God, who can throw both body and soul into hell, rather than fearing man, who can destroy the body, but not touch the soul (Matthew 10:28). It is only with this mindset that they will not deny Christ, even if it means that their bodies will be destroyed. After all, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord” (Matthew 10:24). Apostate Israel killed Jesus, and they will kill members of the little flock in the tribulation period, as well.

2:12 The church in Pergamos needs to know that the Lord “hath the sharp sword with two edges” (2:12), which is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

Therefore, this letter is about getting them away from false doctrine and getting them back to believing God's Word rightly divided.

2:13 We should also mention that Jesus Christ tells all 7 churches: "I know thy works." This proves true what James 2:24 says that, for Israel's program, "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (The works, that justify man in Israel's program, are works of faith, rather than works of the flesh.)

Twice in 2:13, we are told that Pergamos is located in Satan's seat or where Satan dwelleth. This shows that the Antichrist will be physically located there. This probably means that Pergamos is called Jerusalem elsewhere in scripture, because the Antichrist will be in the temple in Jerusalem (II Thessalonians 2:4). So as not to confuse its readers, in Revelation, only the New Jerusalem is called Jerusalem. When referring to Satan's capital, Revelation uses the term "Babylon," because the Antichrist is just continuing Satan's counterfeit religious system of Babylon that started in Genesis 10. Here, in 2:12, God is referring to the church in Babylon. So as not to confuse it with Satan's kingdom, it is called the church at Pergamos, which may be the actual name it is called at that time. Spiritually speaking, though, it is Babylon, Satan's capital. Pergamos is also said to be where Satan dwells due to the two Satanic groups dwelling in their midst, who are mentioned in 2:14-15.

The report of the church in Pergamos in 2:13 is a good one. In spite of being in Babylon, they have not denied faith in God's promises to them. They still believe that Jesus is the Christ. They are not following the Antichrist, even though they see people around them doing so. Apparently, there has been persecution in the church. A guy named Antipas was slain by apostate Israel for not denying that Jesus is the Christ, and yet the rest of the church continues to have faith in God's promises.

2:14-15 However, Pergamos still has problems in that they have allowed two groups of unbelievers to be in their midst. First, there are those holding to the doctrine of Balaam. The three characteristics of Balaam are that he taught Balac: 1) To try to stumble Israel, 2) To eat idol sacrifices, and 3) To commit fornication (2:14).

Applied to the tribulation period (Remember that they need a SPIRITUAL ear to hear what the Spirit is saying unto them (2:17).), these Baalamites teach the Antichrist: 1) To try to stumble the little flock with their Jewish customs and traditions, rather than following God's law covenant with Israel, 2) To be an active participant in the Jewish religious system, known as "Babylon" in Revelation, and 3) To join themselves to Babylon by taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast, instead of having faith in God's promises to them and obeying His commandments.

Note the progression from stumbling to partaking to being fully involved with the false religious system. Psalm 1:1 describes this progression as: 1) Walking in the counsel of the ungodly to 2) Standing in the way of sinners to 3) Sitting in the seat of the scornful, where apostate Israel will persecute and kill members of the little flock. Therefore, this group, that holds to the doctrine of Balaam, is none other than apostate Israel (called the Pharisees in Jesus' day).

The second, bad group at the church of Pergamos is those holding "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (2:15). These people probably encourage lasciviousness among believers under the guise that they are under grace and not under the law (Romans 6:14), which is incorrect in the tribulation period. They espouse that they can do whatever ungodly deeds they want and still be saved, which is lasciviousness, not grace. This is the doctrine that James 2:14 warns about: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man may say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Peter also alludes to the lasciviousness of apostate Israel by saying that his epistle gives them "the TRUE grace of God wherein ye stand" (I Peter 5:12), as opposed to using the grace of God for sinful pleasures. The Ephesians had no trouble kicking out the Nicolaitans, but the church at Pergamos allows these people to continue in their midst.

Therefore, there are three groups at the church in Pergamos: 1) The little flock, who has not denied the faith (2:13), 2) Apostate Israel, who is practicing religion, having sold themselves to the Antichrist (2:14), and 3) Evildoers, who use God's "grace" as a cover for their lasciviousness (2:15). ("Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid" (Romans 6:1-2).)

One more thing we should say about apostate Israel is that they know the scriptures. Their problem is that they do not BELIEVE the scriptures. When Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where the Christ would be born, they immediately quoted Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:3-6). Yet, they had no interest in seeing the child, because of their unbelief in what God had told them. Similarly, apostate Israel, in the tribulation period, will know the scriptures, but they will not believe the scriptures will be fulfilled. As such, they will reject the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition (Mark 7:9).

Note also from 2:14 that Balaam taught Balac how to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel. Similarly, the Antichrist will offer riches to the Jewish religious leaders in order to get them to use their religion in such a way as to put a stumblingblock before the little flock of Israel (see Matthew 13:22).

2:16 The church at Pergamos has strayed from the word of God, as a result of the two groups of unbelievers in their midst. If they continue down this road, they will soon deny Jesus as the Christ. Therefore, the Lord tells them,

here, to “repent.” They need to change their minds and believe the word of God rightly divided, rather than believing what religion tells them through the twisting of scriptures. They also need to kick out the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans from their midst. If they do not do this, the Lord will use His double-edged sword (2:12), which is the word of God (Hebrews 4:12) to fight against them. 19:15 says that Jesus uses that sword to tread “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” Therefore, if the church at Pergamos does not change their mind and they continue to allow the two groups of unbelievers to affect their faith, they will soon have no faith and end up being cast into the lake of fire. This is why Jesus says that He would have to “come...quickly” (2:16). Otherwise, even the very elect would be deceived, and no flesh would be saved (Matthew 24:22).

2:17 It will take faith in God for Pergamos to have the ear to recognize the two apostate groups in their midst. Otherwise, they will think that those groups are preaching the truth to them. Unfortunately, that is what the Christian church today thinks of those false ministers of Satan, who fill the pulpits of churches every Sunday morning (II Corinthians 11:13-15). These preachers give lies to the people, and, because of the people’s lack of faith in God’s Word rightly divided, the people are convinced that their leaders are godly, when they are really of the devil.

For those in Pergamos, who do have faith in God, God will give them “the hidden manna” and “a white stone” (2:17). Manna is the food that God gave Israel in the wilderness under Moses. It is a type of “the living bread” (John 6:51), which is the Lord Jesus Christ. This manna is hidden, during the time of the tribulation period, because Jesus is in heaven during that time. Then, God also promises to “give him a white stone” (2:17). When Israel was in the wilderness under Moses, water came out of a rock on two occasions. I Corinthians 10:4 says that “that Rock was Christ.” Thus, manna and a stone provided bread and water as Israel’s nourishment in the wilderness. Both of these are types of Jesus Christ, Who provides “living bread” (John 6:51) and “living water” (John 4:10) for believing Israel in the kingdom. What this means to Pergamos is that, if they continue to believe the two, apostate groups in their midst, they will end up taking the mark of the beast in order to have food and water in this life. What Jesus is saying to them in 2:17 is that, if they have faith in God, they will be overcomers, because they will have learned that “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Then, in the kingdom, Jesus will give them a permanent source of food and water, and they will dwell in God’s kingdom forever. Now, the significance of receiving a “WHITE” stone is that it is holy or purified.

The “new name,” written on them is “the name of My God” (3:12). Since Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, we see in 19:12 that He already has His name written on Him. The reason that no man knows the name is that it is too holy for unbelievers to utter, lest they blaspheme it. Therefore, only the saved, in the kingdom, will be able to know this name. This name is

quite possibly: “HOLINESS TO THE LORD”, which the high priest wore (Exodus 28:36). I believe this for two reasons: 1) Israel will be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6). Therefore, it is appropriate that they have a priestly name. 2) Believing Israel is “an holy nation” (I Peter 2:9). Therefore, their name will be “HOLINESS TO THE LORD,” because, through the blood of Christ, they embody the Lord’s holiness.

(By the way, Mormons use this scripture by giving new names to those who are married and sealed for all eternity in a Mormon temple. The funny thing is that the names given are almost always Joseph for the man and Mary for the woman. Why wouldn’t the names be Adam and Eve, since Mormons believe they will populate their own planets in the hereafter?)

2:18 As we mentioned in 1:14, God’s eyes being “as a flame of fire” indicates the refiner’s fire of the tribulation period that Israel will go through. “His feet like unto fine brass” (1:15) indicates that Jesus Christ has gone through the fiery judgment of God by becoming sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21). Because Jesus did no sin (I Peter 2:22), His feet came through God’s judgment as fine brass, and He earned eternal life. This relates to Thyatira in that many of the church will become apostate and be judged into the lake of fire by God. Thus, the reminder to Thyatira that Jesus has the ability to execute judgment upon them, having survived God’s judgment Himself, as evidenced by His brass feet.

2:19 2:20’s “notwithstanding” tells us that everything in 2:19 is good. In 2:4-5, the Lord told the Ephesians that He was against them for leaving their first love. They needed to “repent, and do the first works.” Their problem was that, although they appeared to be serving God, they were beginning to love the things of this world. They needed to go back to believing the gospel of the kingdom, rather than believing the lies of Satan through the Antichrist and apostate Israel. In Thyatira, they have the same good works as the Ephesians do, but they still have the love of God as motivation to preach the gospel and do the signs of the kingdom. Thus, the first “works”, of 2:19, signifies the gospel that they believed. The last “works”, of 2:19, is them preaching that gospel. Since they preach that gospel out of charity, faith, and patience, the lost sheep of the house of Israel are being saved, making “the last to be more than the first” (2:19).

Instead of having lost their first love, like the Ephesians, the Thyatirans have “charity” in their preaching the gospel and healing the sick. The Lord also compliments them for their service and faith, which shows that they are not following after the things of this world. They also have patience to withstand persecutions, tribulations, and rejections of the gospel by unbelieving Israel. Then, their works, by having the proper attitude of charity, make everything they do be greater. In other words, they are bearing fruit because they abide in Christ, rather than just going through the motions, like the Ephesians were doing.

2:20 Ahab was king of Israel. As such, he represented the nation as a whole. He married Jezebel, who served Baal. Ahab, then, served Baal himself. I Kings 16:31 says that serving Baal is a step beyond the sin of Jeroboam. The sin of Jeroboam was to institute idol worship in Israel (see I Kings 12:27-33). As bad as it was that Jeroboam set up an idolatrous, religious system to get people away from worshipping the true God, it was even worse when Ahab married the idolatrous system, because, now, Israel had taken a competing religious system and married it with God's religious system, such that God's religious system was corrupted. Now, God's name is blasphemed because idolatrous practices are done in the name of God.

This system continues in Israel from Ahab until Jesus' second coming. It is so appealing to the flesh that, even though the church in Thyatira is doing great things for God, it is still allowing the false, religious system to remain in its midst. Therefore, the Jewish religious system of apostate Israel is within the church at Thyatira, teaching and seducing God's servants to commit spiritual fornication against God. This means that it is convincing members of the little flock to abandon faith in God, forsaking God and His Word, and to start following the Jewish religious system, thinking that God is in that religious system. Although eating things sacrificed unto idols is against God's law covenant with Israel (Leviticus 26:1), what this really means, spiritually speaking, is that they are following a false religious system, rather than following God's Word to them. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9), even though they claim to prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works—all in the Lord's name (Matthew 7:22).

2:21 The time when the Lord gave apostate Israel "space to repent of her fornication" (2:21) was in Matthew – Acts 7. They rejected God the Father by killing John the Baptist (John 1:6; Matthew 14:10). Israel rejected God the Son by killing Jesus (Luke 23:34,46). Israel rejected God the Holy Ghost in Acts 1-7 by stoning Stephen (Acts 7:59-60). This is the space God gave apostate Israel to repent, "and she repented not" (2:21). With no members of the Godhead left to reject, God declared to Israel that "ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1:9). Therefore, God started the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9. Once the fulness of the Gentiles be come in at the rapture of the body of Christ (Romans 11:25), Israel becomes God's people again, and it will be said unto them, "Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hosea 1:10). Then, Israel will have yet another chance to enter God's kingdom.

2:22 The purpose of the tribulation period is for Israel to repent, believe the gospel, and be water baptized so that they will have eternal life in God's kingdom on earth (Mark 16:16). God will give Jezebel 3 ½ more years of space with the first half of the tribulation period. This is Israel's last, good opportunity to enter the kingdom. Then, they are cast "into great tribulation" (2:22), which is the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. It will be a lot harder to repent and believe the gospel of the kingdom then.

During the great tribulation, they will either believe God, don't bow down to the image or take the mark of the beast, endure unto the end, and receive eternal life, or they will continue to believe man over God, bow down to the image of the beast, and be cast "into a bed" of fire for all eternity (2:22). It will be a lot harder for Israel to believe during the last half of the tribulation period, when capital punishment for not bowing down to the image of the beast will be threatened by the Antichrist (13:15).

2:23 "Her children" (2:23) are the individual Jews, who join themselves to the religion of apostate Israel and the Antichrist. Jezebel is the name that God gives to the Babylonian religious system of Baal worship that Jezebel followed, which is really "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). The kings of the earth will commit fornication with her (Revelation 17:2), meaning that the rulers of the world will adopt this Babylonian religious system as their own. The children, that they produce, are all those who align themselves with Babylon by taking the mark of the beast or worshipping its image. God promises to kill these people in an eternal lake of fire (14:9-11). That is what is meant, here, by killing "her children with death" (2:23).

When the Lord Jesus Christ does this, "all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts" (2:23). Jeremiah 17:10 says that "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." In other words, the time when the churches recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord is when He throws the religious folks into the lake of fire. This is when "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Of course, the churches should know that Jesus Christ is Lord before this happens, because they can know this by faith, since faith is both "substance" and "evidence" of things not yet seen (Hebrews 11:1). This is why believing Israel will enter God's kingdom, while unbelievers will not (2:26-28). This is why God gave them the Hebrew epistles (Hebrews - Revelation), because they will need to walk by faith, and not by sight, in the tribulation period (II Corinthians 5:7).

The false religious system of Jezebel will look like it is following God and His Word. The world will look at Jezebel on the outside and judge her to be a saint. However, the Lord looks on the inside. That is why we are told that He "searcheth the reins and hearts" (2:23). There, He finds that Jezebel is "full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Therefore, He will give apostate Israel the lake of fire. Because they are trusting in their own righteousness, rather than in God's imputed righteousness, God will give apostate Israel judgment according to their own righteousness, i.e.,

according to their own works. Since no one is righteous on his own (Romans 3:10), all of these people will be judged into the lake of fire (20:13-14).

2:24 The letter to Thyatira is written to the faithful. They are not part of Jezebel. Their problem is that they have let apostate Israel into their midst and have allowed them to continue there. However, they are not part of apostate Israel. Note that religious Israel quotes the scripture and claims to represent God, yet God says they have known the depths of Satan (2:24).

The depths of Satan are to quote and twist God's Word so that they look like they are on God's side, when they are really on Satan's side. This is called "handling the Word of God deceitfully" (II Corinthians 4:2). This is Satan at his worst, because he can lead more people astray by looking like God, than he can by showing his true colors of wickedness. He did this in the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4), and he will do this to the little flock during the tribulation period by using apostate Israel to do his bidding. (He does this today through "Christianity.") Since Jezebel is such a great temptation to the little flock, the Lord says He will put "none other burden" (2:24) upon the church at Thyatira. They have their hands full, dealing with apostate Israel in their midst. (We can understand this grace given to the little flock, as we have our hands full today dealing with Churchianity.) Also, note that the depths of Satan comes from his speech, as the verse says, "the depths of Satan, AS THEY SPEAK" (2:24). This proves that the depths of Satan are the lies that he speaks and backs up with scripture that is WRONGLY divided. It is not sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

2:25 What the believing remnant at Thyatira already has is mentioned in 2:19. They are already obeying God's commandments out of a heart of faith. All they need to do now is to "hold fast" (2:25) to that faith and not be swayed by apostate Israel's seductive religious system, so that they will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13).

2:26-28 If they do this, they will be overcomers of Satan's policy of evil. They are definitely in a war between Satan and God. The beast has power to overcome the saints: "it was given unto him [the Antichrist] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (13:7). But, the Lord Jesus Christ is greater. By Christ, the saints can overcome Satan: "And they [believers] overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (12:11). Apostate Israel, however, will join themselves to the Antichrist, because he claims to give them God's kingdom while still following their own lusts. Well, here is the Lord saying that He will give Israel the kingdom, provided they stay away from the apostate system of the Antichrist. Believing Israel will rule with the Lord over the Gentiles forever. Apostate Israel will only rule over the Gentiles until the end of the tribulation period, because the Antichrist only has power over the Gentiles for the last 42 months of the tribulation period (13:5). Believing Israel overcomes the Antichrist and

enters God's eternal kingdom by holding fast to faith in God's law covenant and His commandments to them.

With regard to having power over the nations, this refers to the positions of authority that believing Israel will receive in the kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and reign with Him. Deuteronomy 32:8 specifically mentions that God divided the nations according to the number of the tribes of Israel. Therefore, God's kingdom on earth will be divided into 12 regions. The more sound doctrine that believing Israel has built up in their inner man, the greater the territory they will rule over in God's kingdom (Luke 19:12-27). This is what is meant by "he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (2:26).

2:27 mentions that the Lord's and Israel's rule over the Gentiles involves the Gentiles being "broken to shivers" by the Lord's "rod of iron." This refers to Jesus' millennial reign, in which He requires strict adherence to the Mosaic law from the Gentiles (Psalm 2:7-12; Isaiah 2:2-3). This is how God breaks the sinful flesh of the Gentiles into submissive flesh so that they understand that they need God's imputed righteousness in order to live in God's kingdom forever. Then, the Gentiles, at the end of the millennial reign, will choose to either have faith in God or Satan. If they have faith in God, their faith will cause them to obey God's Word forever.

2:28 says that the Lord will give the morning star to His overcomers. In 22:16, Jesus says He IS the morning star. Remember the issue with Thyatira was that they should not marry Jezebel (2:20), which is the apostate religious system of Babylon. If they keep themselves away from Jezebel, they will be virgins, fit to marry Jesus, the morning star (19:7-8). Therefore, the promise, to give the overcomers the morning star, is the promise to marry believing Israel and have her as Jesus' bride for all eternity (Isaiah 62:4). We can also contrast this with Satan. As Lucifer, he was "son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12). "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14) and will deceive many into thinking that he is the morning star, when the Lord Jesus Christ is "the bright and morning star" (22:16).

2:29 As with the first 3 letters, it takes a heart of faith to have the Holy Spirit give Thyatira the spiritual truths contained in this epistle. Only by the Spirit will they understand that the religion of the Antichrist is of Satan, even though apostate Israel uses scripture to support their teachings.

3 Warnings to the last 3 churches are given in this chapter. Sardis only has a few believers left and is in danger of losing faith in God completely. Philadelphia is faithful, but they become believers only at the end of the tribulation period, which means that most of their work for God will be in the millennial reign. The Laodecians have completely lost faith in God and will be thrown into the lake of fire if they do not repent. Although "all of Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26), at the end of the tribulation period

many just barely make it into the kingdom, as seen by the five virgins who trim their lamps when the midnight cry is given (see Matthew 25:5-10). (Perhaps the reason God allows the tribulation period to go on as long as it does is so these 3 churches are saved.) This is why God ends the great-tribulation period when He does (Matthew 24:22). The warnings of Revelation 3, then, are very important for believing Israel to heed, lest they not have any oil in their lamps for when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to bring them into the kingdom.

3:1 “The seven Spirits of God” (3:1) are mentioned four times in scripture (1:4, 3:1, 4:5, and 5:6). From these references, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ has the seven Spirits (3:1), they are before God’s throne (1:4), they look like seven lamps of fire burning (4:5), and they are “sent forth into all the earth” (5:6). Since the Lord Jesus Christ has them, they are not considered members of the Godhead. My guess is that they are the seven Spirits of: 1) The Lord, 2) Wisdom, 3) Understanding, 4) Counsel, 5) Might, 6) Knowledge, and 7) Fear of the Lord, as mentioned in Isaiah 11:2.

Whatever they are, it appears that the 7 Spirits of God act as a buffer between God and the churches, since the churches do not receive the atonement until after the tribulation period is over (Acts 3:19-21). The seven spirits, then, keep God from destroying the churches during the tribulation period. (This is why they look like fire burning.) If so, this shows that God has many forces at work to keep His wrath from being poured out upon man, which makes sense since God’s wrath is already “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Romans 1:18).

The seven stars “are the angels of the seven churches” (1:20). The seven stars or angels minister God’s letters of instruction, found in Revelation 2-3, to the 7 churches, so that the churches can endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved.

Sardis’ problem is that many of them have abandoned faith in God in favor of apostate Israel’s religious system. The warning to them is that God is watching them. Therefore, they had better repent and return to faith in God, if they are going to enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Sardis is a lot like churches today. Sardis, at one time, had faith in God’s promises to Israel under the law covenant. Now, they have abandoned faith in God in favor of the lusts of the flesh, accomplished through religion. Since they are religious, they have a name that they live, but the truth is that they are dead spiritually.

3:2 Sardis only has a remnant of faith in God’s law covenant with them. Since they are in apostate religion, the things of faith that do remain “are ready to die” (3:2). Their only hope, then, is to “be watchful” by comparing what they hear with God’s Word rightly divided, kicking out the doctrine that is false. This is what Jesus referred to as “watch and pray” (Matthew 26:41). They should also “strengthen the things that remain” (3:2), which

would be faith in God's Word, by reading God's Word rightly divided and by allowing the Holy Spirit to teach sound doctrine to them so that they will be able to stand against the attacks of the apostate, religious system of Israel. If they do not do this, they will end up completely abandoning faith in God and be lost forever.

3:3 Sardis needs to change their mind, i.e., repent, about following apostate Israel's religion. They then need to "hold fast" to faith in God's Word to them. Matthew 24:43 says that Jesus will come upon Satan's house, steal the people who belong to Satan, and judge them into the lake of fire. If He comes on Sardis "as a thief" (3:3), it means that they are part of Satan's house, and not a part of God's house. Therefore, they need to get back into God's house, by having faith in God's law covenant with them. Otherwise, God will throw them into the lake of fire, rather than bringing them into His kingdom.

3:4 In spite of the apostate religion being a large part of the church at Sardis, there are still a few people, who have not defiled their garments. Garments, in Israel's program, stand for righteousness (see 19:8). Their own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). If Sardis has faith in God, they will be given white robes by God (6:11). They are made "white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14). "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Therefore, not defiling their garments (3:4) means that this is the believing remnant in Sardis. They have faith in God's promise to give them eternal life in the kingdom, rather than trying to earn it themselves by following the religion of apostate Israel and the Antichrist. Therefore, they will receive God's imputed righteousness which means they will receive white robes ("She should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (19:8).). They will walk with the Lord, which tells us that the curse of sin will be lifted, and they will walk with God in paradise on earth, just like Adam walked with God (Genesis 3:8). The difference between saved Israel and Adam, though, is that saved Israel is WORTHY to walk with God, because they have had faith in God's promises under the law covenant, instead of believing Satan's promises via the Antichrist and apostate Israel in the tribulation period. Therefore, they will walk with God forever, while Adam only walked with God until he sinned.

3:5 When reading the letters to the seven churches, the reward to the overcomer always matches what he overcame. In this case, Sardis has overcome self-righteousness. Therefore, they are given the white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb, of God's imputed righteousness. Their names not being blotted out of the book of life, then, must also be in line with overcoming self-righteousness.

A lot is made out of "the book of life" in Churchianity. What is it? Who is in it? How are names added or blotted out? 13:8 and 17:8 tell us that the names in the book of life are there "from the foundation of the world." 3:5

and 22:19 talk about people's names being blotted out of the book of life. 20:15 says that those, not written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire. 21:27 says that only those written in the book of life may enter New Jerusalem. John 1:9 says that Jesus is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Putting all of these verses together, I conclude that, when God made the earth, He also made the book of life, which contains the name of every single person, who would ever live on this earth. At the end of each person's life, if he has not had the blood of Jesus Christ atone for his sins by having faith in whatever God has told him to believe, his name is blotted out from the book of life, since he will receive the wages of his sin, which is death, instead of the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23). If he believes the gospel, his name remains in the book of life.

(As a side note, the body of Christ was created "before" the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), and not "from" the foundation of the world, as the book of life was (17:8). Some people use this distinction to say that the book of life only pertains to Israel's program. However, the body of Christ also has life in Christ, and Paul does mention that his fellowlabourers are in the book of life (Philippians 4:3). Therefore, it makes sense that all believers, not just those in Israel's program, would have their names in the book of life.)

In the context of the people in Sardis, since apostate Israel is in their midst, them being overcomers means that they had faith in God's promises to them, such that they confessed that Jesus is the Christ, having come in the flesh already (I John 4:2-3). And, because they were willing to confess Jesus before men, the Lord will not blot their names out of the book of life. Instead, He will "confess his name before My Father," just as Jesus promised to do in Matthew 10:32, so that they will enter into eternal life.

Note that Jesus also says that He will "confess his name...before his angels." Matthew 18:10 says "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." People use this verse to say that we have guardian angels. (If we really have guardian angels then why do some godly people die prematurely?) However, it appears that "his angels" refers to the ones that will get orders from believing Israel in God's kingdom, since they will be judging angels at that time (I Corinthians 6:3). If this is the case, confessing a believer's name before His Father gives him eternal life in the kingdom, and confessing the believer's name before "his angels" lets the angels know which ones are assigned to serve him in God's kingdom. After all, Hebrews 1:14 says of the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Therefore, rather than being guardian angels that protect you from physical harm while living this temporal life, your angels are really those who will serve you in eternity as your rule your realm—heavenly places for the body of Christ and the earth for Israel.

3:6 Again, understanding Jesus' letter to the churches requires faith in God so that the Holy Spirit will give them the spiritual understanding. This faith is the "ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (3:6).

3:7 Of the seven letters to the churches, this is the most difficult one to understand. Everything in this letter seems to be geared toward the millennial reign. As such, my guess is that the church in Philadelphia is established very late in the tribulation period. They probably sat on the fence for a long time, not taking the mark or bowing down to the image of the beast, but not having faith in God either. Then, just before the tribulation period ends, they make the choice to believe the gospel of the kingdom. As such, their work is primarily in the millennial reign, giving the gospel and the Mosaic law to the Gentiles (Matthew 28:19-20), as priests of God (Exodus 19:5-6). All they need to do before then is to "hold fast which thou hast" (3:11), which is their faith in God. They need to remember that the Lord is holy and true (3:7), and He will bring them into the kingdom.

From Isaiah 22:20-22, we can surmise that "the key of the house of David" refers to governmental rule over a territory. Isaiah 9:6-7 says that the Lord Jesus Christ will be the governmental ruler over the whole earth. Therefore, in Revelation 3:7, when the Lord says He has the key of David, it means that, as the ruler over the whole earth in the millennial reign, Jesus Christ has the authority to give governmental rule to some people and take governmental rule away from others and no man can overturn His decision. That is what "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (3:7) means. We see this in practice in the parable in Luke 19:12-27. There, one man receives authority over 10 cities for being faithful, while another man loses what was given unto him.

Therefore, the church at Philadelphia needs to continue to have faith in God's promises. For, if they side with the Antichrist, the Lord will take away the governmental rule that He has for them in the millennial kingdom.

3:8 Because they are new believers, the Philadelphian church only "hast a little strength". However, because they have kept God's word and have not denied His name, He has set before them an open door. This open door is in relation to Jesus having the key of David (3:7). He does not use this key until His second coming, which is still future at the writing of this letter. Therefore, the Lord is telling the Philadelphians to continue in their works of having faith in God's promises to them under the law covenant. If they do this, they will rule over the Gentiles with Christ in the millennial kingdom. The "open door" is them being able to go to the Gentiles with the gospel of the kingdom and the Mosaic law in the millennial reign and see many Gentiles saved. Because they have kept the Lord's word, and have not denied His name, the Lord knows that the Philadelphians will be faithful to do the same among the Gentiles during the millennial reign.

3:9 In 3:9, as in 2:9, the Lord references people of the synagogue of Satan. They are physical Jews, but they do not have faith in God, which means that they are not spiritual Jews. They are like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, who said "Abraham is our father" (John 8:39). Yet, because they did not "do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39), i.e., believe God, they are really of their true father, the devil (John 8:44). And, so, the fake Jews of the synagogue of Satan are apostate Israel. They tout the Babylonian religious system as being from God, when it is not. Because they are aligned with the Antichrist, apostate Israel will be killed at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, they will not be in the millennial reign.

Also, as an angel will later mention in Revelation (19:10 and 22:9), worship belongs only to God, and not to man. Therefore, the synagogue of Satan coming and worshipping before the feet of the Philadelphians must refer to them worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ at the time when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11), which is at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be bowing before the Philadelphians' feet, because they are ruling with Jesus Christ. So, in the tribulation period, people will worship the Antichrist, bowing at the feet of apostate Israel, because they are ruling with the Antichrist. Similarly, apostate Israel will worship the Lord Jesus Christ, bowing at the feet of the Philadelphians, because they are ruling with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Lord mentions this to the Philadelphian church so that they will be willing to "hold that fast which thou hast" (3:11), knowing that role reversal will take place at Jesus' second coming. During the tribulation period, apostate Israel is killing and persecuting the little flock, saying that the little flock is going against God. However, once Jesus takes over, then apostate Israel will "know that" Jesus loves believers (3:9), which is in stark contrast to what apostate Israel says about the little flock of Israel during the tribulation period.

3:10 Since Philadelphia still has to hold fast what they have (3:11) and overcome (3:12), keeping them "from the hour of temptation" (3:10) must not refer to taking them out of the tribulation period. Since the focus is on them working for Christ in the millennial reign, I believe that "the hour of temptation" (3:10) refers to the 45 days or so of darkness between the end of the tribulation period and Jesus' second coming. (This 45-day period is calculated by subtracting the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 from the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12.) During that time, believing Israel will wait in darkness for Jesus to come "as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10). They must survive this hour of temptation in order to be saved at Jesus' second coming. Jesus promises to be with them during that time so that they will be saved (Matthew 28:20).

3:11 Since the Philadelphians are saved toward the end of the tribulation period, the Lord tells them that He will come quickly. Their job is to hold fast to faith in God. That way, no one will take their crown, and they will reign with Christ forever in God's kingdom on earth.

3:12 “He shall go no more out” (3:12) tells us what the Lord means when He says He will make the Philadelphians “a pillar in the temple of My God” (3:12). The pillar is a symbol of standing firm, which means that they will forever be true to and belong to the Lord. It does not mean that, physically speaking, they will never leave the temple, because they will go to the Gentiles with the gospel of the kingdom and with the Mosaic law, as evidenced by the open door that is set before them (3:8). Therefore, it is only spiritually speaking that the church at Philadelphia will “go no more out” (3:12) from the temple of the Lord.

Having God’s name written upon them indicates possession. Therefore, as they go out as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6 and Isaiah 61:6) to the Gentiles in the millennial reign, the Gentiles will see the name of God written on them and know that they belong to God. Therefore, the Gentiles will go with saved Israel to Jerusalem to learn of God (Zechariah 8:22-23). Since they are going out as a kingdom of priests, their new name is probably “HOLINESS TO THE LORD”, since that is what the high priest wore under the old covenant (Exodus 28:36). “The name of My God” is probably the “I AM” (Exodus 3:13-14). “The name of the city of My God” is given in this verse as “new Jerusalem.” Thus, they will be wearing “Holiness to the Lord,” the “I AM” of new Jerusalem. In other words, they are God’s ambassadors to the world. They show everyone that they represent the “I AM” of the new Jerusalem, and their name is “Holiness to the Lord” so as to bring glory to the Lord, rather than to themselves.

Jesus wants to make it clear that the new Jerusalem “cometh down out of heaven from my God” (3:12). This happens after the millennial reign is over (21:1-2). Therefore, when the Antichrist proclaims, in the tribulation period, that he has brought about new Jerusalem, Israel should not believe it, just like they should not believe that the Christ is on earth during the tribulation period, because He will come down out of heaven. Just because the Antichrist attaches the name of “new Jerusalem” to his kingdom does not mean that he is in new Jerusalem. For example, today, the Mormons claim to represent Jesus Christ, because they put His name in their church name, but they do not represent Jesus Christ, because they preach a false gospel and follow a false book.

3:13 Again, it takes faith in God’s promises in order to have the Holy Spirit in order to be able to get the spiritual meaning out of the epistles to the seven churches in Asia.

3:14 The Laodecians are the worst of the 7 churches. They appear to be a completely unsaved church. As it stands, all of them will go to the lake of fire. As such, they first need to recognize Jesus as the Christ so that they stop following the Antichrist as the Christ. Therefore, Jesus calls Himself “the Amen” (3:14), which means “let it be so.” In other words, as the Lord,

whatever Jesus says is so. It is the truth. Laodecia needs to place their faith in what God has said to them in His Word, trusting in Jesus as “the Amen.”

Jesus is fully God and full man. As God, He is the Amen; as man, He is “the faithful and true witness” (3:14) to Himself being the Amen. He is faithful because, at His first coming, He fully obeyed everything God had for Him to do. He is true, because, since He fully obeyed God, He was able to determine that God would fulfill His conditional promises to Him. Therefore, Jesus is the witness that God’s promises will come to pass, and Laodecia can rely upon His testimony because Jesus was both faithful and true to God. Jesus overcame Satan and received a place in the Father’s throne. Therefore, the Laodecians can rely upon the faithful and true witness of Jesus, such that they can be certain that they will also sit with Jesus in His throne, if they are overcomers of Satan, too (3:21).

Jesus’ resurrection in a glorified body is further evidence to the Laodecians that they should have faith in God’s promises to them under the law covenant. It is Jesus’ glorified body that is in view as “the beginning of the creation of God” (3:14). “That holy thing” (Luke 1:35) is saved Israel, and Jesus is the beginning of them, being “the firstfruits” to be followed afterward by “they that are Christ’s at His coming” (I Corinthians 15:23). Therefore, Laodecia has the truth (“the Amen”); they have a faithful witness to the truth; and they have the evidence of the eternal reward awaiting them if they have faith in God’s promises to them. All of these together are more than enough for them to have faith in God in order to have a place in God’s kingdom.

3:15-16 The idea of the Laodecians being lukewarm, and not cold nor hot, means that they have a comfortable life, focused on the material, rather than on the spiritual. We see this from 3:17, where it says that they “have need of nothing.” Hot, cold, and lukewarm, then, are physical statuses used to represent spiritual statuses. If they were hot, they would need to find a cool place. If they were cold, they would need to find a warm place. But, because they are lukewarm, they are comfortable where they are spiritually. In other words, they see no need to have faith in God and to obey God. (That is why God prefers they be either cold or hot.) Rather, they will continue to follow the Antichrist and apostate Israel and go right into the lake of fire as a result.

God does everything by His Word. He spoke everything into existence in Genesis 1, and He will speak the wicked out of existence by the Word coming out of His mouth (19:13-15). In the tribulation period, God uses the little flock as His mouth to give life to the lost sheep of the house of Israel via the gospel. Because the Laodecians have no faith in God, He will spue them out of His mouth, meaning that He will not use them to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel because they are not saved themselves. Therefore, all that 3:15-16 is saying is that the Laodecians’ works are of the flesh. They are not saved. Therefore, God cannot use them to advance His

kingdom. It does not mean that we need to be on fire for God (“hot”) and give the devil the cold shoulder (“cold”) or whatever other metaphors people come up with to rationalize the use of cold and hot here.

An example of this condition is in the United States today. If you were a serial killer, you would be “cold.” If someone told you that you are a sinner and need to believe the gospel, you may believe it. Similarly, if you did heinous things to become a billionaire, you would be “hot.” If someone told you the gospel, you may believe it, because you know of the awful things you did to get to the top. However, most people today are “lukewarm,” meaning that they try to do good to others and they work hard to prosper materially. If you came to them with the gospel, they would not believe it, because they think they are okay on their own. It is this complacency that keeps the gospel from penetrating the soul and saving the person. Therefore, Jesus will spue them out of His mouth.

3:17 Now, we see why the Laodecians are lukewarm. It is because they are rich in the goods of this world. Since the Antichrist controls the economic system, such that the little flock is poor and the rich “shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23), the fact that the Laodecians have material riches tells us that they are aligned with apostate Israel. Note that Jesus, in this verse, looks at the SPIRITUAL condition of the Laodecians. They SAY that they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (3:17). This is true materially. However, spiritually this is not true. Spiritually, they are “wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (3:17). The word “and” is repeated between each of their characteristics to emphasize just how spiritually poor they really are.

They are “wretched” because they are trusting in their own filthy-rags righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), rather than trusting in God’s imputed righteousness. They are spiritually “miserable,” because they are keeping the Holy Spirit from using their spirits to control the flesh so that they do not do the work of God’s kingdom. Since the flesh is controlling the spirit, their spirits are miserable. Then, they are spiritually “poor.” In other words, they will not receive rewards in God’s kingdom. They will not even make it into God’s kingdom if they keep doing what they are doing. They are “blind” spiritually because they are allowing the Antichrist and apostate Israel to lead them. If they had faith in God’s Word rightly divided, they would have the light of God’s Word (Psalm 119:105) to guide them in the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4), which is the Great Tribulation period. Without the light of God’s Word to guide them through a dark world, the Laodecians are spiritually “blind.” Finally, they are spiritually “naked.” They do not have “white robes” (6:11) of “righteousness” (19:8). Instead, they have filthy rags of self righteousness (Isaiah 64:6) that God will destroy at the Great White Throne Judgment. Therefore, the Laodecians are in the opposite condition spiritually of their physical condition. This is the hallmark of the Great Tribulation period. The Antichrist and apostate Israel, because they have literally sold their souls to the devil, will look beautiful, happy, rich,

enlightened, and clothed with riches to the world. However, spiritually, they will be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Unfortunately, the spiritual condition of the church at Laodecia is just like the world today! I hope this indicates that the rapture will take place soon. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (22:20).

3:18 Because of this, Jesus counsels the Laodecians to turn their condition around. Note that Jesus tells them “to buy of Me” (3:18). Isaiah 55:1 says “come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Instead of going to the Antichrist for physical food, they should come to the Lord and buy spiritual food. They are unable to change the spiritual condition around themselves. They need to have faith in God’s Word rightly divided. They will then receive God’s imputed righteousness.

“Gold tried in the fire” (3:18) has to do with rewards in God’s kingdom. Their having faith in God’s Word is how they buy this gold tried in the fire. Along with their rewards in the kingdom comes “white raiment” (3:18), which is indicative of God’s righteousness given to them (19:8). They are currently naked because of their lack of faith in God, which shows that the church at Laodecia is currently not saved.

The way they anoint their eyes with eyesalve is by believing God’s Word. It is the Holy Spirit, Who gives the understanding of scripture (I Corinthians 2:9-16). God pours out His Spirit upon believers in the last days of Israel’s program (Acts 2:16-18). He says that the Holy Ghost shall teach them all things (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is represented by oil in the Bible (Exodus 29:7; I Samuel 16:13). Therefore, this eyesalve, that the Laodecians need to use in order to see the truth of God’s Word, is the Holy Spirit. If they do not allow the Holy Spirit to teach them the mysteries of the kingdom, they will continue to be blind, which means they will continue to be duped by apostate Israel, such that they will be cast into the lake of fire.

Also, another part of the shame of the Laodecians’ nakedness is that they are naked in bed with the idolatrous, Babylonian, religious system, propagated by the Antichrist and by apostate Israel. The little flock can see the shame of their nakedness by recognizing the religious idolatry that the church at Laodecia is participating in. “The shame of thy nakedness” will also appear to people in the millennial kingdom, as they look down into hell “upon the carcasses of men that have transgressed against” God, “and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isaiah 66:24).

3:19 3:15-18 contains some harsh words that are hard for the Laodecians to accept, especially since they believe that they are rich and have need of nothing (3:17). God tells them to spend eternity with Him, rather than being in the lake of fire with Satan. Therefore, He gives them a rebuke in that He scolds them for their unbelief. And, He gives them chastening in that, He will not use them as His mouthpiece (3:16) to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom, unless they are zealous and

repent. ("For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6).) Repenting means to change their mind. Right now, the Laodecians' mind is focused on the things of the world. They need to have faith in God's Word rightly divided and shift their focus to God's coming eternal kingdom.

3:20 Today, people use this verse to say that the gospel is to invite Jesus into your heart. The gospel is never this in any part of any dispensation. Rather, this verse serves as a warning to the Laodecians. James 5:9 says that "the judge standeth before the door." I Peter 4:5 says that the Lord is already "ready to judge the quick and the dead." Isaiah 3:13 says that "the Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people." Therefore, 3:20 is a warning to the Laodecians to repent now, because the Lord's second coming will take place soon. He comes through that door as the judge, and, as it stands now, He will judge the Laodecians into the lake of fire, if they do not repent (change their minds and put themselves back under God's law covenant with Israel).

The reason the imagery of a door is used is because, when Jesus comes to the earth, He comes to the sheepfold of the "house" of Israel. In that house, he finds that thieves and robbers have entered the sheepfold by climbing up some other way, other than by the door (John 10:1). Therefore, when Jesus comes to Israel, He first takes away apostate Israel into judgment (see Luke 17:34-37). Then, He knocks on the door of the sheepfold. "The sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3). He then gathers "the lambs with His arm and [carries] them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11). Jesus leads them to His Father's house, where He has a place prepared for them (John 14:2-3), because He will marry them as His bride (21:2,9).

The purpose of Jesus' second coming is to marry His bride, which is faithful Israel, but He must first judge apostate Israel. Jewish custom was for the bride to be in the room and then have the bridegroom come into that room and consummate the marriage. For example, when Jacob was to marry Rachel, he judged improperly and consummated the marriage with Leah, when he thought it was Rachel (Genesis 29:23-25). Later, he married Rachel and consummated the marriage with her. Jesus, when He enters the building (which is the land of Israel) at His second coming, will judge properly that apostate Israel is not His bride. Therefore, He will cast her out and throw her into the lake of fire. Thus, His first action at His second coming is to judge the apostate nation of Israel. His second action will be to marry His true bride, which is the little flock of Israel. That is what is meant by His coming in and supping with those who believe (3:20). The "SUP"-ping Jesus does with believing Israel happens at "the marriage SUP-per of the Lamb" (19:9). John 14:23 makes it clearer by saying that Jesus and the Father will come unto the little flock of Israel "and make our abode with him." Matthew 12:29 alludes to the judgment part of this by saying that Jesus will bind Satan and then spoil his goods. Jesus bound Satan at the

cross (Colossians 2:14-15). At His second coming, Jesus “will come as a thief in the night” (II Peter 3:10), and spoil Satan’s goods by taking apostate Israel into judgment. This, then, clears the house so that He can marry believing Israel and dwell with her forever.

Therefore, 3:20 is a warning of impending judgment for Laodecia, but it is also a promise of blessing and reward for those, who have faith in God’s Word to them. It is up to the Laodecians to have faith in God, which means they will open the door and dwell with God forever. Or, they can continue in unbelief, leave the door closed, and then be judged into the lake of fire when God opens the door at His second coming. The choice is theirs.

Therefore, saying that this verse says that you need to invite Jesus into your heart is a gross perversion of the truth. It shows the ugly pride of man in doing so. If Jesus knocks on your heart’s door to come in, He is a beggar. He pleads with you to come into your heart, like your heart is some great place. NO! This is not the case. God never begs. It is you, as a filthy, dirty, rotten sinner that should come to Him, smite your own breast, and say “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Churchianity has it backwards! They say to God, “I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are” (Luke 18:11). “Since you begged me to, Jesus, I will let you into my heart.” What a perversion! Instead, Jesus knocks on the door of the sheepfold of Israel to deliver the lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25) “from the hand of him that was stronger than he” (Jeremiah 31:11). This is the powerful, redeeming God of 3:20, not the weak, begging “God” of Churchianity!

3:21 In 3:14, Jesus told the Laodecians that they need to trust in Him as “the Amen,” meaning that, what He says, will happen. He can also be trusted as the man, who was faithful to God, which makes Him a true witness that God’s promises will come to pass for the faithful. As the overcomer of Satan, Jesus was given a throne by the Father and is set down in His Father’s throne (3:21). In other words, the Father is above all (I Corinthians 15:28), and the Son is beneath the Father within the Father’s throne.

Now, the Laodecians have the opportunity to serve the Son, as the Son had with the Father. If the Laodecians have faith in God and reject what apostate Israel and the Antichrist are telling them, then they will also be overcomers. Then, the Son will give them a position within His throne just like the Father gave the Son a position within His throne. Since the Laodecians are impressed by the riches and power of the Antichrist, they should be even more desirous of a position in God’s kingdom since God’s kingdom is much greater and will last forever.

3:22 Without having the Holy Spirit to guide them into God’s truth, people, in the tribulation period, will read chapters 2-3 and think that the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist is what God wants them to follow. True believers in God’s promises to them, however, will see these

chapters as warnings against, and not support for, Babylon and the Antichrist. Seeing the truth, rather than Satan's lies, is only possible by having the ear of faith to hear the Spirit of God's instructions to the churches in these chapters.

4 Before seeing all the bad stuff that will happen in the tribulation period, John sees the governmental structure in the kingdom of heaven as it will be for all eternity. He sees all power concentrated in the Lord Jesus Christ. He sees the 12 rulers in God's kingdom on earth and the 12 rulers in God's kingdom in heaven (the 24 elders), as they lead all of mankind in giving glory and honour to the Lord. He also sees four seraphim around God's throne, maintaining its holiness. The end result is that God receives pleasure for all eternity from mankind, who voluntarily serve the Lord. Therefore, John sees the happy ending first, so that he will see the necessity of the tribulation-period events. Only by these events will saved Israel have their happy ending in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

4:1 In chapters 2-3, John wrote down the warnings and the promises to the seven churches in Asia, which are to strengthen them to endure unto the end of the tribulation period. Now, John will see the "things which must be hereafter" (4:1). These are the events of the tribulation period. Note that these things "MUST" be hereafter. God does not want to pour out His wrath upon Israel, but He must do so in order to purify Israel (Malachi 3:2-4) so that they will have faith in God to enter the kingdom. Without the events of the tribulation period, Israel would continue in their unbelief, as they have from the beginning, and be lost forever in their sins. Since "the Jews require a sign" (I Corinthians 1:22), God gives them the signs of the tribulation period. Today, since "the Greeks seek after wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:22), God gives us the hidden wisdom of God in the dispensation of grace (I Corinthians 2:7). Starting in chapter 4, God will now "give" the signs of the tribulation period to Israel so that they may be saved and enter God's kingdom.

Note also that the voice that John hears is "as it were of a trumpet talking with me" (4:1). In 1:10, John also heard "a great voice, as of a trumpet," and that voice belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the one, talking to John in 4:1, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

4:2 No man can see God and live (Exodus 33:20). This is because God cannot be around sinful flesh or else His holiness would be corrupted. Therefore, John must leave his flesh behind and be "in the spirit" (4:2) in heaven for this vision. 5:6 identifies the one sitting on the throne as the Lamb, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

4:3 Note the rainbow around God's throne. We also see the rainbow around God's throne in Ezekiel 1:28. The rainbow is God's promise not to ever destroy the earth again with a flood (Genesis 9:13-15). Thus, the rainbow

around His throne reminds Him of this promise and our seeing the bow after a storm gives us a little glimpse into the throne room of heaven.

Also, note that the word “like” appears many times in Revelation to describe the things that John sees. This tells us the reason God created the heaven and the earth the way He did was so that we would have an idea of what some of the things look like in the third heaven. This is why Romans 1:20 says, “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

4:4 Who are the 24 elders? By rightly dividing the Word of truth, we recognize that God is reconciling the earth back to Himself in Genesis – Acts and Hebrews – Revelation through the nation of Israel. Jesus said in Matthew 19:28 that the 12 apostles will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel in God’s kingdom on earth (As further evidence, John calls himself “the elder” in II John 1 & III John 1.). Deuteronomy 32:8 says that God’s kingdom on earth is divided into 12 regions—one for each tribe of Israel.

We also know that God is reconciling the heaven back to Himself today in Romans – Philemon through the church, the body of Christ. Ephesians 1:20-21 and Colossians 1:16 speak of the governmental structure in heaven. Amos 9:6 says that God “buildeth His stories in the heaven.” It makes sense that God would also divide heaven into 12 governmental regions, just like He did with the earth.

Since the 24 elders sit on thrones around the Lord Jesus Christ’s throne, they must be the 12 rulers under Christ on the earth (These would be the 12 apostles.) and the 12 rulers under Christ in heaven for the mystery dispensation (We do not know who these 12 are.).

Their white raiment makes sense, since white raiment is given to the saints as righteousness (19:8). The crown of gold upon their heads probably shows their position of authority as elders, which makes sense, since Paul says that we strive for spiritual mastery in order to obtain an incorruptible crown (I Corinthians 9:25), and that Paul would receive a “crown of righteousness” from the Lord (II Timothy 4:8).

4:5 The lightnings, coming out of the throne, are probably cherubim, as mentioned in Ezekiel 1. This is because Ezekiel 1:14 says that the cherubim go back and forth “as the appearance of a flash of lightning.” (Granted, Ezekiel 1 describes them as “the four living creatures.” However, Ezekiel 10:19-22 says that they are cherubim.)

The “thunderings” (4:5) speak of God’s judgment of the earth, which, in this phase of the day of the Lord, would be the tribulation period (John 12:28-29 describes the voice of God as sounding like thunder.). The “voices” would be

God's Word, which, if Israel has faith in, will keep them from being judged into the lake of fire. In order for Israel to enter the kingdom, the 7 churches need angels to minister to them. These angels are the seven spirits of God mentioned here, who are sent to the churches with the instructions found in Revelation 2-3. They are described as being "seven lamps of fire" (4:5) because the way that God saves Israel is by the refiner's fire of the tribulation period. Only then are they an offering pleasant unto the Lord (Malachi 3:2-4).

In summary, lightnings are the cherubim, keeping God's throne holy; thunderings are God's pronouncement of judgment; voices are God's instructions to the faithful to avoid judgment; and the lamps of fire are the seven spirits or angels sent to administer trials and instructions to Israel so that they will believe God and enter His eternal kingdom on earth.

4:6 The heaven and the earth that God created in Genesis 1 are in a container. We know this because John 1:51, Acts 10:11, and Revelation 19:11 give us at least 3 times when the third heaven is opened. Therefore, the third heaven must be partitioned off from the heaven and the earth. The top of heaven and earth's container is the sea of glass that is before God's throne in the third heaven. The four beasts are seraphim, as we will explain in 4:8.

4:7 The four beasts are reminiscent of the four characteristics of Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ, as found in the four gospels. The lion is Israel's king, which is shown in Matthew. The calf is Israel's servant, which is shown in Mark. The man is Israel's perfect man, which is Jesus in Luke. The flying eagle is Israel's God, which is Jesus, shown in John. Therefore, the four beasts look like four creatures on earth so that we may understand the qualities that Jesus had to have in order to save us from our sins.

You may be tempted to conclude that the four beasts are cherubim because their four characteristics are similar to the cherubim of Ezekiel 1:10. However, there are some important differences. First, the cherubim in Ezekiel each have four faces, while each of the beasts is only like one of the creatures, not all four. In other words, each cherub has all four characteristics, but each beast only has one of the characteristics. Also, the cherubim have a face like an ox, instead of looking like a calf. We should also note that the four beasts are all beasts that look like beasts, but one of them has the FACE of a man (4:7), rather than looking like a man. I do not know the significance of these differences.

Since Satan is a cherub (Ezekiel 28:14), he has wings. He has also transformed himself into an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). Therefore, it is no coincidence that Churchianity portrays angels with wings. This is Satan's way of getting man to make the things of God look like the things of Satan.

4:8 Now, we learn that the four beasts are seraphim. The way we know this is that we are told that “the four beasts had each of them six wings about him.” Seraphim are the only creatures in the Bible that are said to have six wings (Isaiah 6:2). By contrast, cherubim only have four wings (Ezekiel 1:6, 10:21), and angels have no wings, but they look like men (Revelation 21:17; Also, Genesis 19:1 says that 2 angels came to Sodom, but the men of the city call them “men” in Genesis 19:5.).

The seraphim declare “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:3), just like they say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” here (4:8).

Their job is to protect God’s throne from being marred by unholiness. This is why they have “eyes before and behind” (4:6) so that they can see everything that is going on. The only place in the Bible, where seraphim are mentioned by name, is in Isaiah 6. There, Isaiah sins by saying that he is a man of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5) and immediately a seraphim places a live coal on Isaiah’s mouth to purge his sin (Isaiah 6:6-7) and protect God’s holiness.

The reason that the seraphim declare three holies to God is to represent the three parts of the Godhead. Holy is God the Father; holy is God the Son; holy is God the Holy Ghost. All three, then, make up the “Lord God Almighty” (4:8). Note how what they declared in Isaiah 6:3 stops at calling Him “the Lord of hosts,” but, here, He is “Lord God Almighty.” This shows that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lord of hosts, has already won the victory over Satan and his forces in Revelation. Therefore, He is called “God Almighty.” In other words, Isaiah saw the Lord as “the man of war” (Exodus 15:3), Who could summon the host of heaven to win any battle with man that Israel would have. However, progressive revelation allows John to see that Jesus is God, and He is Almighty, not just to defeat earthly foes, but also to spoil principalities and powers in heavenly places through the cross (Colossians 2:14-15).

The reason that the might or power of God is emphasized, here, is because it takes the power of God to execute His plan of the refining fire of the tribulation period so that all Israel will be saved. The fact that the seraphim “rest not day and night” (4:8) shows two things: 1) Keeping God and His throne holy is a job that allows for no breaks, and 2) No rest is needed in heavenly bodies which shows that we will not need rest up there ourselves, especially as shown by the 24 elders in 4:10 not having any rest, since the 24 elders are humans in their glorified bodies, just like we will be.

Yet, Hebrews 4:9 says, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” This shows that, although they do not sleep, being in the presence of God is a restful position. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Strife and weariness come from doing your own labor. However, if you present your body as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1) and allow Christ to live in

you (Galatians 2:20), then you are not really working—Christ is. All you are doing is walking in the good works that God before ordained for Christ to do through you (Ephesians 2:10). Therefore, Christ’s eternal work through us translates into eternal rest for us.

The phrase “which was, and is, and is to come,” that describes the Lord God Almighty here, was also used in 1:8 to describe Him. It simply means that God always exists—in the past (“which was”), in the present (“and is”), and in the future (“and is to come”). This is in contrast to the Antichrist “that was, and is not, and yet is” (17:8). When the Antichrist is killed, he dies. When Jesus was killed, God the Son never died; therefore, He remained alive. You can think of Jesus’ death like what happened in Daniel 3. There, the three Hebrew boys were thrown into a fiery furnace to die, but no harm came to them. Similarly, when Jesus died on a cross, He was thrown into the fires of hell, but no harm came to Him (Psalm 16:10), due to His holiness.

4:9 The seraphim “give glory and honour and thanks” to the Lord Jesus Christ because His death on the cross defeated Satan and his forces in the heavenly realm. The “thanks” part is “thank you, Lord, for making my job easy.” Once Satan and his forces are removed from heaven midway through the tribulation period (12:7-9), the seraphim will not have to worry any more about keeping God and His throne from Satan’s attacks. It is for this that they are thankful.

4:10-11 Now, the 24 elders are the 12 apostles (Matthias took Judas Iscariot’s place), who will rule over the earth, and 12 people from the grace dispensation, who will rule over the heaven. They are redeemed man, who had faith in God and His Word. Therefore, they fall down and worship Christ for giving them such high positions in His kingdom. They “cast their crowns before the throne” (4:10) to show their recognition of the Lord’s authority over all, including themselves. They extol the Lord’s worthiness, recognizing His total victory over Satan and his forces by living a perfect life and being the perfect, atoning sacrifice, making it possible for mankind to be reconciled back to God.

The 24 elders say that the Lord should receive “glory and honour and power” (4:11), while the seraphim gave “glory and honour and thanks” to the Lord (4:9). The reason the 24 elders mention “power” is because, as humans, they were under the curse of sin, being dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1), having no hope (Ephesians 2:12). When Christ rose from the dead, the Father set Him far above all powers in heaven and earth (Ephesians 1:20-21), and Christ, then, lifts all believers above the curse of sin. Therefore, the power is important for the elders, for they would be in the lake of fire without it.

In this context, then, the “all things” that God created (4:11) would be all of His undefiled creation, which is primarily all those receiving their new

bodies and positions in heaven and earth to worship and bring glory to the Lord forever. (Anything of Satan and sin is not considered a “thing” because it is temporary (II Corinthians 4:18; Matthew 24:35). Only the eternal are “things” in God’s view.) God gets pleasure out of the voluntary service of mankind to Him. Thus, primarily in view are the bride of Christ (Israel) in God’s earthly kingdom, and the body of Christ (Gentiles) in God’s heavenly kingdom. The bride and the body are created by God and bring Him pleasure throughout all eternity. Since God is talking about people, both the past and the present tense are used here. “They ... were created” in that God created the corporate bride and body of Christ in time past, but “they are ... created” in the present, because God is still filling the bride and the body with people, who place their faith in what God has told them.

5 The tribulation period starts with the opening of the book with 7 seals. (This is how it starts in heaven. On the earth, it starts with the Antichrist making a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27).) The end result of the tribulation period is that Israel will be saved. Therefore, the tribulation period represents God’s mercy upon Israel. Only Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain, is worthy to start the tribulation period, since it means the salvation of Israel. The Lamb’s worthiness to start the tribulation period is the point of this chapter. Only He can redeem Israel and make them God’s kings and priests (vs. 9-10). If He were not able to do so, no one could, which is why John “wept much” (v. 4) before the Lamb was revealed as being able to save Israel, since He won the victory for them on the cross.

5:1 As we will see in the coming chapters, this book of seven seals is the book of the tribulation-period events, which is the fire that results in the purification of Israel. Each of the seven seals is a judgment of God. The seventh seal contains the seven, trumpet judgments, and the seventh-trumpet judgment contains the seven, vial judgments. The One, sitting on the throne, is holding this book of judgments. The Ancient of Days, Who is God, is sitting on the throne (Daniel 7:9). We learned from Revelation 1:13-16 that the Ancient of Days is God the Son. So, it is God the Son, sitting on the throne holding the book of judgment.

It is weird that there are things written “on the backside” of the book. I do not know why that is the case.

5:2-4 Opening this book means the greatest time of tribulation ever upon the earth. Yet, John weeps much because no one can open the book. John is not a sadist, who wants to see blood and violence. Rather, he has been exiled to the isle of Patmos “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:9). He is tired of seeing Satan rule the world. In chapter 4, he saw God ruling over heaven. John understands that the tribulations, contained in that book, are necessary in order to bring in God’s eternal kingdom on earth. If the book cannot be opened, Satan remains as “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), because Israel will not be saved. This is

why John weeps when no one can open the book. It means that Satan will retain control of the earth!

Note that even God cannot open the book. It takes a man. (There is so much of God's power concentrated in this book that it even takes "a strong angel" (5:2) just to ask the question of who is worthy to open the book!) God came up with the plan of redemption, but it took God, becoming man, in order to bring about the redemption of man. Similarly, God came up with the trials of the tribulation period as the way to draw Israel to Himself, so that they may be saved, yet it takes a man to execute judgment upon mankind. The man, who opens the book, must be worthy to open it. No man can judge man, unless he is above that judgment himself. The sacrifices, that the priests brought into the temple before God, could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4,11), because of the imperfection of the man (Hebrews 9:7) and the sacrifice (Hebrews 9:13-14). Similarly, sinful man cannot even look on the book of judgment. Because of his imperfection, any man would be killed, just by looking at the book!

"No man in heaven" (5:3) is a reference to redeemed man in heaven. They cannot open the book, because they have not received their glorified bodies yet. Therefore, they are not completely perfected yet. Men, in earth, are those still alive, and the men, under the earth, are those in hell, awaiting judgment. They certainly cannot open the book!

Note also that, not only can no one except Jesus open the book, but also no man is found who can he can even look at the book (5:2)! This shows how powerful God's Word is (Hebrews 4:12), and that it should be treated with the utmost respect. How dare modern translators change God's sacred Word around!

5:5 Think of it this way. God is a just God. He cannot do ANYTHING unjust, or else He would sin and no longer be God. Since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), God's justice demands that people die for their sins. The book with seven seals is God's plan of mercy for the nation of Israel to be saved in the tribulation period. The problem is that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:18). How can the justice of God allow God to show mercy upon Israel, when they are subject to God's wrath for their unbelief? After all, Jesus said, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Matthew 12:31). Then, in Acts 7, Stephen said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

Therefore, there appears to be no provision of forgiveness for Israel in their program. However, there is a provision. What God actually did was He divorced Israel in the wilderness under Moses, due to their unbelief. This is

why God tells those people, “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun” (Numbers 14:29-30). Then, God turns right around and says, “But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised” (Numbers 14:31). What happens at this point is that Israel is divided into two groups of people: 1) Unbelieving Israel, and 2) Believing Israel. From then on, all unbelievers will be part of the “generation of vipers” that cannot “escape the damnation of hell” (Matthew 23:33). All believers will be part of “the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1) that will enter into the Promised Land. This is seen in God’s statement in Isaiah 50:1, “Thus saith the Lord, where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.” In other words, unbelieving Israel is a whore for their unbelief (Ezekiel 23), and God put her away. But, believing Israel is “the virgin daughter of Zion” (Lamentations 2:13). Their sins have been washed white as snow by the blood of Christ (Isaiah 1:18). Therefore, only Jesus Christ can open the book and bring believing Israel into God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

This is why, initially, no one is able to open the book with seven seals. Yet, “the Lion...hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (5:5). In other words, if God were to judge by Himself, the mercy plan of the tribulation period could not be carried out. A mediator between God and man is needed. “Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Galatians 3:20). Therefore, the question of: “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (5:2), is really the question, “Who is worthy to be the mediator between God and man to keep the wrath of God from being poured out on Israel, yet satisfy the justice of God in extending mercy to them, when it seems all provisions of mercy have been exhausted?” The reason that Jesus can open the book is because He “did no sin” (I Peter 2:22) and became the propitiation, or fully satisfying sacrifice, for man’s sin (Romans 3:25). This makes Him the only one qualified to be the mediator; thus, He is the only one qualified to open the book with seven seals. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

In other words, Jesus Christ met the justice of God by taking on God’s wrath for Israel. He also is able to offer God’s righteousness to Israel because He was the propitiation for their sins. Therefore, mercy can be offered to Israel, yet again, through the opening of the book of seven seals.

Now, things get even more confusing here. First, “one of the elders saith unto” John (5:5). Well, John IS one of the elders, since he is one of the 12 apostles. It is possible, then, that John, as the elder with full knowledge, answered his, as the man with partial knowledge, own question. The writer, John, has not taken his position as an elder yet; therefore, the writer does not understand now what is going on, although he will understand in the future, when he is sitting on a throne as an elder.

Also, “the Lion of the tribe of Juda” (5:5) is there. This is Jesus, as prophesied in Genesis 49:9. He is seen as a lion, because a lion is the king of the jungle, just like Jesus is the king of Israel. In fact, we just saw the lion characteristic in one of the seraphim in 4:7. A lion roars a lot before devouring its prey as a warning to others to get out of its way. Similarly, by bringing about the judgment contained in the seven seals, Jesus spiritually roars against the Gentiles that they had better bless the Jews, or else they will be Jesus’ prey at His second coming.

Note that Jesus, in His capacity as a man, will take the book from the Ancient of Days (5:7), and the Ancient of Days is Jesus as God. Therefore, Jesus takes the book from Himself, much like John may have answered his own question! Jesus’ characteristic as a man, here, is emphasized by the title “the Root of David” (5:5) being ascribed to Him, as Isaiah 11 shows the root of David being the Saviour. Being David’s root, then, means that He must be a man. It is as a man that Jesus prevailed over Satan to give Him the authority to release judgment upon Israel so as to bring them to salvation. Only Jesus, as the perfect man and Israel’s king, can open this book of judgment.

5:6 Note in 5:5 that, from John’s perspective in eternity as an elder, he saw Jesus as “the Lion,” who would bring judgment. However, from John’s perspective as sinful man, in 5:6, he saw Jesus as a slain lamb—“the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). This tells us that, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when saved Israel eats Jesus’ flesh and drinks His blood (John 6:53-58), they are not committing a cannibalistic act. Rather, saved Israel will be eating the ultimate Passover Lamb to atone for their sins. Jesus is whatever Israel needs them to be. He is the Lion for an elder, who is looking for God to reconcile the earth back to Himself, and He is the Lamb for a believer, looking for the atoning sacrifice for his sins.

Note that the slain Lamb is “in the midst of the throne.” This means He must be holy; otherwise, the four seraphim, closely guarding the holiness of God and His throne (see 4:6-8), would not have let Him in. Horns, in the Bible, represent kingdoms. The “seven horns” (4:6), then, represent the 7 churches in Asia, written to in chapters 2-3. These belong to God’s kingdom in the midst of the Antichrist ruling the world and Satan’s kingdom. We are told that the “seven eyes” are “the seven Spirits of God,” which are the seven angels over the seven churches. While the tribulation period is going on, it

may seem like God has been defeated, but we know that He has a kingdom of seven churches, and He has angels watching over them to keep them spiritually safe during the tribulation period.

It is funny how, from man's perspective, the tribulation period shows that God is not around and that Satan has won, given that the Antichrist is sitting in the temple, has declared himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:4), and no one seems to be able to stop him (13:6-8). Yet, Revelation 5 shows that the tribulation period is God's plan, and that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the one who opens the book with seven seals, is completely in control of what goes on. Thus, God is working all things out for Israel's good in the tribulation period (Romans 8:28), even though the world will think Satan has won. Then again, this should not surprise us. After all, Satan thought he won by having Jesus crucified, but, in so doing, Jesus won the victory over Satan.

5:7 The Lion takes the book from the Ancient of Days. The Lion is Jesus Christ as man, and the Ancient of Days is Jesus Christ, as God. How does He take the book from Himself? I do not know. It is a mystery how Jesus can be fully God and fully man in the first place, and there are many instances where Jesus said or did something that shows that He could operate independently as God and independently as man, yet be both at the same time! For example, Jesus learned "obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8), yet God cannot learn anything. Therefore, Jesus must be able, as man, to take the book from Himself, as God.

5:8-10 Since the four beasts and the 24 elders worship the Lamb and the Lamb was slain (5:9), it is clear that the Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:29). The prayers of the saints are so precious to the Lord that He keeps them in golden vials. Also, the tears, that His saints have cried for all of the tribulation that they suffer for God, are kept by God in His bottle (Psalm 56:8). (This shows what God values. By contrast, man's bottles are usually filled with alcohol.)

These verses show that the tribulation saints can know, by faith, that God loves them and will see them through the tribulation period. Now, the tribulations, found in the book with seven seals, serve two purposes: 1) To bring judgment upon those oppressing the tribulation saints, and 2) To give the kingdom to the little flock of Israel. We see, from 6:9-11, that the prayers of the saints are for God to bring judgment upon their oppressors.

The new song, of 5:9-10, specifically applies to saved Israel. However, since the 24 elders sing it and half of them are part of the mystery dispensation, there is probably a second verse to this new song that the body of Christ sings. This second verse is not included, here, since John's revelation specifically relates to Israel's program.

Those, who do not rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), will read “Thou...hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (5:9) and declare that this group must be both Jews and Gentiles since every nation is represented here. However, 5:9 does NOT say that Thou hast redeemed people FROM all nations, but it says that God has redeemed them OUT OF every nation. “The tribulation period is part of God’s fifth cycle of chastisement against Israel, in which God promises to “scatter [them] among the heathen” (Leviticus 26:33). Therefore, when God redeems the little flock, He is redeeming Jews “OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (5:9). Thus, when you read Matthew 24:14, “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” do not think that this is for today. Rather, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world in the tribulation period because the lost sheep of the house of Israel are scattered throughout the whole world. It is ONLY the lost sheep of the house of Israel that the believing remnant is sent to reach during the tribulation period (Matthew 10:5-6), not the Gentiles.

Once all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26), in the millennial kingdom, Israel’s job is to be “a kingdom of priests” (Exodus 19:6 & Isaiah 61:6) to the Gentiles, teaching them to obey the law (Matthew 28:19-20; 23:2-3), and Israel will be the Gentiles’ mediator between them and God. Then, for all eternity, they will rule on the earth over the Gentiles. This is what is meant by saying that God has made Israel “kings and priests: and [they] shall reign on the earth” (5:10).

Yes, 5:10 does say that they will “reign on the EARTH” (5:10). This is a clear indication of a different message than what Paul preached. Paul said that “God... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). He further said that “our conversation is in heaven” (Philippians 3:10). No one, who takes his Bible literally, could possibly conclude that Paul’s letters and the book of Revelation are written to the same audience, since Paul promised us heaven and John promises Israel the earth. Therefore, you are not “an holy priesthood” (I Peter 2:5)—Israel is!

In 5:8, I would say that the harps represent the saints praising God in song, as seen in 14:2-3 and 15:2-3. Thus, the believing remnant of Israel sings, praises, and prays to God, the result of which is that they will reign on the earth as kings and priests of God.

5:11 Jesus’ opening of the book of the seven seals is a huge event in Israel’s program. It signals the beginning of the tribulation period, in which Israel will be saved and, afterward, enter into God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Knowing this, all in heaven gather around for the opening of the book. This is an event that all of heaven has been waiting for since God called Israel to be His holy nation in Genesis 12, which was, at the time of this writing, about 4,000 years ago!

This verse also tells us that there are least 100 million angels on God's side, since 10 thousand times 10 thousand equals 100 million. The only other time that "ten thousand times ten thousand" is mentioned in scripture is in listing the number of people who will be at the Great White Throne Judgment (Daniel 7:10), which makes you wonder if, the reason that God has so many angels, is for them to deal with the unbelievers.

5:12 7 is the number of spiritual completion, and so we see the Lamb is worthy to receive 7 things. Jesus "is the Lamb that was slain" (5:12). Since God raised Him up from the dead and made Him above all powers, He is "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" (5:5). That is His "power." His "riches" in Israel's program is receiving the Gentiles as his inheritance (Psalm 2:8). Because He won the victory over Satan, Jesus, the man, receives the "wisdom" to rule over both the Jews and the Gentiles. His "strength" is the ability to defeat the Antichrist, the false prophet, Satan, and all of Satan's forces in order to bring in the kingdom. He then receives "honour" in bringing in the kingdom. Those under the new covenant in the kingdom give Him "glory," and He is blessed with an everlasting kingdom. All of these things are necessary in order to open the book. Remember the question in 5:2: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" The one, who opens the book, is bringing God's kingdom on earth about, since He is bringing about the salvation of Israel. Therefore, He must be worthy "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (5:12). All of these relate to the kingdom, and only "the Lamb that was slain" is worthy.

5:13-14 Four is the number of creation, which is why creation only lists four things that belong to the Lord Jesus Christ ("Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power"). Even the animals are singing God's praises here. Who is missing? Man is missing. "Every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isaiah 45:23) that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11), but this does not happen with all of man until the Great White Throne Judgment. We do see the 24 elders, who are men, fall down and worship the Lamb, but we do not see the rest of man yet, since judgments have not been given to them yet before the tribulation period starts.

Note also the distinction in this verse between God the Son and Jesus. As God, He sits upon the throne. "The Lamb" is a reference to Jesus, the man. Yet, as the Lamb, He also sits upon the throne, because He earned His worthiness by living a perfect life.

6 Chapter 6 is the opening up of the first, six seals of God's judgment against man. These seals are a summary of the entire, seven-year tribulation period. The first, four seals correspond to Matthew 24:4-8, which are called "the beginning of sorrows." These take place during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. Then, the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period take place, which Jesus calls "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21). God's judgement in great tribulation is summarized in seals 5-7 (The

seventh seal is opened in 8:1.), the seven trumpet judgments (chapters 8-11), and the seven vial judgments (chapter 16). Several events happen in the middle of the tribulation period, the most significant of which is “the abomination of desolation” (Matthew 24:15) being set up by the Antichrist in the temple. This is the image of the beast that all must worship or be put to death (13:15). Thus, the fifth seal shows all the saints killed during the “great tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). The sixth seal shows God’s judgment of the unbelievers at His second coming.

6:1 Thunder represents the voice of God (II Samuel 22:14 and John 12:28-29). Therefore, God “speaks” to Israel to “repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2) through the thunder of the tribulation period.

6:2 The first seal is of someone with a bow, sitting on a white horse. This is NOT the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ comes on a white horse AFTER the tribulation period is over, and He has a sharp sword, which is the Word of God, coming out of His mouth (19:15-16). He does NOT have a bow.

Since the first seal is the beginning of the tribulation period and Satan rules during the tribulation period, the one on the white horse is Satan. It makes sense that Satan would have a similar entrance as the Lord Jesus Christ will have, because Satan is the great imitator of God. He will deceive many into thinking that he is God, and that the Antichrist is the Christ. That is what Matthew 24:4-5 says. Satan has a bow, here, depicting him as an archer. The symbol of an archer is two fingers raised, as if to use the bow. It is no coincidence that pictures of Satan, drawn by Satan worshippers throughout history, show Satan with two fingers raised. It is also no coincidence that the Pope of the Catholic Church raises 2 fingers and “blesses” people in like manner as an archer handles his bow. This shows the Pope as the head of Satan’s church. It is called “Catholic” today. It is known by God as “Babylon” (17:5), which means confusion (Genesis 11:9).

So, this first judgment rendered upon man during the tribulation period is that Satan is given a crown to be temporary king of the world. Note that the “crown was given unto him” (6:2). A crown was never handed to Jesus Christ, unless you count His crown of thorns (Matthew 27:29). Jesus earned His crowns through His perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection. He also does not just have one crown, but “on His head were MANY crowns” (19:12). Jesus is not just a king, but He is “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (19:16). Also, at His second coming, Jesus has “the armies which were in heaven” following Him (19:14). There are no such armies mentioned here for Satan. Thus, the one on the white horse in 6:2 is none other than Satan himself. God gives Satan the power to be king of the world for seven years. Most of the world will follow him, but the result will be that Israel will be saved so they can be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles when Jesus reigns over the earth.

Also, note from 6:1, the command to “come and see.” Israel should not take people’s word that Satan is God. Rather, they should “come and see,” by comparing what is going on with the scriptures, to “see” for themselves that Satan is an imposter.

6:3 In the case of the first, four seals, the first thing Israel is told is to “come and see.” The first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period is Israel’s opportunity to “come and see” what is going on. If they use the spiritual eyes of belief to see, they will note that Israel is being tried because of their unbelief and believe the gospel of the kingdom, as proclaimed by the two witnesses (11:1-6) and the little flock of Israel. They will then be given the Holy Ghost so that they can endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13). If they do not “come and see” this during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, they will end up bowing down to the image or taking the mark of the beast during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, resulting in them being tormented forever in the lake of fire (14:9-11). Since the first four seals cover the trials of the first half of the tribulation period, all four of these seals, and no other place in Revelation, contain the invitation for Israel to “come and see” (6:1,3,5,7).

In John 1:38, two disciples of John the Baptist called Jesus “Rabbi.” Jesus told them to “come and see” (John 1:39). The result of them coming and seeing was that “we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ” (John 1:41). They went from thinking of Jesus as a teacher to recognizing Him as their Messiah, because they came and saw. Similarly, during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, a remnant of Israel will “come and see” that Jesus is their Messiah, as opposed to the Antichrist being their Messiah, and they will have faith in God to bring them into the kingdom, instead of bowing down to the image of the beast.

6:4 The one, sitting on the red horse, would be a devil underneath Satan. The horse is red because of the bloodshed he causes. He takes peace from the earth, and people kill each other. These are the “wars and rumours of wars” and the nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, as Jesus said in Matthew 24:6-7a. The ultimate world war will be going on, “but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6). This is only “the BEGINNING of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8).

Note that “there was given unto him a great sword” (6:4). Contrast this with the Lord Jesus Christ, who “out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword” (19:15). The Lord has the sharp sword, because it is the Word of God. The one, on the red horse, has a great sword given unto him. Perhaps this sword is the “great things and blasphemies” that also come out of the mouth of the Antichrist (13:5).

6:5-6 The one on the third horse, like the one on the second horse, would be a devil, high in Satan’s ranks. 6:5-6 show that Satan will now control the

food supply, as indicated by the “pair of balances in his hand” (6:5). In this trial, though, he makes food very plentiful. Wheat and barley are cheap, and there is plenty of oil and wine.

So, in the first seal, Satan swoops in and starts conquering territories. In the second seal, he creates wars and chaos. In that situation, then, the world will look for a saviour—someone to help them out of their predicament. That “someone” is the one in the third seal, bringing prosperous economic times to the world. This person, then, is the Antichrist. You can see, then, how Satan manipulates human “evil” and “good” together to get the world to follow him.

Note that the Antichrist rides upon a black horse. We often think of black as the color of death. Black, though, represents spiritual darkness. Spiritual darkness is brought by the Antichrist in the third seal by bringing economic prosperity. Remember Lot. He chose economic prosperity, and Sodom and Gomorrah got so wicked that God destroyed them with fire. Similarly, the world will follow after the economic prosperity that the Antichrist brings, going into spiritual darkness and being destroyed by God with fire at the end of the tribulation period, as a result.

6:7-8 People talk about the Grim Reaper. Well, here he is. He sits on a pale horse, indicating death. (So, black is not the color of death after all.) Again, Satan uses one of his devils as a force of evil to make people run to the Antichrist as their saviour. In this fourth seal, it is a tag-team effort with two devils. The first one brings death, and the second one brings them to hell. 20:14 says that, at the Great White Throne Judgment “death and hell [are] cast into the lake of fire.” As will be seen in the fifth seal (6:9-11), when believers are killed, they go to heaven, not hell, and wait for the redemption of their bodies at Jesus’ second coming. Therefore, the 25% of the people, who death and hell kill here, must be unbelievers. Otherwise, death and hell would have no power over them.

These unbelievers dying are a sign to Israel of how the Lord Jesus Christ will come at the end of the tribulation period and tread “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (19:15), disposing of those aligned with the Antichrist. Thus, Israel needs to “come and see” (6:7) what death and hell do to 25% of the earth so that Israel believes God’s law covenant with them so that they will not be part of those destroyed at Jesus’ second coming. Death and hell will kill by having people kill each other, having people literally starve to death, killing them with diseases, and having animals kill them (6:8). This fourth seal coincides with the famines, pestilences, and earthquakes mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24:7.

Also, note how famine is brought about just after people had plenty to eat in the third seal. This shows how Satan plays with the emotions of people to get them to make decisions based upon their material circumstances, rather than their spiritual. This kind of devilish wisdom is “sensual” or based upon

their senses (James 3:15). Satan is just setting the world up for taking the mark of the beast. When he gives everyone plenty of food, they follow him. When he takes the food away, he blames someone else. Then, he institutes the mark of the beast for the last half of the tribulation period, and the world will take the mark to ensure that they have plenty of food in the future, thereby sealing their doom in an eternal lake of fire.

6:9 Although not seen here, there is a major change in the world between seals 4 and 5. We see this change in Matthew 24. Jesus says that the first, four seals “are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8). “THEN shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you” (Matthew 24:9). The reason for this change is that the first half of the tribulation period ends with the completion of the fourth seal.

In the first half of the tribulation period, there are seven kings in the world, and the Antichrist is one of the seven kings, ruling over the Middle East (17:10-11). The two witnesses keep him from sitting in the temple and declaring himself to be God, so, he attempts to kill them, and they kill him instead (11:5; 13:3). Then, Satan resurrects the Antichrist as a beast, and he kills the two witnesses (13:1-2; 11:7). The world hates the two witnesses (11:8-10), and so the world now sees the Antichrist as their Messiah, especially since he rose from the dead, which makes them think that he has the power over death (13:4-7). Now, he can finally sit in the temple and declare himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:4). The world now has 10 kings, but all 10 kings give their power to the Antichrist, since they see him as God (17:12-13). Thus, the Antichrist is the world’s ruler during the last half of the tribulation period (13:5). With this power over the world, the Antichrist is able to control everything. Thus, an image of the beast is made, and all, who will not worship it, are to be killed (13:14-15). However, God has declared that all, who bow down to the image of the beast, are to spend eternity in the lake of fire (14:9-11). Thus, believers will not bow down to the image of the beast, which results in the Antichrist and apostate Israel trying to hunt them down to kill them. This is why the last half of the tribulation period is called “Great Tribulation” (Matthew 24:21), and Jesus tells the little flock to run for their lives (Matthew 24:15-20).

Therefore, the fifth seal shows those killed during the Great Tribulation “for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (6:9). They would not bow down to the image, because they professed Jesus to be the true Christ. Therefore, the Antichrist had them killed. Note that the greatest opportunity for Israel to repent and put themselves back under God’s law covenant with them so that they may have eternal life in God’s kingdom on earth is during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. If they wait until great tribulation, they will probably end up continuing to follow the lies of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, since their physical lives will be at stake. They will take the make of the beast so they can eat (13:17); thus, giving up their birthright into the kingdom, just like Esau did, for food (Hebrews 12:16-17). This is why the instruction to “come and see,” that we see in each

of the first, four seals (6:1, 3, 5, and 7), is not given for the last, three seals. Israel should have already seen enough in the first half of the tribulation period to make the decision to place their faith in God and His Word, rather than in Satan (Anti-God), his Christ (Anti-Christ), the false prophet (Anti-Holy Ghost), and apostate Israel (Anti-Israel).

6:10 Those martyred, for not bowing down to the image of the beast, want to know how long the Lord will not judge those killing believers on earth. This is the question of all faithful believers throughout history, as they see Satan ruling over the earth and the heaven, instead of God.

6:9-10 also teaches us that, when believers die, their souls go to heaven, where they wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to give them glorified bodies. Paul says that “we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven...:that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (II Corinthians 5:2,4). Therefore, in addition to wanting God to take vengeance upon unbelievers, those souls under the altar in the fifth seal also wonder how long they will have to wait before they receive their glorified bodies.

6:11 First, white robes are given to the martyred saints in heaven. These white robes, according to 19:8, are “the righteousness of saints.” Therefore, the first thing God does is grant them righteousness. In other words, God is more concerned with their salvation than He is with the destruction of the wicked. It is only after they are clothed with God’s righteousness that He answers their question. The answer is that, in order to make sure that all of Israel is saved (Romans 11:26), more believers will have to be killed. In John 17:12, Jesus said that He made sure that none of those given to Him by the Father were lost. Similarly, in the tribulation period, Jesus will make sure that all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel are found. This means that many of the found sheep will have to be killed by Satan before the remaining lost sheep realize the danger of apostate Israel and the Antichrist and flee to “the Good Shepherd” (John 10:14) to bring them into His fold. This will take “a little season” (6:11) to accomplish, which is the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period.

We learn two things from this. First, we see the extremes to which wickedness must go before people will abandon their foolish pride and finally trust in God to save them. Second, we learn that God is concerned with people’s eternal souls over their physical lives. (“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28).) So many people today think that God wants them to be healthy and live long lives. We learn from this verse that God is only concerned with where they spend eternity and is willing to have them unjustly killed if it means that more people will be saved as a result. Somehow, this message is lost among our megachurches today.

6:12-13 The events in Revelation are not always presented in chronological order. The sixth seal happens after the entire, seven-year tribulation period is over. The way we know this is that Matthew 24:29 tells us that the events of the sixth seal take place “immediately after the tribulation of those days.” Therefore, the first, four seals are of the first 3 ½ years, the fifth seal is what happens to the saints during the last 3 ½ years, the sixth seal happens after the tribulation period is over, and the seventh seal gives details of what happens in the Great Tribulation, since it includes the seven trumpet and seven vial judgments.

The first part of the sixth seal is in 6:12-13. First, the earth is taken off its axis and out of orbit with a great earthquake. 16:18 says it is the greatest earthquake ever, such that whole cities fall (16:19). Then, with the tribulation period being completed, God turns off the lights. The earth has already experienced a great earthquake (11:13) and 1/3 of the lights being turned out on them (8:12) before, as a foreshadowing of the end, when they would experience the totality of similar events. The earth will be in complete darkness, probably for 45 days (1,335 days in Daniel 12:12 minus 1,290 days in Daniel 12:11). The purpose of this is to give Israel time to think. Some Jews will still be alive, who have not yet worshipped the image of the beast. Therefore, they have 45 days of sitting in the dark to contemplate everything that went on during the last 7 years and make the decision to repent and have faith in God to give them eternal life in His kingdom, apart from any works they have tried to do to earn eternal life. It is during these 45 days that God has promised “that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” (Joel 2:32) from “the great and the terrible day of the Lord” (Joel 2:31). This is represented by the five wise virgins, who trim their lamps and go in to meet the bridegroom, thanks to the midnight (in darkness) cry of the little flock (Matthew 25:1-13).

When God made the sun, moon, and stars, He said that one of their purposes was “for signs” (Genesis 1:14). They represent the host of heaven, so that we are reminded that the earth is not all there is, so that we will set our “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2). When God makes the sun black, the moon blood, and the stars fall from the sky (6:12-13), it is because a much greater sign is about to appear. This greater sign is “the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (Matthew 24:30). This is why the stars are said to fall “as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs” (6:13). In other words, the time for the stars usefulness as a sign has passed, now that the sign of the Son of man will soon appear in heaven to take their place!

6:14 This is the second part of the sixth seal. Jesus rends the heavens like a garment (Isaiah 64:1), tearing into earth’s atmosphere. The way He does this is with His sword (Isaiah 34:4-5 and Revelation 19:15), i.e., the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Before He comes, the heaven is stretched out like a curtain (Psalm 104:2). So, when Jesus pokes a hole in it with His sword, it rolls up like a scroll and departs (Isaiah 34:4). Since the heaven (our

atmosphere) affects the things on the earth, the result on earth is that “every mountain and island were moved out of their places” (6:14).

6:15-17 Jesus is “the true light” (John 1:9). He is so bright, that, in the kingdom, the light of the sun is not needed “for the Lord God giveth them light” (22:5). Now, if you have been in total darkness for 45 days, your eyes will need to adjust to even the least little bit of light. However, they see the greatest light ever come through the heaven.

Three things to note about what happens: 1) Rich and poor, free and slave, and kings all hide together. In the tribulation period, the rich and the leaders with the Antichrist would not dare associate with slaves and common people. Man is a respecter of persons, but God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11). See how Jesus’ coming immediately eliminates man’s hierarchy of pride. 2) Not found among those hiding in verse 15 is believing Israel. You do not see the poor (those who did not take the mark) or the believers listed here. This is because believers have been waiting a long time for this to happen. (“Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23).) It is only all unbelievers, who hide. 3) Unbelievers know about God. So many people today deny God’s existence and His power, claiming to be atheists. They are all liars, because God says that He has made Himself known unto all men (Romans 1:19-20). Jesus’ second coming exposes the truth that there are no atheists. No one says, “What’s going on?”; “Who is that coming through the heaven?”; or “Everything is fine because God does not exist.” All unbelievers know exactly what is going on. Not only do they know that God exists, but they also recognize both the deity and the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ! They see Him as “the Lamb,” slain for their sins; they know that He is God because He “sitteth on the throne” (6:16); they know that the “great day of His wrath is come” (6:17); and they know they are powerless to stop Him from destroying them. They know all of this, and have known it, while they were sitting in darkness. Yet, instead of calling upon the name of the Lord in order to be saved, like the believing remnant does (Joel 2:32), they continue in their rebellion against God by calling upon creation to save them.

They ask the mountains and rocks to hide them from God’s face. So holy and bright is God that unholy man cannot look upon His face and live. When Moses saw God, God hid him in the cleft of the rocks so that he would not see God’s face and die (Exodus 33:20). Similarly, at Jesus’ second coming, unsaved men ask the mountains and rocks to keep them from being killed by looking at the Lord’s face. Romans 1:25 says that unbelieving man disregards his knowledge of God and worships and serves “the creature more than the Creator.” Therefore, at Jesus’ second coming, we see man’s continuation of this in proclaiming the creation to be God by calling upon creation to stop the Lord’s wrath from coming against them.

Note also the question of unbelievers: “Who shall be able to stand?” (6:17). The answer is that, because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), no one can stand on his own. However, for believers, we are told that “he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Romans 14:4). Therefore, while unbelievers are mowed down by the power of God at Jesus’ second coming, God makes believers stand so that they can enter God’s kingdom.

Finally, note how the wicked, at the end of the tribulation period, hate the Lord’s appearing. Contrast this with members of the body of Christ today, who “love His appearing” (II Timothy 4:8). This contrast is understood when we see who stands and who does not stand at Christ’s coming.

7 Before the great tribulation begins, 144,000 Jews from the believing remnant of Israel are sealed. They, along with the rest of the little flock, preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during the great tribulation (vs. 1-8). The result is that an innumerable number of Jews are saved (v. 9). This is how all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26) and will dwell in God’s kingdom on earth forever with all of the pain from the curse of sin being eradicated (vs. 15-17).

7:1-3 It may seem like Satan is in control of the earth during the tribulation period. Granted, God does give him a crown and allows him to go “forth conquering and to conquer” (6:2), but God is still in control. God’s control is seen in the fact that He commands the four angels (Again, four is the number of creation in the Bible.), in charge of hurting the earth and the sea, not to hurt the earth until God’s servants are sealed. This sealing event seems to take place midway through the tribulation period, as 12:14 says that saved Israel is nourished by God for 3 ½ years from the face of the serpent, which would coincide with the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. I believe that this nourishment coincides with the sealing, here, in chapter 7.

The note in 7:2 that the angel has “the seal of the LIVING God” may be alluding to the midpoint in the tribulation period because it is then when the Antichrist is killed by the two witnesses (13:1-3). Therefore, at that time, the world’s christ is dead, but the true Christ cannot be killed because He is the living God. Thus, Christ is able to seal His saints. Remember that the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period are the time for Israel to make their choice to trust in God to save them through His law covenant with them, instead of trusting in the Antichrist. The believing remnant of Israel are those “servants of our God” sealed here (7:3).

Once the Antichrist is resurrected from the dead by Satan, which happens within a matter of days, from Revelation 7, there will be a mark of the beast that those on earth will be required to have in their foreheads or in their right hands (13:16-17). This is Satan’s seal. Since Satan is the great imitator

of God, it makes sense that God would have a seal for His servants in their foreheads, and then Satan would copy God right afterward.

We are not told if God's seal is physical, spiritual, or both. My guess is that it is only spiritual. 12:14 says that "the woman," which would be believing Israel, is "given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." "A time, and times, and half a time" equals 3 ½ years ("Time" equals 1, "times" equals 2, and "half a time" = ½. 1 + 2 + ½ = 3 ½.), which coincides with the Great Tribulation. As a result of this protection, 12:17 says that Satan "was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The popular Bible believers' view is that the 144,000 are sealed and raptured up to a place in the sky, where they are protected until the tribulation period is over. There are two, main problems with this view. First, 12:14 says that she flies "into the WILDERNESS." A wilderness is a physically barren place. John the Baptist preached "in the wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1), where he ate "locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4)—not exactly gourmet cuisine! Jesus was "led UP of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1), and He ate nothing at all in those 40 days (Matthew 4:2). (Jesus' being led UP into the wilderness coincides with believing Israel flying there.) Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, "and He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Therefore, if believing Israel is in the wilderness for 3 ½ years, it means that they are eating very little to nothing, and that the nourishment they are receiving during that time is not physical food, but it is the spiritual food of "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3). This explains why God allows the mark of the beast to be implemented for the last half of the tribulation period, in which all believers cannot participate in the Antichrist's economic system, meaning that they cannot buy food (13:17). This is why they must depend upon sympathetic Gentiles to give them food, water, shelter, and clothing (Matthew 25:35-40). Therefore, believing Israel's wilderness would be in the spiritually barren land of Israel, not in God's paradise in the sky.

Second, believing Israel is commissioned by God to preach the gospel "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6). Because Israel will be scattered abroad among the heathen, they will not be able to go to all "the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matthew 10:23). Nevertheless, the "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world" before the end comes (Matthew 24:14). If God needs believing Israel to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel and that commission is not completed at Jesus' second coming, it makes no sense that God would remove 144,000

“preachers” from the world to wait for the tribulation period to be over. Who would be left to preach the gospel? And, what about Jesus’ warning to “flee into the mountains” when the image of the beast is set up in the temple (Matthew 24:15-16)? There would be no need to flee if they are going to fly to heaven.

Therefore, we conclude that those sealed by God are not taken off the earth. Rather, they stay right where they are. The reason, that they are sealed, is because the Antichrist will soon begin worship of the image of the beast and taking the mark of the beast. Doing either causes someone to spend eternity in the lake of fire (14:9-11). Therefore, God rewards those, who believe the gospel of the kingdom in the first half of the tribulation, with a spiritual seal that gives them the faith they need to resist the temptation to side with the Antichrist, regardless of the consequences, in the second half of the tribulation period. As such, there are at least 144,000 believers on the earth who refuse to take the mark or worship the image of the beast, which will be a powerful testimony to the remaining lost sheep of the house of Israel so that they also will believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved.

Now, you may wonder why 6:9-11 says that many believers will be killed during the great tribulation, when the servants of God are sealed beforehand. The answer is that their souls are sealed, such that they will not take the mark or worship the image, and they will be saved at the end of the tribulation period. However, they could still be arrested and killed for not bowing down to the image of the beast. There will also be “the remnant of her seed” (12:17), i.e., those saved during the last half of the tribulation period, who may also be killed for not bowing down.

These believers being arrested and tried is all part of God’s plan for all Israel to be saved. Remember that the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” before the end comes (Matthew 24:14), but they will not be able to go to all “the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matthew 10:23). The way that the whole world hears the gospel before the believing remnant goes to all the cities of Israel is through the trials of believers being broadcast for all to hear. Mark 13:9 says that they will be delivered up to councils, beaten in synagogues, and brought before kings to testify. Mark 13:10 says that this is how the gospel is published among all nations.

This is where the gift of tongues comes in. When that gift was given, each person HEARD, IN HIS OWN TONGUE, the words spoken (Acts 2:8,11). Therefore, when the trials of believers are televised, every word they speak will be heard by everyone in his own tongue, and, since the Holy Ghost will be speaking through the believers (Mark 13:11), they will be speaking a clear, gospel message that the whole world will hear.

Now, getting back to those sealed in Revelation 7. These people are represented by the Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3. Because they entered the fiery trial of the great tribulation period with faith in God,

those sealed by God will come out of the fire of the great tribulation period unscathed, just like with the three Hebrew boys. This is why Jesus told His disciples that “the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30), because God will replace everything of theirs in the kingdom, including down to the minute detail of the hairs on their heads (Matthew 19:29)!

7:4-8 Note that those sealed are all from “the tribes of the children of Israel” (7:4). Doubters will say, “No one knows what tribe they are from, so how can precisely 12,000 be sealed from each tribe?” The answer is that, while man may not know what tribe he is in, God knows. Since God is the one doing the sealing, this is not an issue. With each tribe of Israel listed here, how could anyone possibly believe that God will not fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the literal nation of Israel? The popular religious argument of us being spiritual Israel cannot possibly fly in light of tribal names being given here. After all, it is one thing to say we are spiritual Israel. It is quite another to say “You are spiritual Gad, while I am spiritual Manasses!” How would such a thing be determined?

Now, Jacob had 12 sons, and Joseph (one of the 12) received a double blessing, making 13 tribes. However, because 12 is governmental perfection and 13 is the number of rebellion, there are always only 12 tribes listed with one being excluded. Joseph and his son, Manasses, are listed here, representing Joseph’s double blessing. The tribe of Dan is excluded. The reason is probably because the tribe of Dan led Israel into idolatry (I Kings 12:28-30). Therefore, the tribe of Dan has been defiled, making them unworthy to be sealed (14:4). However, Dan will be in the kingdom. “Dan shall judge his people, AS one of the tribes of Israel” (Genesis 49:16). In other words, Dan judges, as if they are listed here. Perhaps they rule over Judah’s portion of the earth, since Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, will be reigning in Jerusalem.

7:9 We now jump past the great tribulation period to God’s throne room in Jesus’ kingdom on earth. The point is to show that the result of the labor of the believing remnant during the great tribulation is that an innumerable multitude of Jews make it into God’s eternal kingdom on earth. 5:9 says that saved Israel came “OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Therefore, the nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, mentioned in 7:9, represent saved Israel, rather than having Gentiles here as well. This is evident from them being saved “OUT OF great tribulation,” and serving before God IN His temple (7:14-15). Israel is scattered among the nations in the tribulation period due to their disobedience of the law covenant, as promised in Leviticus 26:33. Thus, Jews come into God’s eternal kingdom on earth from “all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (7:9).

We should mention that Gentiles will be saved for blessing Israel, as Matthew 25:31-46 mentions. However, the focus of the book of Revelation and the tribulation period is to get Israel saved so that they may go out to

the Gentiles during the millennial reign as a kingdom of priests. Thus, the time of Jewish salvation in Israel's program is in the tribulation period, while the time of Gentile salvation in Israel's program is in the millennial reign.

In Revelation 4, John saw the holiness of God's throne, and the glory which the Lord receives forever. This is the good news that is the result of Revelation 5-6—the opening up of the book with seven seals and the resulting tribulation period. Similarly, in Revelation 7, John sees the end from the beginning, which is how God declares things (Isaiah 46:10), because He IS the beginning and the ending (1:8). This scene in heaven is the result of the opening up of the seventh seal in Revelation 8 and the resulting events of the great tribulation period. Therefore, John gets the good news before he gets the bad news so that he may see the necessity of all of the events of the tribulation period.

Now, we know that the multitude of Jews before the throne and the Lamb, here in 7:9, are righteous, because they are wearing white robes. 19:8 says that these white robes “are the righteousness of saints.” Therefore, we see, here, the fulfillment of Romans 11:26 that “all Israel shall be saved.”

The “palms in their hands” (7:9) are significant because, at Jesus' second coming, He will fulfill the fall feasts given to Israel under the law covenant. “The tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement” (Leviticus 23:27). The ultimate fulfillment of the day of atonement is at Jesus' second coming when He blots out their sins (Acts 3:19-20). The fact, that they already have white robes in 7:9, shows this event has already taken place when John sees them in the future. Then, five days later, on “the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord” (Leviticus 23:34). This is when Israel remembers how they dwelt in tents in the wilderness, and thanks God for bringing them into the Promised Land. The ultimate fulfillment of this is that, after their sins are forgiven at Jesus' second coming, Israel remembers how they dwelt in the tents of their mortal flesh in the wilderness of the earth with Satan being god of the world (II Corinthians 4:4), and thanks God for their new bodies and for bringing them into the Promised Land of God's eternal kingdom on earth. Leviticus 23:40 says that part of that feast of tabernacles is that they take “bunches of palm trees...and...rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.” The “palms in their hands” in 7:9, then, show that John is seeing the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after Israel receives atonement for their sin at Jesus' second coming.

7:10 They rejoice before the Lord by proclaiming “salvation to our God” (7:10). In other words, they were part of Satan's kingdom, but now, thanks to God's atonement of them, they are saved to be joined to their God forever. Therefore, they are not saying that God is saved, but they are saying that they are the saved and they belong to God. Note also the further revelation here that their God is both fully God and fully man. In Leviticus 23:40 in the

Feast of Tabernacles, they rejoiced before the Lord their God. Now, in the full fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles, they know that their Messiah is also their God. Therefore, they rejoice before God, which speaks of Jesus' deity, and before the Lamb, which speaks of His humanity.

7:11 People, who were saved through the tribulation period, are standing "BEFORE the throne" (7:9). The angels, elders, and beasts stand "ABOUT the throne" (7:11). This indicates that the angels, elders, and beasts, along with God, all have their attention on what is before the throne—the believing remnant of Israel. Therefore, their proclamation, in 7:12, of "blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might" unto God is in relation to God's salvation of Israel through the tribulation.

7:12 As we saw in 5:12, we see the angels proclaim 7 things about God with 7 being the number of spiritual perfection. The list in 5:12 and the list in 7:12 are a little different from each other, because 5:12 relates to God as the Lamb; thus, it relates to His humanity. As the Lamb, He receives riches for winning the victory, and He receives strength to rule over all. Since God already has riches and strength, these are replaced in 7:12 by thanksgiving and might. As God, He receives thanksgiving from redeemed man. He also receives might, which is the authority that Satan has now in heaven and earth. Satan loses this authority as a result of God's redemption of man through the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the "thanksgiving" and "might" parts relate specifically to God's victory over Satan in redeeming the believing remnant of Israel standing before the Lord here.

7:13-14 In 7:3-8, we saw the 144,000 sealed Jews before the Great Tribulation period began (7:3-8). They, along with the rest of the little flock of Israel, preach the gospel of the kingdom to the cities of Israel, such that an innumerable crowd of Jews (7:9) "come out of great tribulation" (7:14) saved. Now, when the tribulation period starts, very few believers are on the earth, since all believers from the mystery dispensation were raptured up just prior to this. Therefore, God sends His two witnesses to Israel to preach to them during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (11:1-7). The result of these 2 preachers is that 144,000 are saved. It is easy to see, then, how 144,000 Jews and the rest of the little flock of Israel, preaching for 3 ½ years, would result in an innumerable group of Jews being saved (7:9). This innumerable group are the ones who had to learn faith in God the hard way. Only by going through great tribulation did they make it into the kingdom. Some of these were killed by the Antichrist and apostate Israel "for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (6:9).

Going through tribulation in order to be saved shows how man will usually only humble himself before God when he is tried. After all, God wanted to give Israel the kingdom under Moses, but they would not believe, because they thought of themselves as something special. Israel's history is filled with unbelief. But, when they lose everything in the tribulation period, they finally believe. This is also why the most economically prosperous countries

in the world follow vain philosophies and are deceived, while the poorer countries are more likely to believe the gospel and be saved.

Their washing their robes and making “them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14) is a fulfillment of Isaiah 1:18. Their own righteousnesses were “as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Their sins had made their garments “as scarlet” (Isaiah 1:18). However, by having faith in God’s promises to Israel under the law covenant, they washed their scarlet garments in the blood of the Lamb (7:14), making them “as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18) so that they now have God’s righteousness and will live in God’s kingdom on earth forever.

7:15 This verse starts with “therefore.” Because Israel believed God’s promises to them, their sins are washed in the blood of the Lamb, making them righteous. Therefore, because they are righteous, they are “before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple” (7:15). This quotation tells us why there are no Gentiles in this group of saved people standing before the throne. God promised ISRAEL that they would be His kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). As priests of the Lord, Israel “shall eat the riches of the GENTILES” (Isaiah 61:6). Now, a priest is a mediator between God and man, as seen by the Lord Jesus Christ’s example in Hebrews 9:14-15. Therefore, Israel’s job, in God’s kingdom on earth, is to come to God on behalf of the Gentiles. That is how they serve God “day and night in His temple” (7:15). God then dwells among saved Israel, since saved Israel is His people.

Note that the verse says that “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.” This is very similar to Jesus’ statement to conclude the book of Matthew, where He said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). That is because both passages refer to Israel going to the Gentiles as a kingdom of priests for God in the millennial reign. This tells us that, what Jesus meant in Matthew 28:20, was that His Word would go with believing Israel so that the Gentiles may be saved. Thus, Jesus’ statement emphasizes the importance of scripture as opposed to Churchianity’s interpretation that you can “feel His presence” at all times.

7:16-17 These, coming out of great tribulation, did not take the mark of the beast (14:9-11), and so they could not buy food (13:17). Although they did have some help from Gentiles and fellow Jews (Matthew 25:35-40), they went hungry and thirsty often. Therefore, the promise, here, that they will hunger and thirst no more. Spiritually speaking, they also hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and God fulfills His promise to them of filling them with the spiritual food of the things of God (Matthew 5:6).

The sun lighting on them and the heat of the sun on them is the hard part of 7:16 to understand. The fact, that it does not happen any more in God’s kingdom, must mean that it was part of the curse of sin. We can connect this with the last part of 7:17, where the elder says that “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,” which tells us that the sun’s light and the

heat must have caused them pain. Based on Psalm 121:5-6 (“The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.”) and Isaiah 49:9-12 (“neither shall the heat nor sun smite them”), it appears that the sunlight or heat has to do with Satan’s people persecuting God’s believing remnant in Israel. It also may be related to the curse of sin, as sunburn, heat stroke, and hypothermia are ailments coming from the sun, which will be done away with in God’s kingdom, as Israel has no need for the “light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light” (22:5). Therefore, 7:16 is saying that all hunger, thirst, and persecution, that the believing remnant of Israel suffered during the great tribulation, are over for them in God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

In that kingdom, “the Lamb ... is in the midst of the throne” (7:17). He is also God. Being both the Lamb and God makes Him “the good shepherd” (John 10:14). With the Lord being their shepherd, they shall not want for anything. He gives them rest, He feeds them with His Word, and the Holy Ghost provides the living fountains of waters (Psalm 23). (Funny how the Lamb feeds them, when it is usually the sheep who get fed, not the other way around.) The tears they cried in the great tribulation are no more. Therefore, the believing remnant can look to these two verses (7:16-17) as encouragement to endure unto the end of the tribulation period.

8 The seventh seal is opened (v. 1), which means that the seven trumpet judgments can begin. The prayers of the saints have been heard (vs. 3-5), which means that God brings judgment against man but grace to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The first four trumpet judgments destroy 1/3 of the earth (vs. 6-12), as a warning that man is about to be destroyed (v. 13), if he does not believe the gospel.

8:1-2 The seventh seal contains seven trumpet judgments, and the seventh trumpet judgment contains seven vial judgments (16:1). 7 is the number of spiritual perfection, and 3 is the number of divine completeness. Since the tribulation period is filled with 7 x 3 (seals, trumpets, and vials) tribulations, it shows that it takes 3 sevens for God’s complete spiritual perfection to work itself into Israel. The 7 trumpet judgments and the 7 vial judgments are all contained within the seventh-seal judgment, and the seventh-seal judgment represents all of the “great tribulations” that take place during the last 3 ½ years or last half of the tribulation period. It is “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Therefore, there is “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (8:1) for the severity of what is about to take place.

Note that it is “the seven angels which stood before God,” who are given the seven trumpet judgments (8:2). We saw, in Revelation 2-3, how these angels were sent with message to the seven churches in Asia. They are ministering spirits sent to help the sheep of the house of Israel, scattered abroad in Asia, to be saved at the end of the tribulation period. Therefore, these seven trumpet judgments will help the churches, as well, as they will teach Israel not to trust in the flesh and the material rewards, that the Antichrist and

apostate Israel offer them, and trust in the things of the Spirit that God offers them instead.

8:3-5 “The prayers of all saints” (8:3) would be prayers for two things: 1) Prayers for God to “judge” (6:10) the unsaved, who persecute the saved, and 2) Prayers for all of the lost sheep of Israel to be saved.

The smoke of the incense and the prayers of the saints ascend up to God (8:4). These prayers are a sweet smell to God, such that God responds with fire that is cast into the earth (8:5). This is the “refiner’s fire” of God (Malachi 3:2) by which He will purify Israel to make them pleasant unto the Lord (Malachi 3:3-4), and the fire will also judge the unbelievers (Malachi 3:5).

As mentioned in the notes on 4:5, the voices represent God’s Word. Therefore, God does not just punish the earth, but He also gives the revelation of His Word by the Holy Ghost to the believing remnant so that they will continue to have faith in God unto the end of the tribulation period. The “thunderings” represent God’s judgment of man. The “lightnings” represent the fall of Satan and his forces to the earth. 12:7-9 says that Satan and his forces are cast out of heaven unto the earth, midway through the tribulation period. In Luke 10:18, Jesus equates Satan’s fall to lightning falling from the sky.

Of course, in addition to the written Word of God being the “voices,” here, there are also audible voices from angels in heaven, such as the declarations in 12:10-12 and 8:13. When God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai, they heard “the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)” (Hebrews 12:19-21).

With regard to God speaking in the tribulation period, Hebrews 12:25-26 says, “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” (Hebrews 12:25-26).

Therefore, the voices coming from God’s throne, in themselves, will be enough to scare the beejeeves out of many Jews, such that they believe the gospel of the kingdom right then and there! Finally, the “earthquake” in 8:5 is the groaning and travailing in pain (Romans 8:22) of the earth, as it is forced to accept the devil and all of his evil forces for the last half of the tribulation period, as they have been cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels (12:7-9).

8:7-12 The first four trumpets pretty much destroy 1/3 of the heaven and the earth, as a precursor to the fifth and sixth trumpets, in which 1/3 of the men on the earth are killed. Who are among the 1/3 killed by the sixth trumpet is determined by man's response to what happens in the preceding trumpet judgments.

The first four trumpet judgments are progressively severe. In the first trumpet judgment, 1/3 of the trees and all green grass are burned up. This reduces the food supply, as man cannot get fruit off of the trees and animals cannot be fed by the grass, and so the world's supply of meat and fruit goes down dramatically. So now, the Antichrist, who was doling out plenty of food under the third seal (6:6), does not have the food that he once did. This should be a sign to man that the Antichrist is not God for he cannot control the food supply.

God could have easily destroyed the trees and grass by fire alone, but He mixes blood in there to show it is the judgment of God upon man. It is now up to man to "drink of the wine which [wisdom has] mingled" (Proverbs 9:5), seeing that as the judgment of God and repenting, having faith in the gospel, so that they may enter God's eternal kingdom on earth.

In the second trumpet judgment (8:8), the water supply of the earth is affected by 1/3 of the sea becoming blood. A mountain represents religion, and the sea represents Satan's realm. Again, God could easily have just turned 1/3 of the sea into blood. But, by throwing a mountain into the sea, resulting in the blood, the type is set for those on earth with the ears to hear that the great mountain of the Jewish religion will soon fall, and the result will be eternal damnation in the lake of fire for all those in Israel, who believe man's religion over God's words to Israel under His law covenant with them.

An example of this is seen in Mark 11:23, where Jesus tells Israel to have the faith to cast the mountain of religion into the sea. Since they do not yet have this faith, God does it for them with the second trumpet judgment, to show Israel that they will need to abandon apostate Israel's religious system and believe God's law covenant with them if they are going to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. 8:9 mentions that 1/3 of the sea creatures died, which shows that, all those, trusting in the Babylonian religious system, will die right along with it and have their part in the lake of fire.

In 9:1, a star falls from heaven and HE was given the key of the bottomless pit. This shows that stars often represent angels in the Bible. Now, in 8:10-11, the third trumpet judgment is "a great star," called Wormwood, that fell from the sky. In Deuteronomy 29:18, bearing wormwood is equated with Israel turning away from the Lord to serve other gods, which is exactly what they do under the Antichrist. "The waters" (8:11), as opposed to the sea, refer to life in God, as we see Jesus promising believers a well of water (John 4:14), and we see "a pure river of water of life," proceeding out of God's

throne in His kingdom on earth (Revelation 22:1). Therefore, while 1/3 of the waters on the earth do actually become bitter, cutting off the water supply for the inhabitants of the earth, this event represents a greater spiritual truth. That truth is that people will look for eternal life in the great tribulation period, but God's law covenant with Israel will be corrupted, or be made bitter, by the Antichrist and apostate Israel, such that, all that drink of their religion, rather than of the pure words of life found in God's law covenant, will spiritually die, just like all men drinking of the bitter waters touched by Wormwood will physically die. Therefore, 1/3 of the waters becoming bitter is probably telling us that 1/3 of the world's inhabitants bow down to the image of the beast initially. This is how they die spiritually.

Note also that Wormwood will be "burning as it were a lamp" (8:10). Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Thus, Wormwood's burning "AS IT WERE a lamp" shows how the Antichrist will be promoting a counterfeit word of God, which is seen today in the many different Bible versions and differing "Bible" teachings available. We also see the "bitterness" of the Christian religion today, as they make people sick on the guilt and burdens of the law that they put on people, due to a failure to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15-18).

In 8:12, the fourth trumpet judgment is that 1/3 of all of the light in heaven goes away. In 12:1 and Genesis 37:9-10, the nation of Israel is pictured as the sun, moon, and stars. Therefore, when 1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten and are darkened by the fourth trumpet judgment, this pictures how 1/3 of Israel will become apostate by taking the mark and worshipping the image of the beast during the Great Tribulation period. Because of their unbelief at this time, they are not part of "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16), which explains how "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26), even though 1/3 of them end up in the lake of fire.

Note also that 1/3 of the day AND 1/3 of the night do not shine either. So, if day and night typically last 12 hours each, after this judgment, there will be only 8 hours per day when the sun shines and only 8 hours per day when the moon and stars shine, and they will only shine at 2/3 power. Then, there will be 8 hours of utter darkness each day (no sun, moon, or stars shining). It is important to note this utter darkness for each day. If it were only the sun not shining for as long as before, scientists would probably come up with some explanation to put people at ease (I am sure they will do this anyway.). However, if stars also stop shining part of the time, people will know that something major is going on, since stars NEVER stop shining.

I would say that this represents how 1/3 of the Gentiles will also seal their doom in the lake of fire by taking the mark and worshipping the image of the beast. As such, God has used His judgments in heaven and earth to warn men not to follow the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Those, with the

ears to hear (chapter 2-3), will understand the meanings of these judgments.

8:13 In case man is too blind to see God's warnings by the first four trumpet judgments, God sends an angel to warn man and tell them that the worst is yet to come. There are three "woes" here to represent each of the three, remaining trumpet judgments. Each of these judgments are called woes, while the first four trumpets were not, because the last three are direct attacks on mankind.

Note how God is gracious in His judgments of man. God is unwilling that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). Therefore, He brings judgments in the tribulation period, that gradually get worse, so that man will see his guilt before God and his need to have faith in what God has told him so that he may have eternal life with God, instead of perishing in the lake of fire. Thus, we see God warning mankind, via an angel, proclaiming more woes upon the earth that are to come.

We should also note that the angel calls mankind "inhabiters of the earth" (8:13). They do not own the earth, due to their unbelief. It is the faithful, who will "inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Therefore, these unbelievers are mere inhabiters.

9 This chapter contains the 5th and 6th trumpet judgments. In the 5th trumpet judgment (vs. 1-11), mankind is tormented for 5 months to give them a taste of what eternity in the lake of fire will be like. In the 6th trumpet judgment (vs. 13-19), 1/3 of the world's population is destroyed to show them their end result of following the Antichrist. In spite of these severe judgments, man continues in his evil ways, because he is spiritually dead (vs. 20-21).

9:1 As mentioned before, the star falling from heaven is an angel, which is why the star is referred to as "him." (See 12:4, where the angels are referred to as stars.) After the tribulation period is over, the angel, with the key to the bottomless pit, binds Satan and puts him in the pit for 1,000 years (20:1-2). However, that is still future. At the time of Revelation 9, an angel releases forces from the bottomless pit upon the earth. In fact, the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments are so bad that they come from Satanic forces that have been locked up for thousands of year, waiting for this specific time of severe judgment upon the earth.

9:2 When the bottomless pit is opened, the smoke, coming out of it, is so bad that it darkens the sun, and it even darkens the air. When the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, it was so great that Moses could not enter the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34). When the devil's essence comes on the earth, it is a darkening presence that is a filthy, nasty smoke "as the smoke of a great furnace" (9:2). This shows the contrast between God and the devil.

9:3-18 When locusts were released upon Egypt, they ate everything green on the earth (Exodus 10:14-15). When locusts are released for the fifth trumpet judgment, they torment man. Then, in the sixth trumpet judgment, horses and horsemen come and kill 1/3 of man. These two judgments serve as a type of what is described in Joel 2:1-11, when, at Jesus' second coming, the believing remnant go forth, under the Lord Jesus Christ's lead, and destroy the Antichrist's forces so that Israel may inhabit the land once again. When they do this, they are described as having "the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run" (Joel 2:4). Thus, for those, who survive the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments, they still have a chance to repent and believe the gospel, so that they will not be destroyed at Jesus' second coming.

9:3-4 In the first four trumpet judgments, found in chapter 8, God has already pretty much destroyed 1/3 of the things in the earth. Therefore, the job of these locusts is not the same as it was in Exodus 10. They have the power of scorpions, which means they are on the earth to hurt people. This is why they are told not to go after what they normally go after, i.e., the green stuff on the earth. Instead, they are to hurt people. They have the power to hurt any man, except for the 144,000 sealed in God (9:4). Therefore, even Jews, who heed the warnings of the first 4 trumpet judgments by repenting and believing the gospel of the kingdom, will be tormented by these locusts. This tells us that the unsealed believing remnant will have a difficult time during these 3 ½ years, to say the least.

Thus, we see the importance for Israel to believe the gospel before the Great Tribulation starts, so that they can be sealed by God and avoid such torment that people will wish they could die to get out of the torment (9:6). This sealing, then, should remind us of Israel during the plagues of Egypt. All of Egypt was hurt by the plagues, except for Israel (e.g., Exodus 9:26). So, too, all those 144,000, who are in the Israel of God and are thus sealed to begin the Great Tribulation, will be the only ones on earth not touched by the events of the Great Tribulation. As such, they will be a sign to the rest of Israel that they also need to repent and believe the gospel, if they are to be saved from God's wrath to come.

9:5-6 For 5 months, the earth will be filled with locusts that torment people with the sting of a scorpion. People will be so tormented that they will want to die, but "death shall flee from them" (9:6). This means that all attempted suicides will fail. Thus, this gives man a taste of what the lake of fire will be like, where man will be tormented forever, probably by these very same locusts, and there will be no way for them to stop their torment by dying. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night" (14:11). The message to mankind will be that, if they do not want to suffer like this permanently, they had better place their faith in what God has told them.

The rich man asked Abraham to tell his family about how awful hell fire is (Luke 16:27-28). Well, for 5 months, God gives the world just a small taste of what the lake of fire will be like so that they may believe the gospel to them and be saved. Since this is just a taste of hell and men still seek death, we can only imagine the sheer torment of eternity in the lake of fire. Thus, these five months of torment show God's "tough love" for the world, that He would inflict such pain upon them for five months, so that they do not have to suffer much worse pain for all eternity.

For those Jews, who do believe during this time, Jesus tells the story in Matthew 7:9-11 about how, if a son ask his father for a fish, his father will not give him a serpent. So, too, their heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask Him. Therefore, we see that those, having faith in the gospel during this time, will be given the Word of God to help them through the worst time of torture the world will ever see.

As a side note, people today are not used to having to deal with pain. Whenever they have pain, they take some pill to keep them from feeling it. There is no pill to remedy locusts constantly stinging you. Therefore, because man's pain tolerance is very low, due to pain medications, the pain they experience during these five months will be more severe than John's original audience could even imagine.

9:7-10 These locusts look like lean, mean, fighting machines. They look like battle-trained horses. The gold-like crowns on their heads indicate that they are the rulers over the world for these 5 months. (Crowns were given to them, just like with Satan in 6:2. They certainly could not have earned the crowns, since they were imprisoned in the bottomless pit (9:1-3).) Having faces of man probably serves to freak out the men they torture. Having the hair of women would do the same thing. Thus, men see, in the locusts' faces, something that looks like them. Since people believe in evolution, I wonder if this is God's way of giving them a taste of their own medicine. In other words, will men see this as a creature that has evolved past man, since men are powerless to stop the locusts from torturing them?

"The teeth of lions" indicates their fierceness. It shows man that these locusts could tear them to shreds at any time, but they will not, because that would be letting man off too easily! The breastplates of iron show that man is powerless to try to kill, or even injure, them. Their wings make them sound like war machines. So, when they are on the move, men know that their attack is near, which makes the anticipation of their arrival an added torture to men.

Finally, the worst part of all of this is their scorpion-like tails, because they use their tails to torture men for 5 months. Now, it is obvious, by looking at these locusts, that they can do a lot more damage by using the rest of their bodies. I think this is to show men that this is just a taste of the torment they will experience in the lake of fire, should they not place their trust in

what God has told them. Now, you may wonder if these creatures are human, devils, or something else. We know, from the text, that they are locusts. This makes them insects that were created for the very purpose of tormenting men, probably primarily in the lake of fire for all eternity. That is when they will be able to use all of their bodies, not just their tails, to torture man, since there will be no way for them to kill man in hell. Thus, torture can be at its maximum in hell.

(By the way, some Christians think these locusts are really helicopters, but that makes absolutely no sense.)

9:11 This angel is probably a devil on Satan's side. He is probably mentioned here to show that Satan has devils, whose sole jobs are to make sure people are adequately tortured for all eternity. Judging by what happens here, it looks like they are up to the challenge.

Proverbs 30:27 says that the locusts do not have a king over them. Therefore, the fact, that these locusts do have a king over them, shows us that they are not ordinary locusts.

The words "Abaddon" and "Apollyon" mean "destroyer." Along with Gabriel and Michael, these are the only angels named in the Bible. In my opinion, the "Grim Reaper" should be called either "Abaddon" or "Apollyon."

9:12 People already want to die, because the first woe (fifth trumpet judgment) is so bad. Yet, there are two more woes to come, and the last woe contains the 7 vial judgments of Revelation 16. Therefore, the tribulations of the Great Tribulation period are just getting started at this point, which shows just how bad things will really get!

9:13-14 This time, instead of releasing locusts, this angel releases 4 angels to bring judgment. The fact, that these angels were bound, shows that they are fallen angels. They are so bad that God does not even let them do Satan's work, because they probably would not obey. Their sole job is to execute this sixth trumpet judgment. The voice comes from "the golden altar which is before God" (9:13). This is the altar mentioned in 8:3, upon which the prayers of the saints were offered. So, the prayers of the saints, asking God how long it will be before God avenges their blood (6:10) is answered, in part, by the sixth trumpet judgment in which those, who have sided with the Antichrist SO FAR by bowing down to his image or by taking his mark early on, are killed. Therefore, the commandment to "loose the four angels" (9:14) probably comes from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

9:15 Note that these angels "were prepared" for this task of slaying 1/3 of the world's population. Now, we already saw in 6:8 that 1/4 of the world has already been killed. This means that, after the 1/3 are killed with the sixth trumpet judgment, a total of 50% of the world's population is killed, just with these two executed judgments. An example with numbers will make

this clear. Let's say there are 8 billion people in the world at the beginning of the tribulation period. ¼ of the world is killed in 6:8, leaving 6 billion people. 1/3 of these are killed in the sixth trumpet judgment, leaving 4 billion people. 4 billion is half of 8 billion. As can be seen, this is a monumental task to complete. That is why these 4 angels had to be prepared just for this specific hour, day, month, and year, in which they would oversee the killing of 2 billion people.

The idea is that, by killing all those, who have already bowed down to the image or taken the mark, the rest of the unbelievers can see that, if they follow suit, God will also kill them. This is not some idle threat. Since God has the power to kill 2 billion people at once, no one, not even the Antichrist, can stop God from killing the rest of the world. At the beginning of the Great Tribulation period, the world "worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (13:4). Now, they have their answer: "The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name" (Exodus 15:3).

9:16 These are 200 hundred million horsemen, under the leadership of these 4 angels, who kill the 2 billion or so people. We are not told who the 200 hundred million men riding these horses are, or even if they are men. Since they are part of the army under the four angels, they are probably devils, just like the four angels are.

9:17-19 Note that the ones sitting on the horses are just along for the ride. It is the horses themselves that kill 1/3 of the world's population. They kill them with the fire, brimstone, and smoke coming out of their mouths, signaling that there is more torment of fire, brimstone, and smoke to come in the lake of fire. Now, we saw, in the picture of 1/3 of the waters becoming bitter in the third trumpet judgment in 8:11, that 1/3 of the world bowed down to the image of the beast. 14:9-11 says that, those bowing down to the image or taking the mark of the beast, will experience fire, brimstone, and smoke forever. Since their eternal destiny is sealed when they bow down, it makes sense that the 1/3 of the world, who initially bow to the image, are the ones killed here, as a sign to the rest of the world, that they will also go into the lake of fire for all eternity, if they bow down.

These horses also use their lion-like heads and their serpent-like tails to hurt men. Thus, they hurt men, and then they kill them. God's justice makes the punishment fit the crime, as God says, "and if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus 21:23-25). Since these people followed "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (12:9), it makes sense that they would be hurt by serpent-like tails. Thus, God is always just, even with dirty, rotten sinners.

Also, note that these verses emphasize that the men are killed by fire, probably to make it clear that God remembered His covenant with Noah and did not kill them by water (Genesis 9:11).

9:20-21 So, half of the world's population has already been killed by this point. Those remaining have seen this. They have seen that those bowing down to the image of the beast were killed, while the believing remnant of 144,000 have been spared all six of the trumpet judgments. They have heard voices from heaven, warning them of what was happening, yet they "repented not" (9:20). How much plainer can God make it that man is sinful and in need of a Saviour? If they do not believe the gospel, they will burn in hell.

The Antichrist has probably explained all of this away by saying that the "devil" (who we know is really the Lord God) has done this, and the only way to be saved is to follow the Antichrist, who will lead them to God (who we know is really Satan). (Isaiah 5:20-21 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!") The remaining unbelievers should not be fooled by the Antichrist. They should see that the Antichrist and his forces are on the devil's side, because they have already seen that God is more powerful than the devil is. After all, God just wiped out 1/3 of the world's population, and the ones He wiped out are the ones, who bowed down to the image.

The Antichrist, though, does not have this power. Of those, who have not bowed down, the Antichrist is only able to kill those he can catch. God probably divinely protects a good portion of the little flock so that they can reach the lost sheep of Israel with the gospel, much like God protected David when Saul was trying to kill them, since this is a type of the great tribulation period. Therefore, unbelievers can look at what the Antichrist says, examine the evidence of 50% of the world's population having been killed, and determine that the force behind believing Israel is more powerful than the force behind the Antichrist. Therefore, the God, Who believing Israel worships, must be the true God, since He is the more powerful of the two. This is simple logic.

However, the unbelievers are so far gone into apostasy, at this point, that God has given them over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28), such that they continue in their evil deeds. This means that, in spite of the evidence before them, many will bow down to the image and take the mark of the beast and have their place in the lake of fire for all eternity, as a result. Jesus prophesied of this by saying, "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). In the days of Noah, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). God warned them, through Enoch and Noah, and no one outside of

Noah's family believed! Therefore, during the Great Tribulation period, man is not thinking of who is greater—God or the devil. Man does what he has always done, which is trying to figure out how he can do the evil that he has purposed in his heart to do and get away with it. Man's best chance of this appears to be following the Antichrist. Therefore, he bows down to the image of the beast.

The evil of these men is divided into two categories: 1) Idol worship (v. 20), and 2) Self worship through their sins (v. 21). The idol worship involves the worshipping of devils. People will say that idol worship does not happen today, but it does. We see it in the Catholic church, in other denominations within Christian-DUMB, and in other religions. Idol worship is really following anything that man has made. (Much of the idol worship today in the United States is of the Hollywood "stars.")

Note that 9:20 calls it "the works of their hands." This makes man the creator, and, in turn, makes him god. They have "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Romans 1:23), serving "the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). Psalm 115:8 says, "They that make [idols] are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Therefore, even after half of the world's population has been killed, spiritually speaking, the remaining unbelievers are just as dead as the idols that they make. Being spiritually dead, then, they use their time solely to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, which is what 9:21 says.

More important than the physical acts of 9:21 are the spiritual acts. They spiritually murder by getting others to bow down to the image. They spiritually practice sorcery by getting people to fall into the spell of the Babylonian religion. They spiritually commit fornication by serving other gods, such as the god of forces (Daniel 11:38), rather than serving the true God. They spiritually steal by trying to take the eternal rewards in God's kingdom away from the little flock by getting the little flock to stop serving God and follow the Babylonian religion instead.

10 The beginning of the "dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephesians 1:10) is detailed in the first six verses of this chapter, as seen by the fact that the angel declares "that there should be time no longer" (v. 6). This is done to show John that Israel's opportunity to be saved is almost over. This is also seen in verse seven, which says that the great tribulation period ends when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. Since the sixth angel just sounded in 9:13 and the seventh angel will sound in 11:15, there is not much time left for the lost sheep of Israel to hear and believe the gospel of the kingdom in order to be saved. Therefore, John needs to digest all the words of prophecy given to him (vs. 8-10), and speak them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Since Israel is scattered among the heathen, due to the fifth cycle of chastisement, this involves prophesying "again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (v. 11).

10:1 A rainbow represents the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 1:28). This is probably true because God's glory is seen in His mercy in not destroying the earth with a flood again. In other words, at the time of the tribulation period, the world is as bad as it was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37). Yet, God cannot bring a flood, like He did then, because He would be breaking His promise. Therefore, His glory is seen in the rainbow as a reminder that God is destroying the earth with fire this time, which is glorious because fire is what keeps sin from reaching God's throne, which is why the people in hell burn with fire, not with water. Therefore, the fact, that God will soon bring a judgment of fire upon the world, indicates that, as will be seen in 10:6, God's eternal kingdom, with sin completely cast out forever, is about to come to fruition, and the rainbow, upon this angel's head, is a reminder of this.

His face being like the sun and his feet being like pillars of fire remind us of the description of Jesus in 1:15-16. The angel, here, then, is probably the Lord Jesus Christ, especially since this same angel gives power to the two witnesses in 11:3. Jesus is probably seen as an angel, because angels are messengers of God, and this angel gives John a little book, which contains prophecies (10:2,10-11). Thus, Jesus acts as a messenger of God here.

There have been television programs in the past where someone has a dream, and all of the people in the dream look like the person he is thinking about. The person is the waiter, the cook, the doorman, and everyone else. The book of Revelation is sort of like this. Because it is only the Lord Jesus Christ, Who conquered death and hell and is far above all of Satan's forces (Ephesians 1:20-21), in the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ plays many of the main characters on God's side, because He is the only One qualified to do many of these things to bring about God's kingdom. Recognizing this also helps us keep in mind that, today, in the dispensation of grace, our salvation and sanctification are all about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, rather than how we can improve ourselves, because we cannot improve ourselves (Romans 7:18).

10:2 The "little book," here, is later eaten by John so that he may prophesy (10:10-11). Chronologically speaking, this chapter occurs after the millennial reign, because 10:6 tells us that it is the beginning of the dispensation of the fullness of times (Ephesians 1:10), that is, when time ends. Therefore, we are transported way into the future now. This "mighty angel" (10:1) is huge, because he is able to put one foot on the sea and the other foot on the earth, which is another reason to believe that He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

10:3 Jesus is "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" (5:5). He roars as a lion, here, because He is about to destroy the heaven and the earth and bring in the new heaven and the new earth. Thunder represents the voice of God (John 12:28-29). Therefore, the seven thunders are the voice of God, speaking into

existence the new heaven and the new earth. When God created the world, He spoke it into existence. Genesis 1 starts each day of creation with “and God said” (Genesis 1:3,6,11,14,20,24). Jesus Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1,14). Thus, God created the world by Jesus Christ. That is what Colossians 1:15-17 specifically says. There were 7 days of creation. There are also 7 thunders here. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that there are 7 thunders, one thunder for each day of the new creation.

10:4 Everyone wants to know what the seven thunders said, because we are not told what they said. When God revealed end-time events to Daniel, He told him to “shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end” (Daniel 12:4). It was not until the time of the end was “at hand” (1:3) that God allowed the end-time events to be revealed with the book of Revelation.

Since the new heaven and the new earth (21:1) do not begin until after the 1,000-year millennial reign of Christ, the time of the new creation is not at hand at the writing of the book of Revelation. Therefore, like He did with Daniel, God tells John to “seal up those things” related to the new heaven and the new earth. Thus, what the seven thunders uttered was probably the voice of God speaking into existence the things of the new heaven and the new earth. Since they are not at that point yet, redeemed Israel would not be able to understand them at the time of John’s writing of Revelation.

However, the main reason that John cannot write down what the seven thunders said is probably because, the mere writing down of the words, would cause the new creation to begin at that point in time. In other words, since “and God said” brought the old creation into existence, “and God said” would also bring the new creation into existence. Thus, John hears the words because he is in the future, but the writing down of the words would bring them from the future and into the present. This is my guess as to why God tells John not to write down what the seven thunders said.

The creation of the new heaven and the new earth is different from the creation in Genesis 1. For example, Revelation 21:2 says that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. The HUGE difference is in the quality of God’s creation. With regard to the first creation, Genesis 1:31 says, “God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” With regard to the new creation, Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “He hath made everything beautiful in His time.” Therefore, the first creation was exceptional (very good), while the new creation is superior, possessing qualities that bring great pleasure (beautiful). The reason for the difference is because the old creation had innocent man with dominion over the earth, but the new creation has redeemed man in Christ with dominion over the heaven and the earth. Therefore, the extent that the new creation is greater than the old creation is the extent to which Christ is more qualified to run God’s universe than Adam was. I am sure there is a wide gap in knowledge between Adam and Christ. Talk about gap theory. This is it!

10:5-6 So, once the seven thunders have spoken, the new heaven and the new earth are in existence. Satan, the Antichrist, the false prophet, all devils, and all men, who did not have faith in God, are in the lake of fire. All that remains in heaven are the sinless spiritual creatures God made and the body of Christ. All that remains on earth are the bride of Christ (Israel) and saved Gentiles from the prophecy dispensation. Since everyone left is holy, there is no need for time. The dispensation of the fulness of times begins, which is the beginning of eternity. Note how 10:6 emphasizes creation, because it is, at this time, that God creates the new heaven and the new earth by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Also, note how significant this event is. The Lord Jesus Christ lifted up His hand and swore by God that time is finished. Granted, God's Word is always true (John 17:17), but, when He swears by Himself that something is true, it is very important. God invented time over 6,000 years ago, and it will exist for more than 1,000 years from now. Time is an invention that has been around as long as the earth has. Therefore, the elimination of time is a HUGE event—just as huge as the discarding of the old heaven and old earth—because it signals the beginning of eternity!

10:7 The fact that this verse starts with “but” tells us that there is a change in time right now 10:6 happens after the millennial reign, while 10:7 happens in the Great Tribulation period. 10:7 speaks of the seventh trumpet judgment. Contained within the seventh trumpet judgment are the seven vial judgments, which conclude the tribulation period.

10:7 mentions “the mystery of God” being finished at the end of the tribulation period. This cannot be the mystery given to the apostle Paul because: 1) Paul's mystery was kept secret until revealed to Paul (Romans 16:25-26), while “the mystery of God” was declared to God's “servants the prophets” (10:7), which would be the prophets of Israel's program. Israel's prophets may have declared it, but it was still a mystery to them, because they “inquired and searched diligently..., searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.” It was not revealed unto them (I Peter 1:10-12)., and 2) “The mystery of God” is finished at the end of the tribulation period, while the mystery dispensation concludes before this at the rapture.

The purpose of the tribulation period is to refine Israel so that they may be pleasing to the Lord (Malachi 3:3-4), such that all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26). Since “the mystery of God” finishes at the end of the tribulation period, I believe this mystery refers to how God saves Israel and brings them into the Promised Land on earth to stay for all eternity, especially since the prophets all spoke of that future time. How does God take hardened, unbelieving Israel and refine them to be pure, holy, and pleasing in God's sight, when they were as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9-10) and became

worse than the Canaanites (I Kings 14:24), who God told Israel to utterly destroy (Deuteronomy 7:1-2)? That is “the mystery of God” (10:7).

10:8 The voice from heaven, in 10:4 and 8, would be the Lord. Thus, we see Jesus, the man, in 10:5-6, stopping time, and we see Jesus, as God, in 10:4 and 8, commanding John.

10:9-11 John is very brave to go up to the angel. I know that Jesus told him to do so. Still, this mighty angel just spoke like a lion (10:3), stood upon the sea and the earth at the same time (10:5), and ended time (10:6). I would have been too scared to go up to that angel and command him to, “give me the little book.”

In Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:3, God has Ezekiel eat a roll of a book that contains “lamentations, and mourning, and woe” (Ezekiel 2:10), because that is what Ezekiel must speak to Israel. The book was, in his mouth, “as honey for sweetness” (3:3). Both Psalm 19:10 and 119:103 say that God’s words are sweet. Therefore, when John eats the little book of God’s words, it is sweet as honey in his mouth.

10:11 says that John must “prophesy again,” which means the reason he eats the little book is so he will have God’s words to prophesy in the future. He “must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (10:11). Now, this probably refers to the little flock being arrested during the Great Tribulation and having to speak the truth to those trying them, which would be the people, nations, tongues, and kings of 10:11. Jesus told His disciples that, at that time, the Holy Ghost will give them the words to say (Mark 13:11).

The “belly,” here in 10:10, probably represents the flesh. Since the flesh is contrary to the things of the Spirit (Galatians 5:17), God’s Word is bitter to the flesh. Thus, the mouth, being used by the Holy Ghost, says God’s words are sweet, while the flesh, being contrary to the Spirit, finds God’s words to be bitter. So, basically, the little book represents the words of God that the Holy Ghost will say through the little flock during the Great Tribulation period so that all Israel might be saved, finishing the mystery of God.

Note that these prophetic words are said “BEFORE many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” (10:11). The words are not directed TO them. Rather, they are directed to Israel, so that they may be saved, because the Gentiles will not repent of their evil (9:20-21). These words must be spoken BEFORE all nations, because Israel will be scattered among the nations, as punishment from God for their disobedience of God’s law covenant with them (Leviticus 26:33). In fact, John 7:35 shows that some Jews were already “dispersed among the Gentiles” at that time. Therefore, John is not giving a salvation message for the world. Rather, the message is for Israel so that they may be saved (Romans 11:26). Then, in the millennial

reign, Israel will go to the Gentiles as a kingdom of priests, so that the Gentiles may be saved.

11 At the beginning of the tribulation period, God will send His two witnesses (v. 3). They will stand before God and in front of the temple for 3 ½ years (vs. 3-4). They warn Israel of impending judgment. The Antichrist hates them, because they keep him from getting into the temple to show the world that he is God (II Thessalonians 2:4). Therefore, when their 3 ½ years are up, the Antichrist kills them (v. 7). The world hates the two witnesses, also, since they warn the world that they will die, if they do not have faith in God. Therefore, the world greatly rejoices over the death of the two witnesses, as well (vs. 9-10). However, God shows the world that the two witnesses are of God, by raising them from the dead and having them ascend up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watch (vs. 11-12). God also destroys 10% of Babylon with an earthquake (v. 13). Thus, the two witnesses are witnesses to who are the believers and who are the unbelievers, giving God the evidence He needs to come and judge the world, as seen in verses 15-19 in the seventh trumpet judgment.

11:1 In Ezekiel 40-42, the temple, and everything around it, is measured, and the dimensions are written down. Then, in Ezekiel 43:2-6, the glory of the Lord fills the temple. Then, in Ezekiel 43:7, God says that the house of Israel will no more defile the place where He sits on His throne. The true temple of God and the place of His throne are in New Jerusalem right now. It will come down to earth from God out of heaven after Satan and his forces are destroyed after the end of the millennial reign (21:1-2), which is the time of the events in chapter 10.

Therefore, when John is told to measure “the temple of God” in 11:1, he is measuring the temple in the New Jerusalem on earth in the future. The point is to show John that the temple has the exact same measurements as it did in Ezekiel 40-42, proving that this is the temple of God (not of Satan), and that God preserved His temple without defilement unto His eternal kingdom on earth, as He promised in Ezekiel 43:7 that He would do.

11:2 42 months is 3 ½ years. This coincides with the Great Tribulation period. Matthew 24:15 says that “the abomination of desolation [will]...stand in the holy place.” That would defile the place in which it stands. However, this is not the temple of God, because the temple of God remains holy. Rather, it is the temple on earth during the Great Tribulation period that the Antichrist has built. Note, from Daniel 9:26, that the Antichrist destroys the sanctuary, which means that he had to rebuild the sanctuary for the time of his rule. Therefore, the one that he sits in, halfway through the tribulation period, is the one that he had built. Since the Antichrist is not part of the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), due to his unbelief, he is considered by God to be a Gentile. Further, 13:5 says that the Antichrist has “power...to continue forty and two months,” which would be the same 42-month period of 11:2.

“The court which is without the temple” (11:2) was the place for the Gentiles to worship God. Being an unbeliever, this court is given to the Antichrist to trod under foot, along with Jerusalem, for 3 ½ years. “The court which is without the temple,” then, is the temple that the Antichrist will build to mimic the temple of God in heaven. Thus, it will have a holy place, and it is in that “temple” that the abomination of desolation is set up. From there, the Antichrist and apostate Israel will tread the holy city “under foot forty and two months” (11:2). This must refer to the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, since Luke 21:24 says that “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,” which would be at the end of the tribulation period, according to Daniel 2:44. Note also, here in 11:2, that the Lord calls the Antichrist and his forces “Gentiles.” They are physical Jews (Daniel 11:37), but they are not part of God’s Israel, because of their unbelief. This is how God can say that “all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26), even though many physical Jews will have their place in the lake of fire.

The purpose of 11:1-2, then, is to show Israel that the temple, that the Antichrist says is God’s temple, is not really God’s temple, because it does not match the measurements found in Ezekiel 40-42. The believing remnant will compare the measurements with those in Ezekiel 40-42 to prove that the Antichrist’s temple is not God’s temple. Therefore, the evidence will tell them that the Antichrist is not Israel’s Messiah. In fact, God says that the Antichrist is a spiritual Gentile. The things that the Antichrist does during the Great Tribulation are not by the power of God. Rather, it is God, allowing the court outside the temple and the holy city to be defiled by the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Therefore, when the Antichrist “as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:4), he is really a false god in a false temple, since the true temple of God is in New Jerusalem, which is in heaven at the time.

11:3 11:3-13 explains how the Antichrist and apostate Israel are able to take over the temple and the holy city for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. We see that they are not able to take over during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, because God gives power unto His two witnesses during that time (11:3), and anyone, coming against the two witnesses during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, will be killed (11:5). (The 1,260 days in 11:3 correspond to the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. Years last 360 days in the Bible.)

You see, the tribulation period is God’s refining fire so that all Israel may be saved and enter into God’s eternal kingdom on earth. The tribulation period begins a short while after the rapture of the church. All saved people go to heaven at the rapture, leaving the world with nothing but unbelievers. Therefore, God sends two witnesses to prophesy of what will happen so that Israel may believe the gospel of the kingdom before the Antichrist takes over Jerusalem. Thus, the two witnesses prophesy in front of the temple for the

first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. They do so in sackcloth to show it is a time of mourning, due to Israel's last state and their alliance with the devil via the seven-year contract they make with the Antichrist to begin the tribulation period.

Who are the two witnesses of Revelation 11?

When a Bible study is done on the two witnesses, invariably the majority of the time is spent on identifying who they are. This is sad, because, since naming them was not a concern of God's, it should not be a concern of ours either. The important points to learn are that: 1) They will prophesy for the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, 2) Their focus will be on God's impending judgment and the need for Israel to repent of their sins and serve God before it's too late, i.e., before the abomination of desolation is set up, and 3) Their untouchableness in the 3 ½ years and later resurrection show God's supreme power over Satan. If you learn these three points, you are far ahead of most Christians, who like to spend their time on the unprofitable exercise of naming names. Nevertheless, so much time and effort are spent on identifying these two, mysterious people that, for the sake of moving on, a discussion of who they are is provided here.

A. Enoch and Elijah

Some people claim that the two witnesses will be Enoch and Elijah. Enoch never died (Genesis 5:24) and neither did Elijah (II Kings 2:11). They are the only two humans, who we know of, who never died. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The theory goes, then, that the two witnesses must be Enoch and Elijah, as they are the only ones who have not died, and all men have to die once. Therefore, Enoch and Elijah will be the two witnesses so that they can be killed by the beast, and Hebrews 9:27 can be fulfilled.

However, the context of Hebrews 9:27 is that Christ had to die spiritually for sins in heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24-25). This is in contrast to the animals that had to be sacrificed every year by the high priest to cover the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:25). As man only dies once spiritually, so Christ only died once for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:28). The writer of Hebrews merely gives us Hebrews 9:27 as part of his argument that Christ did not have to die multiple times, and the context shows that the death was a spiritual one, not a physical one.

However, for the sake of argument, let's say that this applies to a physical death. Since the author of Hebrews uses it to say that Christ did not have to die multiple times, over and over again as the animals did, to atone for the sins of all of mankind, the context of the verse tells us that this rule is to be applied for dying NOT MORE THAN once, not AT LEAST once. In other words, for this rule to apply physically, no one could die, be resurrected

from the dead, and die a second time, because Christ did not have to die more than once to atone for the sins of the world. In this case, we would have no resurrections from the dead without an ascension afterward. Yet, we see the widow's son raised from the dead through Elijah (I Kings 17:22-23), a son being raised from the dead through Elisha (II Kings 4:32-35), Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44), "many" saints were resurrected when Jesus died (Matthew 27:52-53), and there were others raised from the dead, as well. Since no other ascensions are mentioned in the Bible, we can assume that all of these people, who were resurrected, eventually died again, meaning that they all died twice.

If Elijah and Enoch must be the two witnesses to fulfill Hebrews 9:27, all of the people mentioned, who have been resurrected, must also "un-die" once for this verse to be fulfilled. Of course, it is silly to think that hundreds of people will "un-die". In fact, I do not even know what that means, let alone how it could happen. But, this proves the fact that Hebrews 9:27 is not talking about a physical death. Therefore, Hebrews 9:27 cannot be used as justification that Enoch and Elijah will be the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

B. Elijah and Moses

Some people say that the two witnesses will be Elijah and Moses because they are the ones who came down to earth to meet Jesus at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-4), and they did the things that the two witnesses will do (Revelation 11:5-6), e.g., smite the earth with plagues, as Moses did, and kill people with fire and stop rain from coming on the earth, as Elijah did. Under the Old Covenant, two witnesses were required to establish a matter as fact (Deuteronomy 19:15). Therefore, God sent Elijah and Moses to establish that the transfiguration of Jesus was from God.

It is entirely possible that Elijah and Moses will be the two witnesses in Revelation 11, but it is also entirely possible that God would send other saints of old or raise up new saints to be His two witnesses in Revelation 11. Just because Elijah and Moses served as God's two witnesses for Jesus' transfiguration does not mean they will serve as God's witnesses on earth for the first 3 ½ years of the seven-year tribulation period. Also, just because they did some of the things that the two witnesses did, does not mean that other saints could not do the same things.

C. Zerubbabel and Joshua

If two people were to come back from the dead to be God's two witnesses in Revelation 11, based on God's Word alone, those two people would probably be Zerubbabel and Joshua. This is so because God declares that they are the "two olive branches", and they are "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:12-14). Similarly, the two witnesses of Revelation 11 "are the two olive trees..., standing before the

God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4). Therefore, going strictly by what the Bible says, if the two witnesses are resurrected saints, God’s description of Zerubbabel and Joshua seem to fit the two witnesses the best.

Yet, this theory is not as popular as the first two mentioned here, because they are not big heroes of the Bible like Enoch, Elijah, and Moses are. In fact, I have never heard anyone suggest that the two witnesses are Zerubbabel and Joshua, probably because Churchianity does not like their stories, like they do with other Bible characters’ stories. To be certain, they were important people in Israel’s history, for they were called by God to help in the restoration of the temple after Babylonian captivity. However, we do not talk about them in children’s Bible stories, because they emerged in the dark days of Israel and did their comparatively boring jobs in the temple, as opposed to the exciting miracles that God did through Moses and Elijah. Since they are in the crispy section of your Bible (Hosea – Malachi), the option of Zerubbabel and Joshua being the two witnesses is not considered, even though they are the most plausible option of those mentioned in the Bible.

D. Elijah and John the Baptist

So much time has been spent trying to identify who these two witnesses are, but their names should be of no importance, because God does not give them to us. The funny thing is that, even if God did give us their names, it does not mean those would be the two witnesses. If Revelation 11:3a said, “And I will give power unto My two witnesses—Elijah and Moses...,” it does not mean Elijah and Moses would be God’s two witnesses. Here’s why:

Malachi 4:5 says, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” This may seem to be a clear indication that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. The Jews took it that way. That is why Jesus’ disciples asked Jesus why Elijah must first come (Matthew 17:10). Jesus explained to them “that Elias is come already, and they knew him not” (Matthew 17:12). Jesus was referring to John the Baptist (Matthew 17:13). Therefore, even though, in Malachi 4:5, Elijah is specifically named as coming, Jesus explains that John the Baptist could fulfill this prophecy.

God is a Spirit, and His Word is spiritual. Man looks at Malachi 4:5’s reference to Elijah and assumes that the man, Elijah, had to come back to earth. Jesus explained that it was the **spirit** of Elijah, and not the **man**, Elijah, that had to come back, and John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi 4:5 by coming in the **spirit** of Elijah. (“And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:14-15).) Therefore, if God named Elijah and Moses as His two witnesses in Revelation 11, Bible teachers all over the world today would tell everyone that Elijah and Moses are definitely God’s two witnesses, when it is more

likely that God would be referring to the **spirits** of Elijah and Moses, embodied in two completely new Jews who have never been to earth before.

Therefore, named or not named, we have no idea what the earthly names of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 will be.

E. Joop and Senen

So, I have eliminated all of the theorized names of the two witnesses, and I have shown how that, even if they were specifically named in Revelation 11, we still could not rely on those to be the saints of old come back from the dead. Having done this, I now propose my own theory of Joop and Senen being the two witnesses.

So, you have never heard of Joop and Senen in the Bible? Their detailed stories are in the book of Hezekiah. I am kidding. There is no book of Hezekiah in the Bible. Joop and Senen are not mentioned in the Bible. Rather, they are common Jewish names today.

My point is that I believe that, just as God raised up new, Jewish servants of God throughout the Bible, so God's two witnesses will be two, new Jews who have never lived before. They will be two completely new people, who will be His witnesses during the first 3 ½ years of the seven-year tribulation period.

Living on earth is a great trial for the saints of God. God took Enoch and Elijah home to be with Him before they died because they were servants of the Lord, who suffered greatly at the hands of sinful man. God said, "Enough! They are too good for the world to have. I am getting them out of there." When Samuel was summoned by a witch in I Samuel 28:15, the first thing Samuel said was, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" Samuel had had enough of the evil and wickedness of this world. He did not ever want to come back to the world with sin and Satan ruling.

In fact, Hebrews 11:36-38a, speaking of the great people of faith says that, "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; **(of whom the world was not worthy)**." God's view of His saints is that they have suffered greatly at the hands of men. They should have been treated as kings, but they were treated like dirt. Therefore, the world was not worthy of them. Why, then, would God cause two of His most prominent servants to go through 3 ½ years of more suffering after having experienced the joys of heaven for 3,000 plus years? God loves them too much to do that. I doubt He will now say to them, "Sorry, guys. Go back down to earth and suffer for 3 ½ more years, and then I will let you re-enter My joys for good after that. I promise."

They have suffered enough and have received their reward. God is not going to take their reward away from them now. Instead, God will raise up two, new men, who will come in the spirit of these great, Jewish men of God, who will be His two witnesses in Revelation 11. At least, that is my opinion on the matter.

11:4 The olive tree in the Bible is the tree of life. Olive oil represents the Holy Ghost in the Bible (Israel had to use olive oil in the lamp in the temple that never went out (Leviticus 24:2). This is why God's Spirit was "poured" upon Israel (Acts 2:17-18).) As such, the olive tree represents the spiritual life of the nation of Israel. John 1:5, 9 says that, when Jesus came the first time, He was the true light, shining in the midst of darkness. Matthew 4:16 says "the people which sat in darkness saw great light." The two witnesses are not the light—Jesus is. However, they bear witness of the light, which makes them the two candlesticks. Therefore, in the midst of all of the darkness of unbelief in Israel in the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, stand God's two witnesses, offering eternal life and light on the scriptures for all Israel, who will come to the temple and believe the gospel of the kingdom, putting themselves back under God's law covenant with Israel.

The two witnesses are also seen "STANDING BEFORE the God of the earth" (11:4). Therefore, they are also in Jerusalem for the same purpose that the two angels came to Sodom in Genesis 19. That is, they are there to spy out the land, which is spiritual Sodom (Isaiah 1:10). Then, they will report back to God, the judge of the earth, standing before the judge, giving evidence of why God should destroy the earth with fire, just like He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire, due to their wickedness. ("Even as Sodom and Gomorrha...are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).) When the men in Sodom attacked the two angels, the men were blinded (Genesis 19:9-11). Similarly, men will attack the two witnesses and will be killed in the same manner that they tried to hurt the two witnesses (11:5).

In Zechariah 4, Joshua and Zerubbabel are types of the two witnesses, as they are called the two, olive trees (Zechariah 4:11), standing "by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:14). There, we are told that God's temple will be built "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Thus, Israel should learn from the two witnesses that it is not the might or power of the Antichrist in taking over the world that is going to give Israel the kingdom. Rather, God's Spirit must be with Israel, and His Spirit is only with them if they have faith in God's law covenant with them.

A type of this "might" vs. "spirit" battle is seen in Numbers 13-14. There, God promises to give Israel the land of Canaan (Numbers 13:2). However, Israel is in unbelief (Numbers 14:1-4). Therefore, God will not give them the land (Numbers 14:23-24). Israel then decides that they will take the land by force, and they are killed as a result (Numbers 14:44-45). Similarly, God

said He would give Israel the Promised Land through the sacrifice of Jesus. Israel is in unbelief; therefore, they do not get the land yet. But, they try to take it by force by uniting themselves with the Antichrist. These people are then killed in the sixth trumpet judgment (9:14-19), and only the believing remnant of Israel will inherit the land, because they receive it by God's Spirit, rather than by power or might.

Special note: The two witnesses stand in front of the temple and keep the Antichrist from going into the temple and taking it over. God's dwelling place is His temple. The devil's goal is to be God (Isaiah 14:13-14); therefore, he wants to get into that temple at all costs. But, the time for such blasphemy to take place is not until the last half of the tribulation period. Therefore, the two witnesses stand "before the God of the earth" (11:4), preventing this from happening during the first half of the tribulation period. Then, "when they shall have finished their testimony," the beast kills them (11:7), and the devil gets to pretend like he is God for 3 ½ years.

11:5 The sign that Israel must have faith in God to receive the Promised Land, rather than being able to take it by might or power themselves, is seen in the fact that those, who come up against God's two witnesses, will be killed. Thus, Israel has a graphic visual to tell them that, unless they believe God's law covenant with them and trust in God to bring them into the kingdom, they will burn forever in the lake of fire.

A type of the two witnesses' consuming their enemies by fire is seen in Elijah's day in II Kings 1:10, 12. There, Elijah gives the word of the Lord to the king that he will die. The king sends men against Elijah, and those men are killed by fire. Similarly, the Antichrist will send men against the two witnesses, and those men will be killed by fire.

11:6 Also, in Elijah's day, Elijah stopped it from raining for 3 ½ years (James 5:17). Similarly, the two witnesses will keep it from raining for the 3 ½ years of their prophesying. Rain represents life. Without rain, food does not grow. No rain = no life. Therefore, no rain, during the first half of the tribulation period, is a sign to Israel that they have signed a covenant of death with the Antichrist.

Of the waters that do exist upon the earth, the two witnesses have the power "to turn them to blood" (11:6). This is a sign of the judgment of God that those partaking of the water or religion of the Antichrist will be destroyed by God, while those who have asked Jesus for "living water" (John 4:10) will have abundant life (John 10:10) in God's eternal kingdom on earth. There are parallels to be drawn between Israel under Pharaoh and Israel under the Antichrist.

Under Pharaoh, Israel was serving the devil, and God brought about plagues to show Israel that God was not on Pharaoh's side, so that Israel would leave Egypt and enter the Promised Land. The tribulation period starts with

Israel making a covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). The two witnesses, however, just like Moses and Aaron, represent God and stand against the Antichrist. The plea they will make to him is that God says, "Let My people go." They will smite the earth with plagues, just like God did to Pharaoh, in order to get Israel loose from the hands of the Antichrist. The Antichrist is a man, during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, and a beast during the last 3 ½ years. The two witnesses will smite the Antichrist and apostate Israel with plagues, while the 144,000 believing Israel of God (Ch. 7) are not hurt by the plagues. Eventually, the Antichrist will try to kill the two witnesses in the head with a sword. We know this because the beast, which Satan resurrects from the dead (13:1-2), has a head "as it were wounded to death" (13:3), and this his wound came "by a sword" (13:14). 11:5 says, regarding the two witnesses, "if any man hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." Therefore, we can conclude that the Antichrist, the man, tried to kill the two witnesses in the head, and the two witnesses then killed the Antichrist in the head. This ends up being how the Antichrist lets God's people go, so that God can seal them as His people before the Great Tribulation period starts (Ch. 7).

The rest of the Jews, however, are in apostasy. The sealed 144,000 are safe from the beast during the Great Tribulation (12:14), while the rest of the Jews are still in bondage, under the covenant they made with the Antichrist, due to their unbelief, much like Israel had to believe God's Word to them after they crossed the Red Sea, or else they would not be saved.

11:7 11:5 says that no MAN can kill the two witnesses. Therefore, when the Antichrist is killed by the two witnesses, halfway through the tribulation period, Satan resurrects the Antichrist in the body of a beast, rather than a man (13:1-2). Satan will think that no one can stop the beast, since he makes war with the two witnesses and kills them. However, the real reason the Antichrist is able to kill the two witnesses is not because he is a beast, but because "they shall have finished their testimony" (11:7). They have the power to prophesy to Israel for 1,260 days or the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (11:3). (We know that the two witnesses prophesy for the first half of the tribulation period because the beast kills them once he rises from the dead, and then he rules the world for 42 months.) This is the time God gives Israel to believe and be sealed to go through the Great Tribulation period unscathed by Satan.

Once this time is up, it is time for the Antichrist, in beast mode, to begin the Great Tribulation period. Therefore, the two witnesses are killed to make way for the Antichrist to come into the temple and desecrate it by proclaiming himself to be God and having all people bow down to his image. By killing the two witnesses, the devil will think he has finally overpowered God. However, the real reason God allows them to be killed is because they "have finished their testimony" (11:7).

11:8 “The great city” is Jerusalem, as that is where the temple is. However, this is not the Jerusalem of God, due to the apostasy of Israel. Therefore, it “SPIRITUALLY is called Sodom and Egypt” (11:8). (God also calls Jerusalem “Sodom” in Isaiah 1:10.). God wants to leave no ambiguity that the Antichrist’s kingdom in Jerusalem is NOT of God. When God called Jerusalem “Sodom” in Isaiah 1:10, it was because they had turned God’s religion, under the old covenant God made with them, into their own religion so that they could do all of the evil they wanted to do, and still absolve their guilt by practicing their religion.

Egypt is known for Baal worship. Therefore, calling Jerusalem “Egypt” shows that the religious system of the Antichrist, that will be present in Jerusalem during the tribulation period, is a false religious system that incorporates elements from both God’s religion (Judaism) and Satan’s religion (Baal worship), which shows that Jerusalem is spiritually dead during the tribulation period. It was in this same condition at Jesus’ first coming, and the result was that the Lord was crucified (11:8). This fact is probably inserted to let Israel see that they should not trust in what happens in Jerusalem, because it will lead to their eternal damnation, just like Jerusalem’s forefathers will be eternally damned for crucifying their Messiah (Matthew 23:33; 27:25).

11:9-10 These verses show the utter depravity of man. For 3 ½ years, the two witnesses stood for God. Because the people of the earth are wicked and refuse to have faith in what God told them through the two witnesses, they had been trying to kill these witnesses the whole time, but were unsuccessful. Therefore, they are so happy, when the two witnesses are killed by the beast, that they declare it a world holiday, sending each other gifts in celebration. So evil is the world that people flock to see the two witnesses’ dead bodies and rejoice over their dead carcasses, lying in open view! This is a lack of shamefacedness over sin. Rather, much like Sodom did, they boast in their wickedness!

Also, note from 11:9 that this verse deals with physical Jews. They are the ones of “people and kindreds and tongues and nations,” who have come to Jerusalem to unite behind their messiah, the Antichrist. They keep careful guard of the bodies to make sure they stay out in the open for all to see as so-called proof that God is not with the two witnesses. However, in doing so, they provide proof to the whole world that God is in the two witnesses, as all are able to see their resurrection and ascension into heaven.

Then, in 11:10, we see the reaction of the Gentiles in the whole world that they are also glad that the two witnesses have been killed by the beast. Leave it up to pagan Gentiles to celebrate the day by sending gifts one to another, just like they do today at Christmas.

11:11-12 The death of the two witnesses symbolizes the spiritual deadness of the world, while their resurrection shows that life is still possible for those

who believe God. The 3 ½ days they are dead represent the 3 ½ years that Israel still has remaining to have faith in God so that they also may be resurrected from the dead at Jesus' second coming.

The resurrection of the two witnesses tells apostate Israel a couple of things: 1) Just a few days prior, Satan resurrected the Antichrist from the dead and claimed that he must be the Christ, due to his death, burial, and resurrection. The resurrection of the two witnesses shows that God was in the two witnesses all along, and not in the Antichrist. This is proven by the command "from heaven saying unto them, 'Come up hither'" (11:12). In other words, the voice from heaven proves that God is still in control, and 2) This resurrection of the two witnesses in plain sight of their enemies gives the whole world the evidence that they did rise from the dead. After all, with today's technology, there must have been a live webcam recording the event, given how joyful the whole earth is over their dead bodies. Therefore, no excuse can be made up, such as the excuse of "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away" (Matthew 28:13) that the Pharisees came up with regarding Jesus' death. NO! The power of God rose the two witnesses from the dead. Therefore, God has the power over death. Israel does well to take note and believe the gospel.

It is also significant that the two witnesses "ascended up to heaven in a cloud" (11:12). When Jesus ascended to heaven, a cloud also received Him (Acts 1:9). When the body of Christ was raptured up, they met the Lord in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). When the Lord Jesus Christ comes back, He will also come "in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 24:30). Therefore, ascending up to heaven in a cloud is yet another proof that the two witnesses are of God.

11:13 Of course, the Antichrist will spin the two witnesses' resurrection and ascension to say that the devil did that, just like he would have already said about the rapture of the body of Christ. Therefore, to remove all doubt, God follows the ascension with a great earthquake, such that 10% of the city and 7,000 men are destroyed. This is a sign of what will happen to end the tribulation period, as the whole city of Babylon, i.e., Jerusalem, will fall at that time (18:2) via the greatest earthquake of all time (16:17-21).

Note that the remaining people in the city "gave glory to the God of heaven" (11:13). Therefore, although the Antichrist will twist what happens so that he can continue Satan's lie program for another 3 ½ years, people will know that God was behind the two witnesses all along. Therefore, the truth is there for those who want to believe it. The problem is that most will want to believe Satan's lies so that they can keep satisfying the lusts of their flesh. This is much like people today in "Christian" churches who believe the lies taught to them in their churches, instead of believing the truth of God's Word rightly divided. Incidentally, a similar thing happened at Jesus' crucifixion, i.e., there was an earthquake and a Gentile confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (Matthew 27:51,54).

Also, note that, for the first time in Revelation, God is called “the God of heaven” (11:13). That is because, by this time, Michael and his angels have already cast the devil and his angels down to the earth (12:7-8), filling the devils’ heavenly positions with the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:20-23). Therefore, God has already established Himself as the God of heaven, and it will be just 3 ½ more years before God establishes Himself as the God of the earth, as well.

11:14 The sixth-trumpet judgment started in 9:13 and ends here. It includes 1/3 of mankind being killed (9:14-21), time ending after Jesus’ millennial reign (10:6), and the events surrounding the two witnesses during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (11:1-13). Therefore, we can see that events in Revelation are not necessarily presented in chronological order. Rather, they are presented in God’s order to show Israel their guilt before God and their need to put themselves back under God’s law covenant with them in order to enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

11:15 The seventh-trumpet judgment is the last one. Contained within it are the seven, vial judgments. So, we will see more tribulations on the earth. However, because it is the last trumpet, those in heaven see it as the time when God overthrows Satan’s kingdom, and God rules and reigns forever on the earth. Thus, we see “the God of heaven” in 11:13 and the God of the earth in 11:15. We also see both the deity and the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ in this verse. His deity is seen in that the kingdoms belong to “our Lord.” His humanity is seen in that they belong to “His Christ.” This is one and the same person—the Lord Jesus Christ. Both His deity and His humanity are mentioned because He would not have the power to overthrow Satan’s kingdom if He were not both fully God and fully man. This power comes from His death, burial, and resurrection, winning the victory over sin and death (Ephesians 1:19-23 and I Corinthians 15:54-57). Only His victory over death can bring about eternity for God’s people.

When Jesus was on the earth the first time, Satan tempted Him by showing “unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, all this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine” (Luke 4:5-7). Instead, Jesus worshipped the Lord God only (Luke 4:8). Now, with the seventh-trumpet judgment, the result is that: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” Therefore, by trusting God, the Lord Jesus Christ received all the kingdoms of the world from God. And, because He received them from God, “He shall reign for ever and ever” (11:15). Thus, Jesus made the wise choice, which is good for Israel. Because they are in Christ, “they shall reign [with Christ] for ever and ever” (22:5).

11:16 Whenever the 24 elders are mentioned, we always see them worshipping God. As such, they are the worship leaders in heaven. We

previously mentioned that these are the 12 apostles plus 12 saved men from the mystery dispensation. Thus, they are men. Ezekiel 28:13-14 shows that Lucifer was the worship leader of heaven. Then, iniquity was found in him, he became Satan, and he will be cast out (Ezekiel 28:15-16). This was not poor planning by God. He knew Lucifer would fall. He also knew that the best worship leaders are those who have the most to worship God for. As Luke 7:47 says, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Redeemed men, then, make better worshippers of God than angels do. The 24 elders know sound doctrine about God more than other men. Therefore, they make for the perfect worship leaders.

Therefore, from the vantage point of eternity, we can say that knowing that Lucifer would fall, God made him worship leader in heaven, since that position would later be better filled with more qualified personnel, i.e., redeemed men. Because of the sound doctrine and the charity of God in the inner man of the 24 elders, that was built up through the trials they went through on earth, the 24 elders will not have pride and fall like Lucifer did. Thus, they are the eternal worship leaders of God—12 in heaven (as part of the body of Christ) and 12 on earth (the 12 apostles, as part of the prophecy dispensation).

11:17 Acts 2:36 says that Jesus was made Lord by God the Father, due to His work on the cross. I Corinthians 15:54-57 says that Jesus won the victory over death and the grave through the cross. This makes Him “Lord God Almighty” (11:17), whom the 24 elders worship. The 24 elders recognize Him in the present, past, and future. In the present, i.e., during the seventh trumpet judgment, He shows Himself as Lord God Almighty through the tribulations He brings upon Israel so that they might be saved (This is no small task, as chapter 5 showed us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one powerful enough to do this.). In the past, He showed Himself to be Lord God Almighty through His victory over death, sin, and the grave, through His death, burial, and resurrection. In the future, He will show Himself to be Lord God Almighty when He overthrows Satan’s kingdom and sets up His eternal kingdom on earth. Since this involves giving eternal life to redeemed man, the 24 elders “give Thee thanks” (11:17).

Being God, God has always had the power over Satan and his kingdom, but it is only at certain times that God takes to Himself His great power and reigns so as to redeem all men, who are willing to be redeemed. Jesus told the Father just before His crucifixion: “Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost” (John 17:12). So, too, we can be assured that God waits for ALL of the lost sheep of Israel (Romans 11:26) to manifest faith in God before He takes unto Himself His great power and overthrows Satan’s kingdom, setting up God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

Unbelieving man says, “If there is a God, why doesn’t He put away evil?” The answer is, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men

count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). In other words, because God is loving, He suffers long with the evil of man so that more people may be saved. Therefore, God’s patience speaks of His love, not of His non-existence.

11:18 Romans 11:26 says that “all ISRAEL shall be saved.” The Gentile nations, on the other hand, remain apostate in the tribulation period, for the most part. When Babylon is fallen at the end of the tribulation period, their wealth is gone. Therefore, “the nations were angry” (11:18). They sold their souls to the devil for material prosperity in the Antichrist’s kingdom, and all of that is gone. You can see why they are angry now!

Note that the events of the 7th trumpet judgment extend all the way past the millennial reign. Also, since the elders are now in heaven, outside of time, the events they mention are not given in chronological order. “Thy wrath is come” (11:18) would be a reference to Jesus’ overthrow of Babylon and the nations at His second coming. “The time of the dead, that they should be judged” (11:18), refers to the Great White Throne Judgment after the millennial reign (20:11-15). Note how “the dead” are those without faith in whatever God told them. 20:12-14 specifically says: “The dead ... stand before God,” “the dead were judged,” and “death” was “cast into the lake of fire.” Those, who have faith in what God has told them, have eternal life as a present possession. Therefore, they are not considered to be “dead.” For example, those, in the grave, raptured up at the end of the mystery dispensation, are not dead. Rather, they “sleep in Jesus” (I Thessalonians 4:14). Therefore, the time of the dead’s judgment is after the millennial reign.

The next event, mentioned in 11:18, happens 1,000 years prior, at Jesus’ second coming. This is the reward to the prophets and the saints. The prophets get a higher reward for their service to God during the prophecy dispensation, because they got God’s Word out to Israel. Then, the saints are believers in Israel, who believed that God would redeem Israel via the law covenant. “Them that fear Thy name” would be the Gentiles, who blessed Israel, because of their faith in God’s covenantal promise to Israel (Genesis 12:1-3). They are judged separately, as Matthew 25:31-46 mentions. Gentiles, who blessed Israel, go into the kingdom, while Gentiles, who cursed Israel, go into everlasting fire. I believe this event takes place after the millennial reign is over, because the Gentiles in Israel’s program will not make their final decision, regarding whose side they are on, until then.

Then, the destruction of those, which destroy the earth, is God’s wrath poured out on the Antichrist, and all those following him, at Jesus’ second coming. This verse, then, testifies to the “great power” of the “Lord God Almighty” (11:17) in that He causes all of these great events to come to pass.

These events happen years apart, but, being outside of time, the elders see them happening together. This is not unlike the prophecy of the Messiah, found in Isaiah 61:1-3. Jesus read this passage, but stopped reading after “to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:17-21). The rest of the passage would be fulfilled at Jesus’ second coming. In other words, Isaiah wrote it all down as one sentence, but Jesus fulfilled the first part 2,000 years ago and will fulfill the second part later. So, too, Revelation 11:18 is fulfilled at different times, although it all appears as one sentence here.

Finally, note that the last part of this verse says, “And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” Today, liberals will tell us to “save the planet” and “go green” so that the earth will remain in existence for millions of years to come. However, according to this verse, it is not an aerosol can, a plastic bag, or toxic waste from industry that destroys the earth. Rather, God says that sin destroys the earth. For example, when Cain killed Abel, God said, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10). Therefore, if liberals were truly concerned about saving the earth, they would tell people to recognize their sin, which is the real thing that is destroying the earth, and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

11:19 People wonder where the ark of the testament or covenant is today. Well, if they just read this verse, they would know that it is currently in heaven. Note that the verse says, “and there WAS SEEN in His temple the ark of His testament.” This means that, when God judges the Jews, they will see the ark, as a reminder to them that God will judge them, according to the law covenant He made with them in Exodus 19.

“Lightnings” would be the spiritual creatures of God, flying at the speed of light to the earth to execute God’s judgment (Ezekiel 1:14). The Lord Jesus Christ speaks this judgment, and so the voices heard are of God and of high-ranking angels, relaying God’s Word so that the lower-ranking angels can execute God’s judgment. When God speaks, His voice thunders (John 12:28-29), which explains the “thunderings.” The earth quakes as a result of God’s thundering voice. Then, the great hail is added to remove any doubt about this being God’s judgment of man.

“Lightnings and thunderings and voices” were seen in 4:5. Those were present with the seven Spirits of God so that the seven churches may be saved. However, in 11:19, “an earthquake and great hail” are added, showing that the time of salvation is over, and the time of God’s judgment of man has begun.

12 This chapter gives a broad overview of the prophecy program so that the believing remnant will understand that Satan’s attack of them in the Great Tribulation is severe. In Genesis 11, God gave Satan control of the Gentile nations (v. 3), but God is still over them through the nation of Israel, which He created in Genesis 12 (vs. 1-2). God promises redemption for all men

through the seed of Abraham. Therefore, Satan stands ready to destroy Jesus when He is born (v. 4). In his zeal to destroy Jesus, Satan unknowingly causes God's redemption plan to come to pass, and Jesus is exalted to God's throne (v. 5). This gives God the power to overthrow Satan and his angels in the heavenly places, replacing them with the body of Christ (vs. 7-9). With Satan being cast down to the earth for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, he tries to destroy saved Israel, but God seals them so that the devil cannot touch them (vs. 13-16). This leaves only the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that is not part of the 144,000, and so Satan makes war with them (v. 17) to try to destroy them. This "war" is called "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21), because it is Satan's last chance to keep God from reconciling the earth back to Himself.

12:1 Although the word "and" signals that chapter 12 is part of the seventh trumpet judgment, we need to keep in mind that God is not presenting these events in chronological order. In terms of when chapter 12 happens, the timeline is all over the place. The point of chapter 12 is to show God's deliverance of believers from Satan through the power of the cross. Therefore, while the world follows the Antichrist and Satan during the tribulation period, they have a choice not to be enslaved by him but to have eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 12 tells how to be overcomers. In 12:1, a woman with the sun, the moon, and twelve stars appears. Genesis 37:9-10 tells us that this woman is the nation of Israel, in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. It further tells us that the sun and moon would be the father (Jacob) and mother (Rachel) of Israel, and the twelve stars are the twelve tribes. Thus, the time of this woman's appearance in heaven is Genesis 12:1, which is the birth of the nation of Israel. (It is no coincidence that we are also in chapter 12, verse 1 of the book of Revelation.) Since 12:1 starts with "and," this tells us that the way that God brings about Revelation 11:17-19 is through the nation of Israel. Revelation 11:17-19 is judgment. Well, Genesis 11:17-19 mentions Eber, from whom the name "Hebrew" comes. It also mentions Peleg. "Peleg" means "divided." Genesis 10:25 says that the earth was divided in his days. This was God's judgment of the Gentiles. Thus, in Genesis 11-12, we see a foreshadowing of God's judgment of the Gentiles and God's mercy upon the Hebrews, which are ultimately fulfilled in the judgment and mercy found in Revelation 11-12.

12:2 We will learn from 12:5 that this child is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Redeemer, as promised in Genesis 3:15, and He came through the nation of Israel. Pain and travail in childbirth is a punishment upon women for sin (Genesis 3:16). Now, because Jesus did not have an earthly father, He did not have the sin nature imparted to Him. Therefore, the "travailing in birth and pained to be delivered" (12:2) of Israel in giving birth to Jesus shows the sin of Israel. Jesus had the proper lineage, i.e., through Eve, Abraham, and David, but it was a sinful lineage.

You can read His genealogy in Matthew 1 and find sin from generation to generation in Jesus' line. For example, Abraham begat Isaac after first having Ishmael out of wedlock (Genesis 16:3-4). Judah had twin boys from an incestual relationship (Genesis 38). David came from great grandparents with some Moabitish blood that, if David had been born a generation earlier, would have prevented him from being able to even enter the temple (Deuteronomy 23:3; Ruth 4:18-22)! Solomon's father and mother were David and Bathsheba, who committed adultery together (II Samuel 11:2-4). Manasseh was the most wicked king (II Chronicles 33:1-9). Yes, all of these people are in Jesus' lineage! The point is that Jesus is not the Saviour because of the holiness of the nation (Israel) He came from. Rather, a holy child is born out of an unholy nation, which works because the man is responsible for the sin (see Adam and Eve), and Jesus is the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15) with His Father being God Himself. In other words, Jesus could come from the sinful line of Israel and still have no sin, because His Father, God, has no sin.

12:3 Now, before Israel was born, another wonder appeared in heaven. From 12:9, we learn that the "great red dragon" (12:3) is the Devil. Lucifer became Satan and appeared as a great, red dragon when iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). The dragon has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns.

In 13:1, we will see that the beast also has seven heads and ten horns, although he has ten crowns, instead of seven. With regard to the beast, 17:9-12 says that the seven heads are seven mountains, and there are seven kings. The ten horns are ten kings. The woman sits on the seven heads (17:9), and she reigns over the kings of the earth (17:18). This woman is mystery Babylon—not Israel (17:4-5). We can use this information to figure out what is going on in 12:1-3.

The great, red dragon gets all of the Gentile kingdoms on earth when God gives them up in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel (Satan told Jesus, "all the kingdoms of the world" are "delivered unto me" (Luke 4:5-6).), but the woman (Israel) is still over the Gentile kingdoms, when she appears in Genesis 12, because Israel is God's nation. Therefore, what we see so far is that, at the Tower of Babel, the devil got control of all of the Gentile nations, but God is still in control over the devil through the nation of Israel.

12:4 The devil's drawing 1/3 of the stars of heaven down to the earth means that, when Satan rebelled, he convinced 1/3 of the angelic realm to rebel with him. They are not actually cast out of heaven and down to the earth until halfway through the tribulation period, as 12:7-9,12 states. However, since God is outside of time, He sees them, here, as being cast to the earth already.

From Daniel 10:21, we can conclude that the 1/3 of the angelic realm, that sided with the devil, included all of the higher-ranking angels, except for

Gabriel and Michael. The devil realized that, if he could devour Israel's child, i.e., Jesus Christ, he would rule the earth entirely, having gotten rid of Israel. Therefore, from the time that Jesus was born, the devil tried to devour Him. The first attack is seen by having Herod kill all children two years and under in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). His last attack was having Jesus crucified (Matthew 27:35). If the devil knew that, by having Jesus crucified, God was saving the heaven and the earth, rather than the devil gaining control of the heaven and the earth, the devil would not have had Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:8).

12:5 Because Jesus lived a perfect life (I Peter 2:22) and was crucified on a tree, being made a curse under the law (Galatians 3:13), His death was not the devouring of Israel's child. Rather, it fulfilled the curse provision under the law (Deuteronomy 21:22-23) so that Jews, under the law covenant, are saved by Jesus' perfect sacrifice as the Lamb of God. Because Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the justice of God required that He not stay in hell and suffer corruption (Psalm 16:10). Rather, God raised Him from the dead (Acts 3:15, 4:10). Jesus was "caught up unto God, and to His throne" (12:5). ("The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Acts 2:34-35).) Therefore, Satan's attempt to devour Jesus was really his own undoing, as it resulted in God gaining the power over death and hell (Jesus said, "I...have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18).) so that He can set up God's eternal kingdom on earth.

The way that we know that the child of 12:2,5 is the Lord Jesus Christ is by being told that He will "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (12:5). We see this applied to the Son of God in Psalm 2:7-9 and to the Word of God in Revelation 19:15, both of Whom are the Lord Jesus Christ. This also shows us why the devil is so adamant about trying to devour the child. In 12:3, we see the devil ruling all nations, except Israel. Then, God promises that Israel's child will take the nations away from him. So, naturally, the devil tries to devour Jesus Christ. By the way, the time when the Lord Jesus Christ does rule the nations with a rod of iron is in His millennial reign (Note from 19:15 that His rule is still future at His second coming.). The rod of iron is the law covenant. We see this from Isaiah's description of the nations going to Zion during the millennial reign, and "out of Zion shall go forth the law" (Isaiah 2:3).

12:6 Since the devil was unable to destroy Israel's child, his next plan is to destroy Israel herself. After all, if God now has the power to set up His kingdom on earth, the only thing stopping Him from doing so is having saved Israel on the earth to rule over the nations. Since God promised Israel would rule over the nations (Deuteronomy 32:8, Revelation 1:6, 20:6), Israel's failure to be saved would result in God's failure to set up His kingdom on earth. Therefore, God sends His two witnesses to build up believers in Israel during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period (11:3-4). Then, halfway through the tribulation period, 144,000 Jews are saved and sealed by God (ch. 7). They then are safe from the spiritual attacks of

the devil during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period by being in the wilderness, in “a place prepared of God,” where she is fed during that time (12:6).

People will say that this “wilderness” is some place that is not on this earth, since she is “given two wings of a great eagle” to “fly into the wilderness” (12:14). However, Jesus taught that saved Israel is to reach the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:5-8), and that they would not finish going to them before the end of the tribulation period. (“Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matthew 10:23).) So, how can believing Israel reach the lost sheep of Israel with the gospel if they are up in heaven somewhere?!

Thus, this wilderness is on the earth and is probably like the place that Elijah stayed in. Elijah prayed to the Lord, and God stopped rain from coming to Israel for 3 ½ years (James 5:17), which is the exact amount of time that Israel will be in the wilderness for the last half of the tribulation period. During those 3 ½ years, God told Elijah to hide by a brook, where God had commanded ravens to feed him (I Kings 17:3-5). “The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook” (I Kings 17:6). Then, when the brook dried up, the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath, where a widow woman would feed him (I Kings 17:9). Similarly, the 144,000 will go to the place that God tells them to go to, and God will feed them, probably by birds. Then, when they go to the cities to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel, God will feed them by believing Gentiles giving them food (Matthew 25:35-40). Or, they may go without food, as Jesus did when He was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matthew 4:1). He ate nothing at all in those 40 days (Matthew 4:2).

Also, as we noted in the notes in 7:1-3, Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, “and He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Therefore, believing Israel’s nourishment from God will primarily be the Word of God, so that they do not take the mark of the beast, as they journey to the cities of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus said, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.... My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:32,34). That is the primary “food” that the 144,000 will “eat” during the Great Tribulation. They will feed on God’s Word, which will cause them to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8). Their wilderness then ends up being “the cities of Israel” (Matthew 10:23) in fulfillment of Psalm 23:4-5. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me....Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” It is no coincidence, then, that Jesus calls part

of Israel the “shadow of death” when He was on this earth (Matthew 4:15-16), as mentioned in Isaiah 9:1-2. Thus, God protects the 144,000 and feeds them in the midst of the spiritual wilderness of Babylon during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period so that they can reach the rest of Israel in order for them to be saved, also (Romans 11:26).

12:7-9 The war in heaven takes place halfway through the tribulation period. We know this from 12:14, where it says that there are 3 ½ years left for the serpent to reign (“a time, and times, and half a time” = 1 + 2 + ½ = 3 ½ years. We can also see this from 13:5 that the beast has power for 42 months, which is 3 ½ years.)

12:7 does not give us details of the war. It just says that the devil and his angels were cast out of heaven and into the earth. We can assume, then, that this is a total victory with no fatalities on God’s side, which is the side of “Michael and his angels.” This is the event that is also mentioned in Daniel 12:1. (Again, a chapter 12 is a reference to a verse in Revelation 12.) There, Michael is said to be the prince of Israel. Therefore, he fights for Israel to overthrow the devil, who is the ruler of all of the Gentile nations at the time.

With regard to the devil and his angels, we are told “neither was their place found any more in heaven” (12:8). The rapture of the church, the body of Christ, occurs at least 3 ½ years before this war in heaven. Ephesians 1:19-23 and 2:6 indicate that Jesus Christ has placed us (the church, the body of Christ) in rulership positions in the heavenly places. Therefore, once we are raptured up, we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be given our reward of a position in heavenly places (I Corinthians 3:11-15). Having people to fill the positions that the devil and his angels are currently in, the Lord Jesus Christ, via Michael and the angels under him, will win the war in heaven against the devil and his angels, such that the devil and his angels will not have their heavenly positions any more. They will be cast down into the earth, and the church, the body of Christ, will fill those positions in heavenly places for all eternity. By the way, I would not be a bit surprised if the way the devil and his angels are cast out is by Michael simply saying to the devil: “The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9), as he did regarding the dispute over Moses’ body. After all, by this point in time, the body of Christ is already in heaven and has been given their positions of authority, which Jesus Christ can give since He triumphed over principalities and powers in the cross (Colossians 2:15). Therefore, all that may be left at this time to cast the devil and his angels out of heaven may be for Michael simply to say, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

12:10-12a The proclamation, in 12:10-12a, is to the tribulation saints, who have been killed for trusting in God to save them through His law covenant with them. Although this event happens at the middle of the tribulation period, the proclamation is to all the tribulation saints, who will be killed during the Great Tribulation, as if they have already been killed and are in

heaven, waiting for Jesus' second coming. This is possible because Romans 4:17 says that God "callesh those things which be not as though they were." In Philippians 3:20-21, we are told that the body of Christ waits from heaven, even though we are on the earth, for Jesus Christ to come and change our bodies. Therefore, the bride of Christ can also wait from heaven for Jesus Christ to come and set up His kingdom on earth, even though they are still physically on the earth.

"Salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ" have now come to the heavenly places, because Satan can no longer approach God's throne and accuse the saved "before our God day and night" (12:10), since his place was no longer found in heaven (12:8). An example of Satan's accusation of the brethren before God's throne is found in Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6. Therefore, the rejoicing in heaven is over not having to deal with Satan up there any more and over having the kingdom of God set up in heavenly places now.

The fact, that Satan accuses the saved "before our God day and night," shows just how integral man's salvation is to fulfilling God's plan. The man, Christ Jesus, lived a perfect life, always doing the Father's will. His perfect life is then counted for believers so that we receive the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23). Christ then lives in us (Galatians 2:20) for all eternity, accomplishing God's will through us. If Satan can find just one fault of Christ sinning through believing Israel, then Christ is not perfect and Satan wins. Therefore, Satan spends night and day accusing believers, and God says every time, "No, that sin was in their flesh. It was not Christ committing that sin through them." It is no wonder, then, that the heavens rejoice that Satan cannot do this any more from this point on!

12:11 tells us that those in heaven rejoicing are the martyrs from the Great Tribulation period, since "they loved not their lives unto the death." They trusted in God's promise to bring them into God's eternal kingdom on earth, which is accomplished through the blood of the Lamb being applied to their souls. Since they are martyrs, they were told to bow down to the image of the beast, and they would not do so. Therefore, they also overcame "by the word of their testimony" (12:11).

It is interesting to note that they overcame Satan, even though 13:7 says that the Antichrist is given the power "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." This shows the free will of man in operation. Man has the free will to choose to believe the gospel and receive salvation from God "by the blood of the Lamb" (12:11), or he can choose to take the mark and worship the image of the beast and be overcome by the Antichrist.

12:12b While the heavens are rejoicing over finally being cleansed, the earth is in a heap of trouble, because "the devil is come down unto" them (12:12). In 8:13, we were told that 3 woes were coming. The first woe was men on earth being tormented for five months (9:5). The second woe was

1/3 of men being killed (9:18). Now, the third woe upon men is the great wrath of the devil, inflicted upon men for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, such that Matthew 24:21 calls this time “great tribulation.” This is the worst woe, because the first two woes were sent by God to hurt men physically so that they would believe the gospel and receive eternal life. However, this third woe is Satan instituting capital punishment for those who will not bow down to the image of the beast (13:15). If they do bow down, God says they will spend eternity in the lake of fire (14:9-11). Therefore, this third woe probably results in billions of people sealing their eternity in the lake of fire.

When 12:12 says that the devil knows “that he hath but a short time,” it does not mean that he knows that he will soon be defeated, because the devil’s pride keeps him from ever thinking that. Rather, it means that he knows he only has a short time to re-group and gather up his troops to prepare for the final battle against God. Therefore, “Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (12:9), will have his greatest period of deception ever during the Great Tribulation, so that he can make his army as strong as possible for the final war against God.

12:13 Since God has declared that He will reconcile the earth back to Himself through the nation of Israel (Exodus 19:5-6), when the devil is cast unto the earth, his first attack is to persecute Israel. When He tries to do this, God protects believing Israel by sealing “the servants of our God in their foreheads” (7:3). Thus, 144,000 believing Jews are kept from denying Christ during the Great Tribulation. This is not God going against their free will, because they have already chosen to believe the gospel of the kingdom. Thus, God’s sealing of them is based upon their free-will choice to believe, just like our sealing, as the body of Christ, is today (Ephesians 1:13-14).

12:14 This sealing by God is what is meant by giving the 144,000 “two wings of a great eagle.” As mentioned in 12:6, this does not mean that she flies away off of the earth to some safe haven in the heaven. Rather, Israel stays on the earth. The reason we know this is because she flies to a “wilderness.” If she flew to heaven, she would be in paradise, Abraham’s bosom, or some other like place. Also, Israel has to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel during the last half of the tribulation period, especially since the devil will make war with new believers (12:17). Believing Israel is nourished for 3 ½ years by God’s Word to them, and by doing the will of God, which is to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

“A time” equals one year. Therefore, a time (1 year), and times (2 years), and half a time (1/2 year) equal $1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3 \frac{1}{2}$ years. This is the Great Tribulation period. God protects the 144,000 “from the face of the serpent,” meaning that God gives them the faith of Christ to keep from denying Christ. If they are arrested and brought before the image of the beast, they will not bow down to it, because the Holy Ghost will speak through them

(Mark 13:11). This is also how “the gospel” is “published among all nations” (Mark 13:10), even though believing Israel does not finish going over all the cities of Israel before Jesus’ second coming (Matthew 10:23). In other words, the gift of tongues is given to believing Israel, and the Holy Ghost will speak to the lost sheep of the house of Israel all over the world in the languages that they understand. This would not happen if the 144,000 were completely removed from the earth. (Also, 17:3 says that Babylon is in the wilderness, which means that believing Israel is still on the earth.)

12:15-16 The fact, that the 144,000 are still on the earth, is shown here in that the earth swallows up the flood that the dragon sent out of his mouth. In 19:15, we see the Word of God come out of the mouth of Jesus Christ to destroy His enemies. Therefore, what comes out of the serpent’s mouth, here, is Satan’s lie program. Satan is known as the dragon, and the sea is his domain. Therefore, it makes sense that he would spew out a flood. This flood of waters, that comes out of the devil’s mouth, is his lies, found in the Babylonian religious system.

Note that he tries to cause the woman “to be carried away of the flood” (12:15). Satan wants the 144,000 to believe his lies so that they will abandon faith in God and be lost forever in the lake of fire, because, if he can destroy saved Israel in this manner, God will not set up His kingdom on earth, because He will not have a nation to rule over the Gentiles. That is what has kept God from setting up His eternal kingdom on earth for the past 3,500 years and counting.

It is at this time that God seals the 144,000 (as seen in Revelation 7). The earth then swallows up the flood that the dragon cast out of his mouth.

When Cain killed Abel, God said that Abel’s blood “crieth unto Me from the ground” and that “the earth...hath opened her mouth to receive [Abel’s] blood” (Genesis 4:10-11). Whenever righteous blood is shed, the earth swallows it up, and God has promised to bring judgment upon the “serpents” and “generation of vipers” (Matthew 23:33), who shed all of the righteous blood (Matthew 23:35). The reason for this judgment is that, by swallowing up this righteous blood, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). What this means is that the earth desperately wants God to redeem it. Therefore, when Satan casts a flood of lies out of his mouth, the earth swallows it up to keep the dragon from flooding out the 144,000.

I do not know exactly what the earth does. However, 7:1-3 tells us that four angels held the four winds of the earth to keep the wind from blowing “till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” Remember that God sent Elijah to a certain place to be fed by ravens (I Kings 17:3-4) for 3 ½ years (James 5:17), and Jesus told believing Israel that, when they see the “abomination of desolation...stand in the holy place” they are to “flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:15-16). Therefore, it seems that the

“wilderness,” to which believing Israel is to flee, is the mountains surrounding Judea. Also, remember that God saved Israel from experiencing some of the plagues in Egypt under Moses, e.g., Exodus 10:21-23.

Therefore, what probably happens is that the 144,000 are sealed, the abomination of desolation is set up, believing Israel goes to the mountains, and the earth “swallows up” the “flood” of lies coming from the Devil so that they do not reach believing Israel, because they are out of the cities where the Babylonian system is its strongest. The earth’s topography also probably protects believing Israel from some of the plagues of the tribulation period and keeps apostate Israel from capturing them, as the mountains helped David when he fled from Saul (I Samuel 23:14).

This makes sense in light of Romans 8:19, which says that “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Therefore, once the sons of God of Israel’s program are manifest through them being sealed, the earth protects them in the mountains to keep Satan’s policy of evil from poisoning their minds so that the earth can be redeemed and purged of all of the righteous blood that has been shed by the Babylonian religious system’s generation of vipers.

12:17 The devil soon realizes that he cannot penetrate God’s seal on the 144,000. This makes him “wroth,” because he cannot destroy believing Israel. He tried to devour Jesus, and that did not work (12:4-5). He tried to devour the 144,000 saved of Israel, and that did not work (12:15-16). Therefore, the only thing he has left is to focus on destroying “the remnant of her seed” (12:17).

Remember that Jesus said that this time is “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). The reason is because the devil has been kicked out of heaven. Therefore, “the devil is come down unto [the earth], having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (12:12).

The rest of 12:17 tells us that the devil’s attack is not on all Jews, because many in Israel are still apostate. Satan’s focus in the Great Tribulation is to attack the believing remnant of Israel, who “keep the commandments of God” (12:17), meaning that they believe the gospel of the kingdom and are water baptized, as they were commanded to do in Acts 2:38, in order to flee from God’s wrath. They also “have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (12:17), meaning that they testify that Jesus is the Christ, rather than the Antichrist being the Christ (I John 4:2-3). These are the only people Satan can affect to get them to join his side. Therefore, they will go through great tribulation. This is why Jesus tells them to “flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:16).

It is also to this group that the Lord Jesus Christ addresses most of His comments in Matthew – John. The reason for this is that the deception program of Satan is so strong during the great tribulation that if God did not

end it after 3 ½ years, “there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22). Yet, all of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) must be saved (Romans 11:26) or else God’s promise is not true, making God a liar and Satan wins. Therefore, Satan concentrates all of his deception, which he has honed over the past 6,000 years, on keeping the lost sheep of the house of Israel from being saved during these last 3 ½ years before Jesus’ second coming.

13 For the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, God allows Satan to take control of the world through his false religious system of Babylon, implemented by his false trinity—himself as the Father, the Antichrist as the Son, and the false prophet as the Holy Ghost. The world worships the Antichrist because he kills the two witnesses (11:7), and because he (II Thessalonians 2:9) and the false prophet do great wonders and miracles to deceive the world (vs. 13-14). Today, Satan has already prepared the world to worship the image of the beast, via female deities that are present in all religions, especially the Virgin Mary in Catholicism. He has also prepared the world to take his mark, via the Hindu dot, ashes on the forehead of Catholics, phylacteries on the forehead of Jews, prayer bumps on the foreheads of Muslims, and technological advances for atheists (Technology is the god of atheists.). Satan has also trained Churchianity today to give out false doctrine regarding the image and the mark of the beast, in order to trick those, who think they have knowledge of the situation, into bowing down to the image and taking the mark. Therefore, the world will not have the ears to hear (v. 9) and will willingly seal their eternal deaths in the lake of fire by worshipping the image of the beast and by taking the mark of the beast (14:9-11).

13:1 Note that the beast rises up out of the sea. This is because the sea is Satan’s domain, as seen in 17:1, where the great whore, i.e., Babylon, “sitteth upon many waters.” Therefore, the fact, that the beast rises up out of the sea, when Jesus rose from the grave, should be proof enough that the beast is of the devil.

Satan’s first part of the war plan is to raise up a beast. The Antichrist is a man during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. Based on 11:5 and 13:3, we can conclude that the Antichrist, the man, is killed by the two witnesses at the end of the first half of the tribulation period. Satan knows that he needs to get into the temple and institute Satanic worship in the temple if he is ever going to get the believing remnant of Israel to become apostate so he can continue as the god of this world, which is why the Antichrist made a seven-year covenant with Israel in the first place.

Unbelieving man follows “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (I John 2:16). In the days of Noah, “every imagination of the thoughts of [man’s] heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). In the tribulation period, “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37). Therefore, the wickedness of man is so great during this time that II Peter 2:12 and Jude 10 call unbelievers

“natural brute beasts.” In other words, they are so far removed from God’s plan, that all man does is operate by the instincts of his own lusts, such that, spiritually speaking, he is a beast. Therefore, once the Antichrist has been dead for three days, Satan resurrects him as a beast. He will then claim that he has fulfilled the prophecy of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ, and he has now received his glorified body. To believing man, the glorified body is what Jesus had—a body that operates well both in the material and the spiritual realms. However, for unbelieving man, who follows his own lusts as natural brute beasts do, the perfect “glorified” body is that of the beast. We see this in the fact that “all the world wondered after the beast” and said, “Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (13:3-4). In other words, “we finally have a creature that is unstoppable in doing all the lusts of the flesh. Let’s worship him!”

Satan has seen how God cast him out of heaven by having a woman (Israel) over Satan’s kings and the power to overthrow Satan’s kingdom in heaven came from the Christ, Who proceeded from Israel. Therefore, Satan sets up a similar situation for himself on earth so that he may overthrow God’s saints on earth and at least keep the earth for himself.

The beast is Satan’s christ, by which he plans to overthrow God on earth. 17:9-12 says that the seven heads represent seven kingdoms. Those are the kingdoms on earth during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. The ten horns are ten kings, who will gain power (the ten crowns) by coming into a confederacy with the Antichrist underneath him. The fact, that the beast has all of the heads, horns, and crowns on him, shows that he will be the one in charge on the world during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. The fact, that “the name of blasphemy” (13:1) is on all of his heads, shows that his religion, on which he will hang his power, is a false religion, full of lies, that goes contrary to what God has established with Israel’s law covenant.

We see this from Daniel. The Antichrist obtains the kingdom in Israel by flatteries (Daniel 11:21). He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel to obey God’s law (Daniel 9:27). However, once he arises as a beast, “in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27). This is when he changes from being one of the seven kings in the world to being the one, world ruler (17:11-13). (This is what is meant by the seven heads and ten horns of 13:1.) Then, the Antichrist will claim that he is fulfilling Isaiah 42:6 by being “a light of the Gentiles.”

Thus, the Great Tribulation begins a 3 ½ year period of time in which Satan mimics God’s kingdom on earth with a resurrected christ and the supposed fulfillment of scripture, but he does so according to the lusts of the flesh, which is why it is attractive to men. In other words, God gives believing man what is best spiritually speaking, which shows the vileness of our flesh

(Hebrews 4:12). Meanwhile, Satan gives man what is best materially speaking, and cloaks it in a form of godliness. The result is the Great Tribulation, in which man follows the lusts of his own flesh while being duped into thinking he is pleasing God. Israel will be so deceived that they will think that the Antichrist is the true Christ and is giving them positions of authority in the kingdom, as God promised Israel in the Old Testament. (Remember that Satan wars against the remnant of Israel's seed in the last half of the tribulation period (12:17).) Therefore, Satan's deceptive plan will be so successful that, "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

13:2 Daniel 7 tells of four beasts. They represent "four kings, which shall arise out of the earth" (Daniel 7:17). "The first was like a lion," the "second, like to a bear," and the third "like a leopard" (Daniel 7:4-6). The fourth beast ends up being the Antichrist (Daniel 7:19-21). Based on the description of him, here in 13:2, we see that the Antichrist is a composite beast of the first three. He is "like unto a leopard" with "the feet of a bear," and "the mouth of a lion" (13:2). This makes the Antichrist, the beast, a conquering machine. The dragon gives him power, such that Satan rules over the whole world through the Antichrist.

Think of television and movies today. As more and more of these pictures become digital, they become more and more grotesque. It used to be that horror movies only came out around Halloween. Now, some people watch new horror flicks all of the time. This satisfies the lusts of the flesh, because the flesh wants to be a brute beast. Therefore, when Satan resurrects the Antichrist as a beast, he gives the world what they want.

First, the Antichrist is "like unto a leopard." Leopards are known for being incredibly strong. They can sometimes kill prey that are three times their size, because God made their bodies to be natural hunters. The Antichrist also has "the feet of a bear," which is important, because it means he can stand and walk upright. Then, the Antichrist has "the mouth of a lion." Therefore, as a leopard, he can catch and kill prey better than other beasts. His feet give him the ability to walk upright, and his mouth gives him the ability to devour his prey. As such, this composite beast is the ultimate beast for fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

The Antichrist's physical body shows what he is like spiritually. I John 2:16 says that "all that is in the world [is] the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." A leopard is best at fulfilling the lust of the flesh by catching the biggest prey. A bear is best at fulfilling the lust of the eyes by seeing things on man's level by standing up, by seeing things on an animal's level by being on all fours, and by seeing things underwater, as seen in their ability to catch and eat salmon swimming upstream. A lion is best at fulfilling the pride of life by being king of the jungle. (A group of lions is even called a "pride.") Thus, Satan creates a composite beast in the Antichrist, which is the ultimate in fulfilling all the lusts that are in the

world, making him the most desirable of all creatures to wicked, unbelieving man. This is why the whole world will worship him.

Then, we are told that “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” From 6:2, we learned that Satan was given a crown at the beginning of the tribulation period and went forth to conquer. I believe the crown he was given was over apostate Israel. Then, he went forth to conquer and was able to place the Antichrist in rule over the whole world by the midpoint of the tribulation period. Thus, the Antichrist is the ultimate beast, and he has ultimate power over the world. It appears that nothing/no one can stop him. Of course, looks can be deceiving!

13:3 Revelation 11:5 says that, if a man tries to hurt the two witnesses, he must be killed. The Antichrist, the man, was killed by the two witnesses. Satan then raises him up as a beast. Thus, he has a head that was killed that has now been healed. He already claimed to be the Christ. Now that he has been killed and raised from the dead, the Antichrist will deceive even more people into thinking that he is the Christ, because he appears to be unstoppable. In other words, even death cannot stop him! This is why the world wonders after him.

17:8 says that those, who wonder after him, are those “whose names were not written in the book of life.” Therefore, they will have no trouble worshipping his image and taking his mark. In reference to Jesus Christ, Zechariah 13:6 says, “What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” Thus, this verse prophesies of Jesus’ crucifixion. However, the Antichrist will be wounded in the head—not in the hands. That is no problem for Satan. Zechariah 13:6 in the Message Bible says that the Christ’s wound occurred in the head from walking into a door. The Message Bible says, “And so where did you get that black eye? They’ll say, I ran into a door at a friend’s house.” Thus, the Satanically inspired Message Bible provides the excuse that the Antichrist will use for his deadly wound to the head. He will say that he ran into a door, rather than being killed by the two witnesses!

13:4 Therefore, these unbelievers in God will become believers in Satan and his christ, the Antichrist. When he is resurrected by Satan, the first thing the beast does is he kills the two witnesses (11:7). Now, the two witnesses have been “standing before the God of the earth” (11:4), keeping the Antichrist and his people from entering the temple. They have also been pronouncing judgment for 3 ½ years upon the world for their ungodliness (Jude 15). As such, all unbelievers hate the two witnesses, such that they rejoice over the two witnesses’ deaths, make merry, and send gifts one to another (11:10). These sickos even go so far as to leave their dead bodies in the street for 3 ½ days so they can watch their dead bodies decay (11:9). Because the people of the world are evil, they want evil to win (John 3:19). People have tried for over 3 years to kill the two witnesses and have been unsuccessful. Now, the beast comes along and gets rid of the two witnesses.

In their evil thinking, then, the beast is the christ, because he has saved his people from the judgment of the two witnesses.

Therefore, “they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast who is able to make war with him” (13:4). Therefore, by getting rid of the two witnesses, the beast has allowed evil to abound in this world, causing unbelievers to hail him as their savior (The Antichrist is unbelievers’ savior from God giving them judgment in hell.). Note also that they “worshipped the dragon,” because he gave power to the beast, just like Christians worship God the Father, Who gives power to God the Son. Thus, Satan has developed a false religion that imitates what God has set up.

The answer to the question of “Who is like unto the beast?” (13:4) is “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11). Therefore, the answer to the question of “who is able to make war with him?” (13:4) is “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God.... The Lord is a man of war” (Exodus 15:2-3). Those, who know that the Lord is God, will believe the gospel of the kingdom and wait for their redemption from the Antichrist at the end of the tribulation. Those, only concerned with the lusts of the flesh, will side with the Antichrist to get their lusts satisfied.

It is a funny thing about sin. Because sin leads to destruction, even if God removes sentence against evil, those, following their own lusts, will eventually destroy themselves. In other words, if God let the Antichrist rule longer than the tribulation period, the world would eventually destroy itself by following sin. (James 1:15 “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”) Therefore, the only true Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes at the end of the tribulation period to save the elect. He comes at that time because, if He waited any longer, there would be no one left to save (Matthew 24:22).

This shows that sin, unabated, destroys the soul in about 3 ½ years. When looking at the world today, this shows the power of God’s love. Here is Satan, as the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), causing most everyone, including “Christians” to follow the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2). Yet, there is a little bit of God’s love coming through believers, and that little bit of love is enough to keep the world from completely destroying itself for the last 2,000 years. How much more glorious, then, will this world be when sin is completely removed and only God’s love comes through believers for all eternity!

13:5 Anybody can speak great things about himself. Therefore, for the Antichrist to be given a mouth, it probably indicates that Satan gives him the knowledge of scripture that Satan has, which means that the Antichrist will be twisting scripture better than anyone else, in order to substantiate

his claims of great things about himself and Satan. (This is how “the dragon gave him his power” (13:2).)

If you look at cults, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons, they are successful because they have taken years to refine their knowledge so that they become experts at explaining away scriptures that go against their teachings. Thus, they make their lies more convincing and draw more people to their cult. Since the Antichrist will supernaturally be given the ability to fool people through Satan giving him a mouth, his ability to fool people with lies is greatly magnified such “that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

Specifically, the Antichrist will ascribe Messianic scriptures to himself and God-the-Father scriptures to Satan. Therefore, he speaks great things about himself by speaking blasphemies (Is not this what Churchianity does today?), ascribing all of the evil, associated with Satan, to God, while giving all the good attributes of God and Christ to Satan and himself, respectively. Because he has the knowledge and tricks of Satan, the Antichrist will be thoroughly convincing. This is why God only allows him to do this for 42 months, and it is why these 42 months are known as “Great Tribulation” (Matthew 24:21). In other words, “Great Tribulation” is not God pouring His wrath upon man, but it is a man (the Antichrist) speaking lies just as eloquently as Jesus spoke the truth. Jesus’ earthly ministry resulted in 120 people being saved (Acts 1:15), because the flesh feeds on lies. Therefore, the Antichrist’s eloquent lies result in nearly the whole world being lost, which is why he can only be the world’s ruler for 42 months. This is in spite of the fact that God will have His believing remnant of 144,000 preaching the gospel and performing great miracles during this time!

The fact, that the Antichrist is stopped after 42 months, shows that God is not powerless to stop him, as the Antichrist will claim. Rather, God will allow Satan to give power to the Antichrist for 3 ½ years (John 19:10-11) so that God may purify Israel through this great tribulation of deceit (Malachi 3:2-4).

13:6 The Antichrist speaks “blasphemy against God” (13:6), which means he ascribes evil to God. He also blasphemes the things of God, which are His name and His tabernacle. Therefore, the Antichrist will institute his false religion, saying that it is of God, and he will put non-holy things in the tabernacle, such as the abomination of desolation. This is how he blasphemes God’s name and His tabernacle. The Antichrist also blasphemes “them that dwell in heaven” (13:6). This would be, predominantly, the body of Christ. He will say that the body of Christ followed the evil one (Jehovah God), and so the evil one took them away, while the Antichrist will say that the true god needs to be worshipped, which he will say is the devil.

Therefore, the Antichrist will turn things upside down—good is evil, and evil is good. People will believe him because: 1) He appears to have the power as God, since he overthrew the two witnesses, made a covenant with Israel, and went about conquering kingdoms, and 2) His false religion will line up perfectly with the sin nature and the lusts of the flesh. Today, Churchianity is watered down and filled with doctrines of devils because people desire to follow the lusts of the flesh. Man uses scripture out of context to substantiate following the flesh. How much more, then, will this be the case, when Satan himself, through the Antichrist, sets up the false religious system of Babylon! And, the way the Antichrist turns everything upside down is by blaspheming everything that is good. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isaiah 5:20).

13:7 It will appear that the Antichrist has power over all as God. That is why this verse makes it clear that, whatever power he has, “was given unto him” (13:7). Since the power is given unto him, the Antichrist is not God.

In the instructions to the seven churches found in Revelation 2-3, the Spirit says to the churches that they can be overcomers. Yet, 13:7 says that the Antichrist will overcome the saints. This is not a contradiction. Rather, the saints can still overcome the Antichrist and apostate Israel in the spiritual realm, such that they continue to have faith in God to bring them into the kingdom. Physically speaking, though, the Antichrist will make war with the saints and overcome them, such that he is able to enter into the temple, declare himself to be God, and physically kill some of the saints (6:9-11). Therefore, the saints spiritually overcome the Antichrist, even though the Antichrist physically overcomes the saints and gets into the temple to desecrate it.

The Antichrist also has power “over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (13:7). Therefore, he will rule over the whole world. However, this does not include “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), because they are not to “be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9). In other words, God takes His kingdom away from the physical nation of Israel (Matthew 21:43) and gives it to the little flock (Luke 12:32), and the Antichrist has no spiritual power over the little flock because God’s kingdom “is not of this world” (John 18:36). It is very important for us to realize this, because this means that the nation called “Israel” by the world, that was re-established in 1948, is NOT God’s nation. “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6). In fact, the “Star of David,” that is on today’s Israeli flag, is really a hexagram associated with Egyptian magic and witchcraft. Acts 7:43 calls it “the star of your god Remphan,” which is Saturn. How could such a pagan flag represent God’s nation?!

13:8-9 Not only does the Antichrist have power over the whole earth, but all those, without faith in God, will worship the Antichrist. Note that 13:9 says that you must have the spiritual ears to understand this is what is going on.

This means that the worldwide worship of the Antichrist will be veiled in the worship of God. In other words, the Antichrist will fool the world into thinking that, by worshipping the image of the beast, they are worshipping God. After all, Catholics bow down to an image of Mary today and think they are serving God. Why wouldn't the world, then, think that they are worshipping God when they bow down to the Antichrist's image, which is of the queen of heaven?

God says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:5-6), and the queen of heaven says, "I am, and none else beside me" (Isaiah 47:8,10). This is because the deception program of Satan under the queen of heaven is so strong that the world, by following their flesh, will believe that the queen of heaven is God. However, those, with the faith to hear what the Spirit is saying to them through God's Word, will recognize that idol for what it is and worship God instead.

We should also note that 13:8 says that "the Lamb [was] slain from the foundation of the world." Obviously, the Lord Jesus Christ was not actually slain until at least about 4,000 years after the world was created. However, "God...calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). Because God is outside of time, He sees the Lamb as being slain from the foundation of the world, even though He was not actually slain until 4,000 years after God created Adam.

Job 38:6 says that God laid the foundations and the corner stone of the earth. Psalm 104:5 says that the foundations of the earth will not be moved forever. Isaiah 28:16 says that the foundation and corner stone were laid in Zion. Ephesians 2:20 reveals this corner stone as being the Lord Jesus Christ. By putting these verses together with Revelation 13:8, we can conclude that Jesus' death IS the foundation or corner stone of the earth, which keeps it in place forever. In other words, because man sins and sin leads to death, God had to place the foundations of the earth in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in order for the earth to stand through all the pain of sin.

The reason, that this fact is mentioned in 13:8, is because Satan's attack through the Antichrist in Great Tribulation is his strongest attack ever against the world. However, because the earth's foundation is in the Lamb's blood, it will not be shaken, even though the Antichrist overcomes the saints, has power over all kindreds, tongues, and nations, and all that dwell upon the earth worship him (13:7-8). This shows the indescribably awesome power of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to overcome all that that the world and Satan throws against it!

13:10 Since it is given unto the Antichrist "to make war with the saints" (13:7), apostate Israel, who has joined themselves with the Antichrist, will come against the believing remnant of Israel to take over Jerusalem. Therefore, apostate Israel will end up taking believers into captivity and

killing some of them. That is why Revelation 6:9 shows souls “slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” Now, in Matthew 26:52, Jesus told Peter to put away his sword: “for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Therefore, when apostate Israel comes against the believing remnant of Israel with weapons, the believing remnant is told by God not to fight. After all, if the power to overcome them is given to the Antichrist (13:7), fighting will not do any good. To stand and do nothing, while the enemy comes to kill you, takes a great amount of faith in God’s plan to deliver your soul from death and give you a new body at the end of the tribulation period. (“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).) The patience comes in waiting for this deliverance for the believing remnant taken captive by apostate Israel, since they continue to be persecuted for their faith through the Great Tribulation.

13:11 From 19:20, we know that this other beast is the false prophet. He looks like a lamb, but he speaks as a dragon. So, he looks like the Messiah, while he speaks the words of the devil. A prophet says “thus saith the Lord.” Therefore, the false prophet will say that he speaks for the Lord, but he is really speaking the words of the devil.

13:12 Since the false prophet is able to exercise the power of the Antichrist, he causes the world to worship the Antichrist. Thus, we see that Satan creates a false Trinity. Satan resurrects the Antichrist and gives him power and authority (13:1-2). The false prophet does great wonders and miracles to testify of the Antichrist (13:13-14). We see the false trinity work together in 16:13-14. They are an imitation of the Holy Trinity. God the Father resurrected the Lord Jesus Christ and gives Him power and authority (I Corinthians 15:24-28). The Holy Ghost then came along and testified of Jesus Christ (John 15:26) and performed miracles during Acts 1-7. Thus, what Satan does during the Great Tribulation is to copy what the Trinity does at the at-hand phase of the kingdom. He does so because he was defeated in heavenly places (Colossians 2:15; 12:7-9). Therefore, Satan thinks he can get the earth for himself if he copies on earth what God did to gain the heaven for Himself. Thus, Satan is Anti-God, the Antichrist is Anti-Christ, and the false prophet is the Anti-Holy Ghost.

13:13-14 The way that the false prophet convinces the world to worship the Antichrist is by doing great wonders and miracles. This makes the world think that the greatness he has ascribed to the Antichrist must be true because of the supernatural power that he has. In other words, the Antichrist must be the Messiah, and Satan must be God, or else the God, Who raptured up the body of Christ, would use His power to keep the false prophet from performing great wonders and miracles. (God will stop this unholy trinity, but not yet.)

The wonder of making fire come down from heaven will be especially convincing because: 1) Men will reason that the false prophet must be from God since fire comes down from heaven, where God lives, and 2) Elijah, a true prophet of Israel, called fire down from God in heaven to consume a sacrifice (I Kings 18:38). The reaction back then was that the Lord is the God (I Kings 18:39). Therefore, when unbelievers see the FALSE prophet do the same, they will come to the FALSE conclusion that Satan is the God. However, the test, during the tribulation period, is not who calls fire down from heaven, but it is who says that Jesus is the Christ (I John 4:1-3), the Son of God (I John 4:15).

Note also that the false prophet does these miracles “in the sight of the beast” (13:14). Thus, the Antichrist approves of the false prophet. This is important to note because the false prophet tells the world to “make an image to the beast” (13:14). If the Antichrist was truly the christ, he would not allow this to happen because the second commandment is: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Exodus 20:4). Therefore, although the Antichrist and the false prophet are extremely deceptive, causing people to believe that Satan is God, if Israel will compare what they say and do with what God says in His law covenant with them, it will be clear that they represent Satan. Therefore, Israel has no excuse on judgment day, if they do not put their faith in God and His law covenant with them and reject the Antichrist.

Now, in Genesis 11, we read of the Babylonian religious system that resulted in the world trying to build a worship tower to Satan in rebellion to God. This worship system has never gone away, such that we still see it in the tribulation period as the religion of the Antichrist. Revelation 17:5 calls it a “MYSTERY,” because it is hidden within Churchianity. It serves the creature, rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). As such, its symbol is a supernatural woman. In Jeremiah 44:17-19, she is called “the queen of heaven.” She is also called Ashtaroth in Judges 2:13, Easter in Acts 12:4, and Diana in Acts 19:27-28.

Today, Catholicism has taken Jesus’ mother, Mary, made her into a perpetual virgin, and deified her, such that she is worshipped more than the Lord Jesus Christ is, making her today’s queen of heaven. In fact, the Catholic church has officially dubbed her “the Queen of Heaven.”

There are apparitions of Mary that are seen from time to time, in different parts of the world. These apparitions or images are probably all similar. This is Satan’s way of getting the world to accept the image of the beast already. Therefore, the image of the beast is of the queen of heaven, which is the focal worship point of the Babylonian religious system from Genesis 11 to today, and this image will probably look a lot like the image of Mary found in Catholic churches all over the world today. This worldwide acceptance of the image today makes it easy to have such a worldwide acceptance for the Great Tribulation.

So, we see from 13:13-14 that the false prophet performs wonders and miracles to deceive the world into following the Antichrist. He also has the power to get the world to make an image of the queen of heaven. Note that it does not say that the image is of the beast. Rather, the image is “TO” the beast. The idol of the Antichrist’s darling mother is a gift from the world to the Antichrist in appreciation of his being willing to die and rise from the dead in order to do away with those “evil” two witnesses, mentioned in Revelation 11, and supposedly bring in God’s kingdom. At least, that will be the world’s take on it.

Note also that 13:14 tells us that the way that the Antichrist died was by a sword wound to the head.

13:15 Once the image “TO” (13:14) the beast is accepted by the beast, it becomes his image, such that it is now the image “OF” (13:15) the beast, meaning that it belongs to him, since he accepted it as a gift from the world for saving them from God, whom they think of as “the evil one.” Now, the false prophet uses his power to give life unto the queen of heaven. “Mary,” or “the queen of heaven,” now has the power to do two things: 1) Speak, and 2) Cause those not worshipping her to be killed. (Perhaps the image is artificial intelligence, or the false prophet supernaturally brings life to it. Either way, an image having power gives even more credence to people worshipping it, because it is not some lifeless statue.) Thus, we see that the false prophet sets up the full-blown Babylonian religious system.

Since this system is much like the current, Catholic system, except with much more power to it, the false prophet will probably end up being the Pope of the Catholic church. Like the Antichrist, he was also probably killed for trying to kill the two witnesses, and Satan will resurrect him as a beast, just like he does with the Antichrist. Thus, the world will have its christ (the Antichrist, who is probably Judas Iscariot, since they are both called “the son of perdition” (John 17:12; II Thessalonians 2:3)), its Holy Ghost (the false prophet, who is the Pope), and Mary (the image of the beast), all resurrected from the dead and all testifying that the Antichrist is the Christ so that the world will look to them and obey them, rather than obeying God’s law covenant with Israel. (The world will obey them because they walk by sight, not by faith (II Corinthians 5:7).)

Note that, while Judas Iscariot and the Pope are actually resurrected from the dead, Mary is not. That is because the real Mary is a saint of God (Acts 1:14). Therefore, Satan has to have an image made of her, that can talk, instead of an actual, live, human being. However, this is all still very convincing evidence that Satan is God, such that “except those days should be shortened [to 3 ½ years], there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22). Note that the false prophet is the one, who actually institutes the death penalty for not worshipping the image of the beast.

By the way, the image of the beast, being set up in the temple, signals the beginning of the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. It is called “the abomination that maketh desolate” in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. It is an abomination because it exalts itself against God and is in the temple. It makes Jerusalem desolate of all those, who will be saved, because they flee to the mountains in order to keep from being killed by the Antichrist (Matthew 24:16). Thus, it is “the abomination that maketh desolate.”

We should note that the false prophet institutes the death penalty for those who will not bow down to the image of the beast. This shows that Satan tries to get people’s allegiance through negative reinforcement. By contrast, God only gets people’s allegiance to Him through positive reinforcement. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). God loves us so much that He sent Christ to die in our place, while Satan hates us so much that he threatens to kill anyone who tries to accept God’s love!

13:16-17 The false prophet also causes all to receive the mark of the beast. Today, if you ask Churchianity what you have to do in order to be killed by the Antichrist, most will say that you will be killed only for taking the mark of the beast. That is a lie of Satan to get people to take the mark. The Antichrist will only kill those who do not worship the image (13:15). Those, not taking the mark, will not be killed. They just will not be able to buy any food or participate in the Antichrist’s economic system (13:16-17). Satan will use the lie, planted in people’s heads, to get them to take the mark. When they see people taking the mark, they will reason: “This is not the mark of the beast, because no one is killed for not taking it. This is just a way to prevent identity theft from happening so that I can spend my money. Therefore, I will go along with this.”

Another reason, that they will conclude this, is because of another lie of Satan that most people believe, which is that the mark of the beast is “666.” “666” is the NUMBER of the beast (13:18); it is NOT the mark of the beast. Since the beast is “like unto a leopard” (13:2), the beast’s mark is a leopard’s spot. Just like Satan has already set up images of the queen of heaven in Catholic churches, he already has set up the mark of the beast in those same churches. The mark of the beast is a leopard’s spot that goes in the forehead (13:16), and that is what Catholics already receive on Ash Wednesday—a mark in their forehead like a leopard’s spot. It is also similar to what married Hindu women already have, what Jewish people have with their phylacteries, and what faithful Muslims have with their prayer bumps.

Therefore, when the mark of the beast is instituted, people will already be familiar with it from their religion and will see it as having the added benefit of protecting them from identity theft so that they can spend their money. In other words, most will think that the mark is God’s way of protecting their money. They will not see it as the mark of the beast, since it will not have the number 666. Therefore, the world will line up in droves to take the

mark. They also will have no problem worshipping the image, since it seems to be verified by God, because they think the Antichrist is God. Also, people will not know that God has reserved the lake of fire for those, who worship the image, as well, because Churchianity does not teach that. Worshipping the beast, worshipping the image of the beast, and taking the mark of the beast are all punished by God by throwing the offenders into the eternal lake of fire (14:9-11).

The below chart illustrates why people will not heed the warning of Revelation 14:9-11:

	Antichrist's punishment	Man's belief	God's punishment	Man's conclusion
Worshipping the image	Death (Flesh)	God is okay	Death (Soul)	Worship the image
Take the mark	No food (Flesh)	This is not the mark	Death (Soul)	Take the mark

Therefore, man's result is eternal death in the lake of fire.

Therefore, it is by the whole world believing Satan's lie program that the false prophet will be able to cause all people to receive the mark of the beast. The Pope is probably the false prophet. So, the world will think God is behind the mark and the worship of the image, since it will look a lot like what Catholics already practice. They will reason that God raised the Pope from the dead in order to accomplish God's purpose. Therefore, they will believe whatever the false prophet says over what the Word of God says, especially since the false prophet "maketh fire come down from heaven" and performeth miracles (13:13-14). People, today, already believe their pastors over the Word of God, and he does not perform miracles! The false prophet also brings life to the image of the virgin Mary (13:15). This is on top of all the Antichrist does.

The Antichrist is seen as the christ because Satan raised him from the dead, and the Antichrist killed the two witnesses. This, alone, is enough for the world to worship him (13:4), and any hint of doubt is removed by the false prophet, testifying that the Antichrist is the christ. Although the Antichrist is an Assyrian Jew (Isaiah 10:5-12), we see him instituting the Babylonian or Catholic religious system. Another sign of this is his vow of celibacy. Daniel 11:37 says that he does not regard "the desire of women." Therefore, he remains "pure" through his vow of celibacy. This makes him the true christ in the Pope's eyes, because the Catholic hierarchy requires their priests to be celibate.

13:17 says that, in addition to the mark, some people will actually take on "the name of the beast, or the number of his name." This is yet another deception by Satan. Some people have a completely rebellious attitude and

will take “666” in their foreheads, just to “prove” that God will not kill them for taking the mark. God told Adam that, IN THE day, he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would “surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Satan said, “ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). Adam ate. His soul died instantly, but he did not die physically on that day. It is the spiritual death that God was referring to. Similarly, Satan will say that those, taking the mark of the beast, will not die. Some will take the “666” mark in defiance of God. They will die spiritually (14:9-11), but they will not die physically right away. This will give doubters the confidence to have the leopard’s mark placed in their forehead. Thus, we see that Satan works all angles to convince the world to worship the image and take his mark. The higher ups will take “666” or the name of the beast in their foreheads. This will, supposedly, show their real allegiance to God, and the Antichrist will give them more power as a result.

Seeing apostate Israel with the mark of the beast, the Antichrist having power over the whole world, the Pope performing miracles, the image of Mary speaking, and the economic prosperity of the whole system, will cause the entire world to worship the image of Mary and take the leopard’s mark in their foreheads. Note that 13:16 says that the false prophet’s edict applies to all: “small and great, rich and poor, free and bond.” Therefore, most people will take the mark.

144,000 were sealed by God, midway through the tribulation period. The Great Tribulation serves to bring in all “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6) “so all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26). Therefore, we know that more Jews will be saved during the Great Tribulation period. How many? We do not know. There were about 600,000 men that God led out of Egypt (Numbers 1:45-46). It was about the same amount that entered the Promised Land 40 years later under Joshua (Numbers 26:51). With women and children, this number was probably around 2 million. Therefore, it makes sense that Jesus (Jesus is the Greek word for the Hebrew “Joshua.”) would lead 2 million Jews into the millennial kingdom. This would include all saved Israel from Genesis 12 through Acts 7 and Hebrews through Revelation. So, perhaps another 56,000 are saved during the Great Tribulation, bringing the tribulation total to 200,000, which would be 10% of the entire number of Jews coming into the kingdom. Regardless of how many are saved, it is a small percentage, since Satan’s deception through his false religious system of Babylon will be so great that “except those days should be shortened, there should not flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22).

Also, note that the Antichrist’s punishment for not taking the mark of the beast is that they will not be able to buy or sell (13:17). This is why Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). Yes, Jesus meant that literally! In other words, in order for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, he must love God more than his possessions, because he will have to give up his possessions to save his soul.

This is also why Jesus told the little flock to “sell that ye have” (Luke 12:33). We see believers obeying this command in early Acts (Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35). In other words, since they will not be able to participate in the Antichrist’s economic system during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, they might as well sell what they have and use it while they can. This is in stark contrast to today’s body of Christ, who are told: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Timothy 5:8). Most of Churchianity is thoroughly confused and preachers take verses out of context to their material advantage, due to a failure to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Instead, we need to recognize that Matthew – early Acts applies to Israel during the at-hand phase of the kingdom and only Paul’s epistles (Romans – Philemon) directly apply to us today so that we are not “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

13:18 666 is not a bad number. 6 is the number of man, since man was created on the 6th day (Genesis 1:26-31). 3 is the number of completeness, since the Godhead is comprised of 3 in 1 (Father, Son, Holy Ghost). Therefore, 3 sixes, or 666, is the number of the height of man. It is man at his worst. We see a type of this with Solomon in I Kings 10:14, when he received exactly 666 talents of gold as tribute each year.

The beast represents the height of man to such an extent that the number of his name is 666. Note that the world will not associate the number 666 with the beast. You have to have wisdom and understanding in order to “count the number of the beast” (13:18) to determine that it is 666. If gematria (a Jewish system of assigning letters to numbers) is used, “666” equals Isis, which is another name for the queen of heaven. Therefore, the Antichrist’s name is related to his mother, the queen of heaven, aka “Isis,” and it takes wisdom to calculate that the queen of heaven’s number is 666.

This is yet another deception by Satan to get people to worship the image and take his mark. In other words, people will not readily associate “666” with the mark of the beast, because they will not use wisdom to calculate the number associated with the name of the beast. Therefore, they will think that they will be okay if they have the leopard’s mark placed in their foreheads, not having any idea that the mark of the beast is not 666 and not knowing that the number of the beast’s name is 666. In other words, most people will not associate 666 with the mark or with the beast; therefore, they will take the mark without any check of their conscience to prevent it.

Also note that, in creating the mark, Satan is imitating God again. Satan set up the false religious system of Babylon. In the Great Tribulation period, Satan has a false trinity to imitate God. Now, he imitates God again, by

creating an eternal-security plan for those, who take the mark. In other words, if he can get people to take the mark, there is absolutely nothing they can say or do to receive eternal life. They are guaranteed to spend eternity in the lake of fire (14:9-11), much like God gives guaranteed eternal life today to all those who recognize their sin and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for their sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 5:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14).

14 This chapter tells of the destruction of the wicked in Jerusalem so that Jesus and saved Israel may dwell there in the millennial reign. In verses 1-5, the world is given clear evidence that the Lord is God over all. In verses 6-7, those, who have not believed the gospel of the kingdom and have not taken the mark of the beast or worshipped his image, are given the opportunity to believe the everlasting gospel, so that they may be part of God's kingdom on earth. They are reminded, in verse 8, that Babylon is fallen, is fallen, so that they know not to trust in the Antichrist and his kingdom. In verses 9-11, they are told that those, who have taken the mark or worshipped the image, do not have this kingdom offer. Then, in verses 14-20, Jesus gathers up the wicked and destroys them outside of Jerusalem, so that Jerusalem is purified for God and saved Israel to dwell in together, when God marries the land (Isaiah 62:4) at the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:7-9).

14:1 In chapter 4, John saw the throne room of heaven. God showed him this before He showed him the events of the tribulation period so that John would understand that the tribulation period is necessary in order to maintain God's holiness and to bring God's holiness to His entire universe. Then, in chapter 7, God sealed 144,000 to show that the believing remnant will make it through the tribulation period. In chapter 13, we saw the great, false religion of Babylon that Satan perpetrates through the Antichrist, and how Satan takes over the entire world by it.

After reading chapter 13, the natural question would be: "What happened to God's people? Is God powerful enough to preserve all of His people through Satan's greatest attack upon mankind?" The answer to the latter question is an emphatic YES! The answer is given in 14:1, where the 144,000, sealed at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, are seen standing, at the end of the Great Tribulation, with the Lamb on top of Mount Sion. This is Jesus' second coming.

This event is spoken of in Zechariah 14:4, when the Lord pours out His wrath upon all those joined to the Antichrist, who have gathered, on the false trinity's side, to battle against the Lord Jesus Christ and His forces (see 16:12-16). Apostate Israel should take heart and have faith that God will deliver them from Satan and bring them into God's eternal kingdom on earth, if they repent, by putting themselves back under the law covenant and by not worshipping the image or taking the mark of the beast.

We should note that Hebrews 12:22-29 gives additional information to this verse. There, we are told that Israel is come “unto mount Zion...and to Jesus.” If they refuse the blood of the new covenant, they will receive the eternal, consuming fire of God, being aligned with the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. However, if they accept the blood of Jesus by believing the gospel of the kingdom, rather than being subject to God’s wrath, they will get to stand with the Lamb on mount Zion (14:1), assuring a place for them in God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

14:2 The voice from heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking what is in 14:4-5 as the judge (John 5:22; Revelation 20:4). “The voice of many waters” signals the Holy Ghost’s power, since He is the living water (John 7:38-39). “The voice of a great thunder” is the voice of God the Father, since His voice thundered when He spoke from heaven (John 12:27-29). “The voice of harpers” would be the sealed 144,000, as explained in 14:3. (People usually associate harpers with angels. However, Revelation 5:8 says that the 24 elders have harps, and they are redeemed man, as we mentioned in the notes there. In fact, angels never play harps in the Bible. Pretty much everything that Churchianity says about angels is wrong.) Therefore, this “voice from heaven” is the entire Godhead—God the Father thundering, God the Son (through the 144,000 redeemed by His blood) harping, and God the Holy Ghost providing the water sound. Together, the voice in this verse shows God’s power to execute judgment, bring salvation to believers, and sanctify them so that they will live forever in God’s kingdom, overcoming Satan and his forces.

14:3 After God delivered Israel through the Red Sea, Israel sang a song (Exodus 15), which was praise to God for His deliverance. No other group of saved people can sing this song, because it is only true of those saved through the Red Sea. Similarly, the sealed 144,000 Jews were protected from the devil during the Great Tribulation (12:13-16) like no other group. Therefore, they sing a “new song” that pertains specifically to God’s deliverance of them, which is why they are the only ones able to learn this song. (Think of it like a graduation song. Only those graduating are worthy to sing it.)

Also, note that the 144,00 were “redeemed from the earth.” This supports the doctrine that Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). Otherwise, if God is the God of this world, believers in God would not have to be “redeemed from the earth.”

14:4 Now, we get an explanation of how God figured out who would be the 144,000 that He will seal in order to get them safely through the Great Tribulation. They made the free-will decision to change their mind (repent) and abandon the Jewish religion and trust in God to give them eternal life as He promised to do under the law covenant. In spiritual terms, this means that they did not defile themselves with the false religion of the Antichrist, which is “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (17:5).

Therefore, they are not spiritually defiled with women, making them spiritual virgins. Since they are SPIRITUAL virgins, this does not mean that they are all men who have never had physical sex before. They may or may not be married in the flesh. Spiritually though, where it counts, they have kept themselves from being defiled by false religion, so that they will remain virgins until the marriage supper of the Lamb, being espoused to Christ (19:9). This group, then, includes both men and women. (“There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).)

We see that they stay pure by following “the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (14:4), and it is this following that makes them spiritual virgins. In other words, they listen to His voice, as found in the Word of God rightly divided, and follow Him, as John 10:4-5 says they will do. Because of their faith in God’s law covenant with them, then, God redeems them, halfway through the tribulation period, by sealing them (ch. 7). As discussed previously, they are still on the earth to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8) during the last half of the tribulation period.

Therefore, when this verse says that they were “redeemed from among men” halfway through the tribulation period, it means that they already have eternal life because they have been sealed. It does NOT mean that they are taken off of the earth at this time. However, because they are redeemed with their sealing, this makes them “firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (14:4). (“Secondfruits,” if you will, will be the rest of Israel that believes during the last half of the tribulation period.)

14:5 Because they are born of the Spirit (John 3:5), there is no guile in them. Having no guile means that they are not double minded (James 1:8, 4:8). In other words, they are not following religion. In John 1:47, we see Jesus identify the apostle Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Jesus identified him as such when he was under the fig tree (John 1:48). A fig tree, in the Bible, is symbolic of religion, as seen when Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to try to cover their sin (Genesis 3:7). When Jesus saw Nathanael under Israel’s religious system but not believing it, he recognized him as part of the believing remnant.

Similarly, when Jesus sees the 144,000 in apostate Israel’s religious system during the first half of the tribulation period, He also sees that they do not believe that false religious system of Babylon. Therefore, He seals them before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, which makes them “without fault before the throne of God” (14:5).

14:6-7 When the false prophet sets up the image of the beast in the temple, there is probably a worldwide, Internet broadcast of the message that all must worship the beast or be killed and take the mark of the beast or lose all of their money. Since worshipping the beast and/or taking the mark seals someone’s doom in the lake of fire (14:9-11), God sends an angel with

the everlasting gospel to the Gentiles so that they may enter the kingdom. This gospel is to “fear God, and give glory to Him..., and worship him that made heaven, and earth” (14:7). It is called the everlasting gospel, because every person, who has ever been born, intrinsically knows of God’s eternal power and Godhead (Romans 1:19-20 and John 1:9). Therefore, if no other gospel is presented to a person, he can at least be saved by believing the everlasting gospel.

This destroys the argument that people make today that, “We must go to all nations with the gospel or else they will not be able to be saved.” In fact, most missionary activity makes things worse, because they preach a false gospel. Then, when people believe this false gospel, they are made “twofold more the child of hell than” those preaching it (Matthew 23:15). Of course, such a verse would never be preached in a Christian church today, because the leaders can raise a lot more money in their churches if they get the people to rally behind the cause of missionaries. Then, they can send people to the “mission field,” which really amounts to a paid vacation to an exotic country, and the leaders can skim money from the top to pad their own salaries. Today, instead of being missionaries, we are “ambassadors for Christ” (II Corinthians 5:19), living out the gospel (Philippians 2:12-15) in a world that needs it (I Corinthians 5:9-10). This lifestyle evangelism is a much more effective tool than going to a foreign country, trying to communicate the gospel in a non-native tongue, and expecting people to believe what a complete stranger says!

You may say, “What about Jesus’ statement that ‘This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.’” (Matthew 24:14)? Jesus was sent “unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24), and He sent His disciples unto “the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6). However, because Israel is scattered among the nations during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, this gospel of the kingdom must be preached “in all the world” so that all of the lost sheep of Israel are saved (Romans 11:26). Therefore, rather than being a statement to reach all people groups with the gospel, as Churchianity would have you believe, Matthew 24:14 is really saying that the believing remnant of Israel must preach the kingdom gospel to all nations in order for all of Israel to be saved. Since God’s people today are the body of Christ, and not the nation of Israel, we need not travel to other nations to try to get people saved.

Getting back to the tribulation period, the angel’s message of 14:6-7 is to Gentiles to follow the everlasting gospel, instead of bowing down to the image or taking the mark of the beast. As such, this angel, preaching the everlasting gospel, probably comes just before the false prophet institutes worship of the image of the beast so that God is just in giving the whole world a chance to believe the gospel and be saved before sealing their eternal destiny in the lake of fire by taking the mark or worshipping the image. Note that, at Jesus’ second coming, the unbelievers know exactly

Who they are rejecting, as they say, “Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (6:16b-17). Therefore, unbelieving Gentiles “are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

14:8 The whole world had trusted in Babylon for the 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation. Now, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (14:8). This proves that God is the all-powerful one, not Satan. If people will not worship God at this point, they will never worship Him. The reason “is fallen” is said twice is once for the Babylonian religious system’s fall (17:1-6) and once for the Babylonian economic system’s fall (18:11-19) that both work together to get people to sell their souls to the devil.

The reason she is fallen is “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (14:8). (We see this also in 17:1-2 and in 18:3.) In other words, her false, religious system causes all participating in it to worship Satan instead of God. That is the fornication, which is packaged in the wine of her economic system. The way Babylon causes the nations to commit this fornication is by tying food, water, and all economic transactions to it. Thus, we see the economic and the religious system work together, and both “is fallen.”

The first angel declares the everlasting gospel (14:6-7), the second angel says that Babylon “is fallen” (14:8), and the third angel says that you cannot be saved if you worship the image or take the mark of the beast (14:9-11). While the first and third angels’ messages make sense halfway through the tribulation period, the second angel’s message does not make sense until the end of the tribulation period, when Babylon really “is fallen, is fallen” (18:2). However, as we have already learned in the Revelation notes, “God...calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). The reason God does this is to show the world that God will destroy Babylon. Therefore, they should not put their trust in the unholy trinity.

In other words, if you believe the internal witness of God that you are a sinner, you will believe the everlasting gospel (first angel), recognize that man’s kingdoms are only temporary (second angel), and not align yourself with the Antichrist’s kingdom (third angel). Thus, the three angels speak a progression that takes place in someone who becomes a believer, rather than speaking of things in chronological order. This is necessary, at this time, to keep the lost sheep of the house of Israel from sealing their eternity in the lake of fire by taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast.

14:9-11 In 14:1-5, the whole world sees Who is the true God. In 14:6-7, they are given the opportunity to align themselves with the true God. In 14:8, they find out that Satan’s kingdom will fall. Now, in 14:9-11, they find out that those, who align themselves with Satan’s kingdom, by worshipping his image or by taking his mark, are going to burn forever in the lake of fire.

We need to keep in mind that the three proclamations, of 14:6-11, do not come from some preacher or even from the two witnesses. Rather, they come from angels flying in heaven. The first and third proclamations are said “with a loud voice” (14:7,9). This, coupled with the everlasting gospel being preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (14:6), leads me to believe that all people on the earth hear these proclamations. Considering that they come from heaven, this should make the Gentiles’ decision, to follow the everlasting gospel, an easy one.

The nations “drank of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (14:8), which means, as a group, they receive God’s wrath for apostasy. In 14:9, we are told that individuals, who committed this fornication, are included in receiving the eternal wrath of God for their apostasy, as well. This is God’s pure wrath, since it is poured out upon them “without mixture” (14:10).

They are “tormented with fire and brimstone” (14:10), and there is “smoke of their torment” (14:11). This means that those, in the lake of fire, literally burn for eternity. “They have no rest day nor night” (14:11) means that they never stop burning. Isaiah 66:24 says, “for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.” This means that their flesh is burned down to a worm, and it stays in this state for all eternity, while they are tormented forever with fire and brimstone. (Jesus re-inforced this idea by quoting Isaiah 66:24 in Mark 9:44, 46, and 48.) Their having no rest is in contrast to saved Israel. For them, “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). The bottom line is that the majority of the world will give up eternal rest in God for a 3 ½-year rest in Satan. They do so, as 14:11 says, by worshipping the beast and his image and by receiving the mark of his name.

Now, when 14:10 says that those, in the lake of fire, will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb, it does not mean that Jesus and the angels will be in the lake of fire with them. After all, what makes the punishment so bad is the absence of God’s love in the lake of fire.

The issue, here, is that God made man to live forever, and there is no way to escape being in God’s presence. This is why Psalm 139:8 says, “If I make my bed in hell, behold Thou [the Lord] art there.” If God were to allow everyone to live in His kingdom, they would ruin His ability to show His love and “the exceeding riches of His grace” “in the ages to come” (Ephesians 2:7). Therefore, God has to consume the wickedness of man with fire. Isaiah 30:33 says that God has made hell “deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” This is why Hebrews 12:29 says, “For our God is a consuming fire.” Thus, fire comes from God to those in hell to keep them from ruining God’s love being shown upon believers for all eternity. This is why those, who take the mark of the beast or worship his image, “shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (14:10).

Apparently, there is the ability for man in God's earthly kingdom to see into hell. Isaiah 66:24 says that those, who come to Jerusalem to worship God, can see the burning and torment of those in the lake of fire. Since they are coming to Jerusalem to the Lamb's throne, and the ability to see into hell is there, those, in the lake of fire, are tormented in the presence of the Lamb. They are also tormented in the presence of the holy angels, since angels surround God's throne. Therefore, part of the torment in the lake of fire is utter embarrassment from having the Lamb, the angels, and worshippers of God all see them burning with fire and being reduced to mere worms.

14:12 Patience is necessary for the believing remnant to continue to have faith in God, in spite of the whole world following after the Antichrist and the resulting persecution upon the believing remnant. These saints "keep the commandments of God" (14:12) by having "the faith of Jesus" (14:12). The faith OF Jesus is seen in that He had faith in the Father's plan, even to His Own death. Hebrews 12:2 says, "For the joy that was set before Him [Jesus] endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). Similarly, for the joy that is set before the believing remnant, they will despise the shame brought on them by the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation. These saints demonstrate the in-Christ life by believing that God will give them eternal life in God's kingdom, even if it means, as it did with Jesus, that they have to give their lives for the faith.

14:13 Since the false prophet has the power to "cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (13:15), many Jews, who become believers during the Great Tribulation, will be slain (6:9-11). They are given the promise, here, that they will be blessed by God in His eternal, earthly kingdom, as a result. Their blessings are expounded upon, by the Lord Jesus Christ, in Matthew 5:3-12, e.g., "Blessed are the poor in spirit.... Blessed are they that mourn.... Blessed are the meek."

Their works, following them into the kingdom, show how important it is to live for God during the Great Tribulation, because only saved souls and their works of faith will survive God's judgment at Christ's second coming. According to Matthew 5:16, the believing remnant's good works cause men to glory God the Father. Of course, this does not happen during the tribulation period. Rather, the glory goes to God at the Great White Throne Judgment, when, "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11). Jesus Christ's Lordship status is seen by the whole world due, in part, to how He is able to save and transform the lives of the believing remnant in the tribulation period (I Peter 2:9-12), in spite of Satan ruling the world through the Antichrist and the false prophet.

By the way, the "henceforth" of this verse begins at the time when the image and the mark of the beast are set up and capital punishment is established by the Antichrist. That is not to say that those, who die in Christ before that

time, are not blessed. It is just that those, who die afterward, receive a special blessing, due to the special persecution they endure.

14:14 In 1:13, the Lord Jesus Christ is described as being “one like unto the Son of man.” Jesus often referred to Himself as the “Son of man” in Mathew – John, because most of what He did was as the Son of man or the second Adam. After His resurrection from the dead, He received His glorified body. The disciples had trouble recognizing Him because of His new body. Because He already has His new body in Revelation, He is referred to as being “LIKE UNTO” the Son of man.

His humanity is emphasized, here, in 14:14, to show that it is only as fully perfected man that He can execute judgment upon mankind, as the book of Hebrews explains. “God is judge Himself” (Psalm 50:6), due to God being the possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis 14:22). At the same time, since “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), God needs to exhibit mercy and grace or else no one would be saved. Being fully man, in addition to being fully God, then, makes the Lord Jesus Christ the perfect judge of mankind. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

He has a golden crown, representing His conquering death and hell (1:18), which gives Him the power to use the sharp sickle in his hand to reap the earth clean of wickedness.

14:15-16 Since Jesus is in His capacity as the perfect man, here, He is “a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7), which is why He obeys a command from an angel. Of course, Jesus is also God. As God, He is the one, Who gave the commandment to the angel, who then passed it on to Jesus, as man. (Are you confused yet?)

The command is to reap the clusters of grapes from the vine of the earth (14:18), because “the harvest of the earth is ripe” (14:15), meaning that the height of man has been achieved as signaled by “666,” being the number of the name of the beast (13:18). The vine, in the Bible, represents man’s fall, as man fell by eating the fruit of the vine of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But, the vine can also represent life in Christ, as in Isaiah 5:7, where God has Israel as His vineyard. In John 15:1, Jesus says: “I AM the true vine.” What this means is that all of mankind is either in the vine of Adam or the vine of Christ. Thanks to the rule of the Antichrist, the vine of the earth is prospering and in full fruit. Jesus comes and reaps the grapes off of this vine. This is described in Matthew 24:36-44 and Luke 17:34-37. The question is asked, “Where, Lord” are you taking them? The answer is “Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:37). Revelation 19:17-18 has the fowls gathered “together unto the supper of the great God” in order to eat “the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.” The ones, who are eaten, are the ones who

gather together with the unholy trinity to make war with the Lord Jesus Christ (19:19-20). Jesus then kills them with the sword coming out of His mouth, and the birds eat their flesh (19:21).

So, basically, what happens is that the Lord Jesus Christ thrusts His sickle into the earth to gather all those aligned with the Antichrist to battle Him. Once gathered, Jesus comes with a sharp sword in His mouth (19:15) and kills all those on the Antichrist's side, and the birds eat their flesh (19:21), since their fruit is bad, being part of Satan's kingdom. Therefore, the event, here, is describing the second coming of Christ.

(A similar event, that may help explain this, is Israel and the Canaanites. God gave the land of Israel to Abram. However, Israel would not possess the land for 400 years, because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15:13-16). In other words, because the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9), He waited until the Canaanites were fully given over to their wickedness, such that they would not be saved, before He actually had Israel go into their land. Similarly speaking, the Lord Jesus Christ waits until man's wickedness is at its full under the Antichrist before He reaps the wicked off of the earth and destroys them.)

The Lord Jesus Christ then uses this same sword (the Word of God) to rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron in the kingdom (19:15). Therefore, chapters 14 and 19 are not describing two, different comings or events. Chapter 14 describes the sickle used to separate out those aligned with the Antichrist from the rest of the world. They are then destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ's sword in chapter 19. The remaining people (the believing remnant of Israel and all those who did not align themselves with the Antichrist) enter the kingdom, and the sword of chapter 19 describes the Word of God, used also to rule the undecided Gentiles in the millennial kingdom.

14:17-19 These verses go along with Matthew 13:30. Jesus reaps the earth with His sharp sickle. Then, the reapers gather together the unbelievers to be burned. The fire of the tribulation period has already purified Israel (Malachi 3:2-3). Now, we see fire coming out from the altar to burn up the unbelievers, because they are impure. So, what I think we have in 14:14-16 is where Jesus Christ, as the righteous judge, separates the wheat from the tares, or the grapes of the vine of the earth from the grapes of the true vine, which is Jesus Christ. Then, with this distinction made, two more angels come along and actually gather up the grapes or men from the vine of the earth and cast them "into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (14:19). This winepress is probably symbolic of the birds coming and eating the flesh of the Antichrist's army. I think this symbolism is used to go along with the vine of the earth being destroyed, as well. This vine is the one in Adam, which is Babylon. Thus, both Babylon and Babylon's people are destroyed at the same time.

Meanwhile, the people, who did not get involved with the Babylonian religious system, get to enter God's kingdom as unsaved Gentiles. These Gentiles, then, get a taste of both the vine of Adam (Antichrist in the tribulation period) and the vine of the Lord Jesus Christ (in the millennial reign) and make their decision, as to whose side they are on, at the end of Jesus' millennial reign (20:7-10). Therefore, the purpose of the millennial reign is for the undecideds to make up their minds.

Note also that 14:17 says that "another angel came out of the temple WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." The people, on earth, are going to think that the temple, that the Antichrist sits in, is God's temple, but it is not. God left Israel's earthly temple in Ezekiel 10:18-19. When Christ offered the blood of His sacrifice to God, it was not offered in "the holy places made with hands" but in "heaven itself" (Hebrews 9:24). Therefore, the true temple of God is in heaven.

In fact, if you really want to have your mind blown, consider the following: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 6:19). Also, in Christ, the body of Christ is "built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). It is quite possible, then, that the heavenly temple that the angel comes out of in 14:17 is the body of Christ itself in heavenly places!

14:20 20:4-6 says that believing Israel will rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years. After the 1,000 years are over, Satan gathers up his army for a final battle, Satan loses, and the new heaven and new earth are established (21:1). Since God is holy and He will dwell in Jerusalem for 1,000 years with saved Israel, Jerusalem must be holy during that time, as well. This is why all of the wicked ones in Jerusalem are reaped and "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15) is "trodden without the city" (19:20), or outside the city. Jesus reaps the earth of the wicked ones, at this time, so that He has a holy place to dwell for 1,000 years with Israel. This is why Zechariah 14:11 says, "Jerusalem shall be SAFELY inhabited."

Sin is taken outside Jerusalem and dealt with there, just like Jesus, "that He might sanctify the people with His Own blood, suffered without the gate" or outside Jerusalem's gates (Hebrews 13:12). Remember that Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Remember that John the Baptist preached in the wilderness (Matthew 3:1). Remember that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days (Matthew 4:1). Sin is dealt with in the wilderness, outside the city, so that Jerusalem may be purified for God and His people to dwell in.

In this case of destroying the wicked people associated with the Antichrist, the river of blood that is the result is 5 feet high (the height of a horse's bridles) by 200 miles long (1,600 furlongs). You really cannot calculate how many people are killed, because you are not given the width of the river. If you take the 200 miles as square miles, that is, length times width, the river

is much too small. Therefore, it must be 200 miles long, but the width is not given to us.

We have previously noted that 25% of the world is killed in the first half of the tribulation period (6:8), and another 25% are killed in the second half of the tribulation period (9:15 says that one-third are killed. That is 1/3 of the people that are left. In terms of the original population, 1/3 of those left is 1/4 of the original population.). Therefore, if the tribulation period starts with 8 billion people on the earth and 50% of them are killed in the tribulation period, 4 billion people are left. Given that each human holds an average of 5 liters of blood, a river of blood, that is 200 miles long and 5 feet high would be 1/8 of a mile wide if it contains the blood of 4 billion people. The river could just as easily be 1/4 of a mile wide and contain the blood of 8 billion people. Because we are not given the width, we cannot calculate how many people are killed, which means we cannot know when the tribulation period will start. However, we can say that enough people exist on the earth today for this river of blood to be a reality, which means that the rapture can take place at any moment.

15 The details of how Jesus reaps the earth and destroys the wicked on the earth are found in chapters 15-16. Chapter 15 shows what happens in heaven, while chapter 16 shows what happens on the earth. First, 15:2-4 shows that the martyred, little flock is really better off than apostate Israel, as the little flock does not have to endure the seven vial judgments. Rather, eternity has already begun for them. Then, we see that the seven, vial judgments are the wrath of God, poured out upon mankind, in response to the prayers of the little flock for vengeance upon their enemies (6:9-10).

We can also view chapter 15 as the fulfillment of the curses and blessings God promised under the Mosaic law in Deuteronomy 27-28. Unbelievers are cursed for not keeping all the words of the law (Deuteronomy 27:26). This is seen in 15:5-8. Believers are blessed for keeping the Mosaic law, because Christ kept the law for them and became a curse for them (Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13). This is seen in 15:1-4.

15:1 The details of the seven, vial judgments are given in chapter 16. We know that these “seven last plagues” fill “up the wrath of God” (15:1). Then, by reading the details of the judgments in chapter 16, we see that they culminate in Babylon being destroyed (16:19-20). Therefore, we can conclude that these “seven last plagues” are the detail behind the summary, found in 14:14-20, of how God will destroy the Antichrist, and all those aligned with him, at the end of the tribulation period. Since the evil is destroyed from off the earth, the wrath of God is filled up in the seven, vial judgments. It is quite probable that the seven angels, giving out these last plagues, are the seven angels, who minister to the seven churches of Asia to help them endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (ch. 2-3). In this way, they get to punish those who oppressed the churches that they guarded.

15:2 The way, that the little flock gains the victory over the beast, is by being killed by the beast, just like Jesus gained the victory over Satan by being killed by Satan. The reason is because death shows their faith in God to give them the victory, rather than them trying to win the victory themselves. In other words, their faith is in the spiritual realm, not in the material. (“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).) Therefore, they do not mind if they are killed in the material, since God has the resurrection power to give them eternal life in the spiritual. The type of this faith is found in the Old Testament when God did not give Abraham and Sarah the promised son, Isaac, until both of them were unable to produce a child by themselves (Romans 4:19). The time of the celebration of the victory in 15:2 is after the end of the tribulation period, when no more believers will be killed (6:10-11).

The overcomers “stand on the sea of glass” (15:2). In 4:6, we learned that the sea of glass is before God’s throne. It is the top to the container that is the heaven and the earth, in which we currently dwell. Therefore, when these 7 plagues come upon the earth, the martyred, little flock of Israel will be safe in God’s heaven, praising God for giving them the victory, because they had faith in God, rather than worshipping the beast, worshipping the image, taking the mark, or taking the number of his name.

In chapter 14, we saw Jesus and the 144,000 stand on the earth as a final warning to unsaved man. Now, in chapter 15, we see the believing remnant, from the Great Tribulation, rejoice over God’s victory over Satan on earth that is about to take place. The reason that the “sea of glass” is “mingled with fire,” here, is to show that these are they, who came through the fire of the Great Tribulation (Malachi 3:2-4), upon whom “the fire had no power” to destroy them (Daniel 3:27), because “the Son of God” (Daniel 3:25) went through the fire with them (through His Word and His Holy Spirit) to keep them safe. Thus, at the end, all will see that God kept His promises to faithful Israel.

Note also that they have “the harps of God.” In 14:2-3, the 144,000 harped on their harps a new song that only the 144,000 could sing. Now, in 15:2-3, the believing remnant sings two more songs—the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

15:3-4 The song of Moses is found in Exodus 15. Israel sung it in celebration of God bringing them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. Since this is a type of God bringing Israel out of Babylon through the fire of the Great Tribulation period, believing Israel sings this same song here.

They also sing “the song of the Lamb,” the words of which are given here in 15:3b-4. Every word of the song is significant. His “great and marvellous...works” would be everything the Lord Jesus Christ did to

redeem believing Israel from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:25). This makes Him "Lord God Almighty." His ways would be the commandments He gave to Israel, which are "just and true," to separate the believers from the unbelievers in Israel, as Hosea 14:9 says, "the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." Being the "King of saints" (15:3) means that the Lord rules over them, which He does because of the victory He won over Satan by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. With that victory won, all fear the Lord and glorify His name. The reason He won the victory over Satan is because of His holiness. Adam lost against Satan, because he transgressed. Jesus won against Satan because He is holy; therefore, death could not hold Him.

Since the Lord conquered death, God will give Him the Gentiles for His inheritance (Psalm 2:7-8). You see, Psalm 2:7 says that, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Acts 13:33-34 tells us that "this day" refers to Jesus' resurrection day. This is vitally important, because God's goal is to give everyone abundant, eternal life in His kingdom. When Jesus conquered death, this goal became a reality. Therefore, Psalm 2:8 says that God gives Jesus the Gentiles, because now He can give life to the Gentiles. This is why "all nations ... come and worship before" Him (15:4).

The Gentiles also Jesus as God, due to His judgments being made manifest. That is what happens here at the end of the tribulation period with the seven, vial judgments. Babylon falls, the Antichrist and his people are destroyed, Jerusalem is cleansed, and Jesus sets up God's kingdom in Jerusalem. The Gentiles recognize Him as God and worship Him. After all, if the whole world "worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" and Jesus successfully defeats the beast, the Gentiles would now worship Jesus.

Note that all of this starts with the cross. The cross is His "works" (15:3) that redeem Israel. His ways are just and true, and so they stand forever. He is King; He is Lord; and He alone is holy. Therefore, He is able to judge the whole world, and all nations worship Him, as a result (15:3-4).

15:5 "The tabernacle of testimony" is the tabernacle that God had Moses build, according to Exodus 38:21. Israel carried it with them as they journeyed in the wilderness (Numbers 1:50-51). Of course, this was just a pattern of the true tabernacle of testimony, which is in heaven (Exodus 25:9,40). It is called the tabernacle of testimony, because it contains the testimony or law covenant between God and Israel. Therefore, when "the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven" (15:5) is opened, it means that God is about to bring about the promise He made to Israel in that covenant, which is that they will dwell in the Promised Land on earth with God forever. You may say, "But, Israel had to keep the Mosaic law in order to receive that promise." Yes, that is true, but Jesus Christ kept the law for them and then became a curse for them under that law. Therefore, the blessing, that Jesus

Christ receives for keeping the Mosaic law, is enjoyed by Israel in the kingdom.

15:6 On the flip side, those on earth, who have not believed the gospel, have to experience the curse under the Mosaic law themselves. This is why seven angels come out of the temple with seven plagues. The wrath of God must be satisfied by purging the earth of wickedness to make it possible for redeemed Israel to dwell with God in Jerusalem and for believing Gentiles (in Israel's prophetic program) to dwell in the rest of the earth under the leadership of saved Israel.

The angel's "pure and white linen" symbolizes righteousness (19:8). The gold symbolizes the purity of the little flock, coming through the tribulation period (Job 23:10). The idea is that, only those, who have endured unto the end of the tribulation period with faith in God, will survive the seven plagues and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb in God's eternal kingdom on earth (15:3-4).

15:7 In 5:8, the golden vials, that the four beasts have, are said to contain the prayers of saints. 6:10 tells us that the prayers of the martyred saints are a request to the Lord for Him to "judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." Now, we see that the golden vials are full, not of prayers of saints, but "of the wrath of God" (15:7). Therefore, the prayers of the saints for vengeance, upon those killing God's people, are now answered by God with the seven vials of His wrath to destroy them. God said, "Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompence" (Hebrews 10:30). Now, we see God fulfilling that promise by destroying wickedness at the end of the tribulation period.

15:8 In Exodus 40:34, the glory of God entered the completed temple so that God could dwell with Israel. Now, in 15:8, the glory of God enters the temple in judgment of the world, and specifically of Jerusalem, so that God can bring the temple down to the earth and dwell with Israel forever (21:2-3).

16 The seven vial judgments are poured out upon the Antichrist and all of his followers in God's direct response to the request of the martyred, little flock for God to avenge their blood (6:10). Man's punishment keeps getting worse and worse to the point that everything man has built has been completely destroyed by the time we get to the end of this chapter. Unfortunately, man's reaction to God's punishment of them keeps getting worse and worse, as we see men blaspheme God due to the punishments in vials 4 (v. 9), 5 (v. 11), and 7 (v. 21). In the sixth-vial judgment, the Antichrist's army gathers in Armageddon to fight the Lord (vs. 12-16). God's destruction of man's kingdoms is done in the seventh vial judgment (v. 17). In that judgment, God destroys Babylon and has the believing remnant flee to refuge cities, while God drops 114-pound balls of hail upon the world (vs.

19-21). This ends in man blaspheming God (v. 21), proving God's justice in bringing judgment, since no flesh would believe God after this.

16:1 Since God has filled the temple in heaven (15:8) and Jesus is "the Word" (John 1:1), this "great voice out of the temple" must be of the Lord Jesus Christ.

16:2 Now, the scene shifts to the earth. During the sixth-trumpet judgment of the Great Tribulation period, we saw 1/3 of the world's population was killed (9:14-19). I noted, there, that these were probably all those who had taken the mark or worshipped the image, as a warning to the rest of the world, not to do those things. Unfortunately, 9:20-21 says that the 2/3, who survived, continued their evil ways. Therefore, by this first vial judgment, many more have taken the mark or worshipped the image of the beast, in spite of God's warning to them. Again, God specifically punishes these people to show the rest of the world to believe the everlasting gospel (14:6-7), rather than following the Antichrist.

The judgment given is "a noisome and grievous sore" (16:2). A type of this judgment is seen in the boils sent upon Egypt in Exodus 9:8-12.

16:3-4 In vials 2 and 3, all water in Israel is turned to blood. The people, who took the mark, which is most of the world, did so in order to have food and water (13:17). Now, they have been inflicted with "a noisome and grievous sore" (16:2), and they cannot survive, due to lack of water. This is a clear sign to the whole world that they chose the wrong side to follow, which gives the areas outside of Babylon a chance to repent. A type of this judgment is seen in rivers turning to blood in Exodus 7:19-21.

We should note that the second vial turns the sea into blood that is "as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (16:3). In other words, the sea turning into blood represents living people dying. This is significant because the sea is a type of Satan's domain, as seen in 17:1, where the great whore, Babylon, "sitteth upon many waters." Therefore, the blood being as "of a dead man" (16:3), not a "live man," indicates that all those, who are part of Satan's kingdom, will die in an eternal lake of fire.

16:5-6 God's justice means that He always gives a punishment that fits the crime. The ones, who "have shed the blood of saints and prophets," are identified by Jesus as the Jewish religious people (Matthew 23:34). Therefore, it is apostate Israel, who is guilty of "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" (Matthew 23:35). This is why I think that all of the water being turned to blood happens specifically where apostate Israel is located. Remember that God's wrath, in the seven vial judgments, is upon those, who killed the little flock. Therefore, these judgments are concentrated among the Antichrist, his rulers, and his followers, which would primarily be in Jerusalem and its surrounding area. If this is the case, not every single drop of water on earth is turned into blood. The punishment comes

upon those, who are worthy of it, who God has identified as apostate Israel. (Note how God says that apostate Israel is worthy of receiving blood to drink (16:6), just like believers are worthy of walking with Jesus in white (3:4). God gives people what they are worthy of, based upon their faith or lack thereof.) This is also in line with some of the plagues that came upon Egypt, in that the plagues did not come upon Israel, e.g., Exodus 9:6; 9:26; 10:21-23.

16:7 In a court of law, a matter is established as fact by the mouth of two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). “The angel of the waters” (16:5-6) declared that God’s judgment, here, is true and righteous. Now, a second witness speaks up to establish the matter as fact. Note that this witness comes “out of the altar” (16:7). This is probably Jesus, the high priest, since He does most everything in Revelation! Even if it is a cherub, it is still someone acquainted with righteous blood shed, making the witness reliable.

The statement: “Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments” is really a wonderful thing. Since God is “Almighty,” He has the power to do whatever He wants to do. Therefore, if He were evil, He would cause evil to prevail. However, because He is good, His judgments are “true and righteous.” In other words, there would be no good in eternity if God were not good, because He is Almighty. Conversely, if anyone else was Almighty, eternity would be bad, since only God is good (Matthew 19:17). Therefore, we should give eternal thanks for this statement being true.

16:8-9 It appears that this 4th vial judgment is one of being able to control the sun, casting intensified rays of heat upon men to give them major burns in scorching them. Those scorched would be apostate Israel’s leaders under the Antichrist. If Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3 is a type of Babylon in Revelation, then they ordered people to be killed by fire. Those killed are now in heaven, singing God’s praises (15:2-4). Now, it is the punishers’ turn to be scorched by fire.

Even if they did not kill believers by fire, they still deserve to be punished by the sun, since sun worship is very popular in pagan religions, as seen by the sun worshippers in Ezekiel 8:16, which is continued today in Easter sunrise services. Baal is known as the sun god, and Satan is Beel-zebub (Luke 11:15). Therefore, by using the sun to scorch them, not only does God give them a just punishment, but He also shows them that the Lord is God, and Satan is not God. However, their hearts are so hardened that, just like Pharaoh in the plagues brought upon Egypt, these leaders under the Antichrist will not repent.

Furthermore, they “blasphemed the name of God” (16:9), meaning that they still contend that God is evil, and that the Devil is the true God. This shows that man is so evil at this point, that there is no saving him. In fact, this is why God waits until now to judge man. God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). Therefore, He

waits until man gets to the point, where no one will repent, before He finally judges men. Since nearly all are saved, who will be saved, God now judges man's sin.

It is sad that man blasphemes God's name, because, today, people claim that God does not exist. God gives grace to believers today, but they will not believe that He exists. Then, when they do believe He exists, their hearts are so hardened that they will only blaspheme Him. It shows how far man has fallen, since he first began "to call upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26) to save him to the time when man only calls upon God to blaspheme Him.

16:10-11 As mentioned before, the vial judgments are against those, who killed and tortured the little flock. This would be the Antichrist and apostate Israel under him. Therefore, the Antichrist's kingdom is attacked, specifically, in this fifth vial judgment. This judgment is his kingdom being "full of darkness" (16:10). The ten plagues in Egypt to let Israel go are a type of these vial judgments in Babylon for not letting the Israel of God go. The plague of darkness is found in Exodus 10:21-23. Now, by the time the fifth vial judgment comes, apostate Israel already has a grievous sore (16:2), they are drinking blood (16:3-6), and they are in intense pain from having been "scorched with great heat" (16:9). Now, they must sit in darkness and feel the pain they are in. This is probably why the plague of darkness in Exodus is a "darkness which may be felt" (Exodus 10:21). This is not unlike the pain they will experience in the lake of fire.

This is seen in the fact that the pain is so great that they gnaw their tongues, which is similar to the weeping and gnashing of teeth in the lake of fire (Matthew 13:42,50). This gnawing of their tongues is a just punishment, since they, in turn, gnawed the tongues of the little flock in the Great Tribulation in the sense that they sought to silence them from preaching the gospel of the kingdom and from testifying of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all of this, they still blaspheme "the God of heaven" (16:11). The Lord became the God of heaven when He cast Satan and his angels out of heaven and down to the earth midway through the tribulation period (see 12:7-10). God is now throwing Satan and his people out of the earth, so that He may be the God of the earth, as well.

Because apostate Israel is on Satan's side, they are STILL blaspheming God. In other words, after all of this, they are still declaring that the Lord Jesus Christ is evil, and that the Devil is the true God. After all, this is what people today say, even in Churchianity, since those, who stand for the truth of God's Word, are accused of being "un-Christian," because they do not "tolerate" the opinions of those siding with false doctrine. Meanwhile, false doctrine is accepted as truth, because popular opinion deems it as such, while sound doctrine is rejected, because it is supported by God, not by man. Finally, in 16:11, we are told that apostate Israel will not repent of its deeds, just like they would not repent in the fourth vial judgment (16:9), which, again, shows that they are beyond saving.

16:12 In 17:12-13, we are told that there are ten kings, which receive power as kings by aligning themselves with the Antichrist. Psalm 83:5-8 actually lists the 10 regions of these kings. Since they are aligned with the Antichrist, these kingdoms must be destroyed by God at this time, as well. Therefore, the sixth vial's purpose is to gather these kingdoms all in one place so that God may destroy the Antichrist's complete kingdom, all at once. The first thing the sixth vial judgment does is it clears a path for these kings and their kingdoms to walk in to gather together for this battle against God. Thus, the Euphrates River is dried up for this purpose. Note that it is "the kings of the east" (16:12), who come to this battle. In Genesis, anything from the east is bad, as is the case here, as well.

We should also note that the Euphrates River is one of the four rivers that God created to water the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:14). Thus, in type, it is "watering" God's kingdom again by destroying the evil kingdom that keeps God's kingdom from ruling over the earth.

16:13 Now, we see Satan's unholy trinity, working together to get the whole world together for this battle. The Anti-God is the dragon, which is Satan. The Anti-Christ is the beast. The Anti-Holy Ghost is the false prophet. All three members of the unholy trinity work together to deceive the whole world. Note that they do not care about the eternal well-being of these people. They only care about trying to overthrow God. They do not care that they will take billions of people down with them in the process.

This also shows how powerless Satan really is. 144,000 believers stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion (14:1). Meanwhile, Satan goes into "the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14), and he is very easily defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ (19:19-21). This should not surprise us because the Lord Jesus Christ already triumphed over Satan and his forces via the cross (Colossians 2:15). This shows that the Lord is, at His worst, far more powerful than Satan is at his best!

(An old fairy tale has a beautiful princess cursed as a frog, and it takes the kiss of her prince to make her a beautiful woman. I wonder if this fairy tale comes from this verse, since the spirits of the unholy trinity come out of them as frogs.)

16:14 Remember that Satan's people continue to blaspheme God during the fourth and fifth vial judgments, alleging that God is evil and Satan is good. Now, Satan convinces most of the world that this is so. Note that the unholy trinity does so by appealing to men's emotions. There is no objective truth of God's Word presented. Rather, they work physical miracles, and the whole world follows after them. Unbelieving man always walks by sight and not by faith. We see this beginning with Eve, who saw that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and

desired to make her wise (Genesis 3:6), even though God said not to eat of the tree (Genesis 2:17).

Therefore, it should not be surprising that, when men see physical miracles, they readily follow Satan and his forces into the pit of hell, by attributing these miracles to God, thinking that only a good “force” would do miracles. (The Antichrist honours “the God of forces” (Daniel 11:38), and so the world will want “the force” to be with them.) Therefore, most of the world will end up following Satan to the great battle. The kings of the east get there by walking up the Euphrates River (16:12). The rest of the people gather for the battle, as well, as 16:14 says, but they have farther to come and so they probably do not walk up the dry river, like the kings of the east do.

16:15 As mentioned in the notes on 6:12-14, the Lord’s coming for this final battle will be after a period of darkness for, possibly, 45 days (1,335 days in Daniel 12:12 minus 1,290 days in Daniel 12:11). After the whole world gathers for this battle, God turns off all the lights: the sun is black, the moon is blood, the stars fall, and the heaven is taken away (6:12-14). This gives the world time to contemplate if they really want to fight against God or not. Since God is powerful enough to turn off all the lights, any logical thinking person would conclude that he should not fight against God. However, the lusts of the flesh are not logical.

In 16:15, the Lord Jesus Christ reminds the seven, Jewish churches in Asia, to whom the book of Revelation is written (see ch. 2-3), that the darkness that happens, at this point, is all part of God’s plan, since He comes “as a thief in the night” (II Peter 3:10). The believing remnant of Israel “watcheth” (16:15), which means that they know God’s prophecies of end-time events, and, because they believe God and His Word, they have the spiritual eyes to see these events as they take place.

The little flock also “keepeth his garments” (16:15). Their garments are the fine linen of righteousness (19:8). Therefore, keeping their garments means that they do not follow Satan’s lie program, as perpetrated by the Antichrist. Instead, they continue to believe God and His Word and trust in Him to save them. Therefore, even if they are forced to gather in the battle against God, they can continue to have faith in God, and God will deliver them. When God looks at saved Israel at this battle, He will see they have the garment of righteousness, because the blood of the Lamb has been applied. Therefore, God will “pass over” them and not harm them, just like He “passed over” the houses of Israel in Egypt, not killing their firstborns (Exodus 12:23).

The “they” of 16:15, then, would be God’s armies. They will look at Satan’s side, see the shame of their sin, and destroy them. However, saved Israel will be clothed with righteousness, and so they will not be killed.

The shame of their nakedness goes back to Genesis. When God created Adam and Eve, “they were both naked..., and were not ashamed” (Genesis

2:25), because they were clothed with God's light (Psalm 104:2). After the fall, they lost God's clothing and became ashamed of their nakedness (Genesis 3:7). Similarly, in the presence of God on the day of battle, all those, without faith in what God has told them, will be spiritually naked and ashamed.

16:16 The purpose of this battle is to cleanse the earth of the wickedness of the Antichrist's kingdom so that Jesus can set up God's kingdom on earth. This is prophesied in Daniel 2:44-45, where it says: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44). However, this does not mean that Armageddon is the final battle. After 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed, and then comes the final battle (20:7-10). Armageddon just clears the way for God's kingdom to be set up. It does NOT get rid of sin forever, because God gives Gentiles, who did not take the mark or worship the image, another opportunity to be saved in the millennial kingdom.

God has all of Satan's army meet in Armageddon so that Babylon will be cleansed so that it can be destroyed. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah. God would not destroy those cities until Lot was outside the city (Genesis 19:22), because God will not "destroy the righteous with the wicked" (Genesis 18:23). Therefore, He clears out Babylon so that the righteous are not destroyed when He destroys Babylon. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (18:4).

16:17 With Babylon cleared out, the seventh vial is poured out. The Lord says from the temple, "It is done" (16:17), meaning that Satan's system of religion, known as Babylon, has been forever destroyed! "It is done" also refers to the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) being completed, meaning that all of sinful man's kingdoms have been destroyed and the God of heaven will now set up His kingdom that "shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

We should also note what the seven vial judgments are poured out upon or into: 1) "Upon the earth" (16:2), 2) "Upon the sea" (16:3), 3) "Upon the rivers and fountains of waters" (16:4), 4) "Upon the sun" (16:8), 5) "Upon the seat of the beast" (16:10), 6) "Upon the great river Euphrates" (16:12), and 7) "Into the air" (16:17).

The first three vials are poured upon things on the earth that are under the curse of sin to cleanse the earth of sin. The next three vials are poured upon representations of the unholy trinity to cleanse the earth of Satan's power (Vial 4 is upon the sun. Jesus Christ is "the Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2), and Satan says that he is the sun god. Vial 5 is upon the seat of the beast, which would represent the Anti-Christ. Vial 6 is upon the Euphrates River. Rivers of living water are a type of the Holy Ghost (John 7:38-39). Therefore, the Euphrates River stands for the Anti-Holy Ghost.) The seventh vial is poured "into the air" because Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Thus, it cleanses the earth of Satan's kingdom. This

means that 3 vials take care of the earth, 3 vials take care of the unholy trinity, and the seventh vial destroys Satan's kingdom, i.e., Babylon.

16:18 We see voices, thunderings, and lightnings four times in Revelation—4:5, 8:5, 11:19, and 16:18. In this case, the voices would be God's voice of instruction to destroy all that man has built and then the voices of high-ranking angels, giving directives to lower-ranking angels to accomplish this. The thunders would be a sign of God's judgment of Babylon. The lightnings would be God's spiritual realm, traveling around to execute His orders (Ezekiel 1:14). All of this results in the greatest earthquake that ever was. It does not just affect Babylon, but it causes the destruction of all that man has built in the entire world, as seen by the cities of the nations falling (16:19), and every island and mountain disappearing (16:20).

16:19-20 Cities represent man's rebellion against God. This is shown in Genesis 4. God tells Cain: "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (Genesis 4:12). Yet, in defiance of God, Cain goes out and builds a city (Genesis 4:17). In Genesis 11, we see the whole world in rebellion against God, as they built the Tower of Babel. Now, at the end of the tribulation period, God destroys "great Babylon" and the cities of the nations (16:19). Babylon's punishment had been awaiting it since Genesis 11.

The islands represent the Gentile nations in scripture, e.g., Genesis 10:5 and Isaiah 42:4, and the mountains represent kingdoms (17:9-10). Therefore, by every island fleeing away and the mountains not being found, it means that, with just one earthquake, God has completely destroyed everything man has made. All of the people of the world stand in Armageddon and see this happen, being absolutely powerless to stop it. Also, islands and mountains are generally where rich people live, which shows that God's attack mostly hurts those who have profited over Babylon's economic system. "In one hour so great riches is come to naught" (18:17).

Note that 16:19 says that "the great city was divided into three parts." The only other time that "three parts" is mentioned in your Bible is in Deuteronomy 19:3. There, God says that, "When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the Lord thy God giveth thee,...thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land.... Thou shalt prepare thee a way,...into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither" (Deuteronomy 19:1-3). In other words, God commands Israel to divide the land into three parts so that it will be easy for an innocent murderer (someone who killed someone else without hatred in his heart) to flee into cities of refuge to be safe until he can be tried in court to see if he should be killed or not. This keeps innocent blood from being shed in the land (Deuteronomy 19:10).

Probably, then, the reason for the land being divided into three parts, in 16:19, is the same as it was for Deuteronomy 19, i.e., to keep innocent

blood from being shed in the land. I say this because, in the sixth-vial judgment, the Antichrist's forces were gathered in Armageddon to battle the Lord (16:12-16). With the wicked being in Armageddon, God then destroys man's kingdom in the seventh-vial judgment. The Antichrist's forces are going to be furious over this and will blame those aligned with God, the believing remnant of Israel. Therefore, God divides Babylon into three parts, has the believing remnant flee to places of refuge, and stations angels in these three places of refuge to keep believers safe from the Antichrist's forces attacking them. Then, God drops 114-pound balls of hail from heaven upon unbelievers (16:21). In other words, God told believing Israel to come out of Babylon so "that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4). Dividing the land into three parts and having believers run to cities of refuge is the way that God keeps the believing remnant safe, while pouring His wrath upon everyone else.

16:21 At the beginning of the Great Tribulation, 10% of Babylon fell via a great earthquake. Man's reaction, at that time, was to give "glory to the God of heaven" (11:13). By the time we get to the end of the Great Tribulation period, just 3 ½ years later, man is so corrupted that, instead of glorifying God, they "blasphemed God" (16:21). This shows that the world must come to an end at this time, since the corruptness of man would keep new people from being saved.

The sixth seal, in 6:12-17, is this first part of the vial judgment, found in 16:17-21. From there, we find out that the reaction of men to this hailstorm is to hide in dens and in the rocks of the mountains to be saved from God. Note, from 6:16-17, that they understand that they are experiencing "the wrath of the Lamb," and they will not be able to stand at the end. Therefore, men did not ignorantly follow the Antichrist. Rather, they knew exactly what they were doing. They clearly defied the God of heaven, and the Lamb, Who died for their sins. Now, they are being punished for their sins, and yet they continue in their sins by blaspheming God. This is why it is important that God keep the believing remnant safe by dividing Babylon into three parts. Otherwise, with them "scattered among the heathen," unbelievers would try to get their revenge on believers.

God shows that He is a big-time rocker by having His Own "rock party," with each hailstone coming out of heaven weighing 114 pounds (the weight of a talent)! Thus, unbelievers learn that "their rock [Satan] is not as our Rock [the Lord]" (Deuteronomy 32:31; I Corinthians 10:4).

17 Chapter 16 ended with Babylon receiving the wrath of God (16:19-21). Chapter 17 gives detail about the Babylonian religious system, while chapter 18 goes over the fall of Babylon. Spiritually speaking, Babylon is "the great whore" (v. 1) who rules over the world with her religion (v. 2). In other words, she is the queen of heaven, who rules with Satan as the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). She is the queen of heaven today, as well, but very few recognize her as such, because she is a "MYSTERY" (v. 5). In the

tribulation period, she will work with the Anti-christ (v. 7) to make Satan's deception program the strongest that it will ever be, such that she becomes drunk with the blood of the saints (v. 6). The first half of the tribulation period shows Babylon ruling through a confederacy of 7 kings, which includes Antichrist as a man (vs. 9-10). These are probably seven, major religions, with the Antichrist being the one over Judaism. Halfway through the tribulation period, Satan makes a deal with two of the kings to complete his unholy trinity, while killing the remaining five kings. The two kings end up being the beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet (the Pope) (v. 10). The Pope gets the world to follow the Antichrist, who propagates a New Age religion to replace all others. Ten kings rise up and give their power to the Antichrist so that he becomes the one, world ruler (vs. 12-13). Once the tribulation period is over, the Lamb will overcome them (v. 14) by using the ten kings to destroy Babylon, preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ to bring in God's kingdom on earth (vs. 16-17).

17:1 "Great Babylon" (16:19) falls at the end of chapter 16. Now, chapter 17 will give us details of what the religious system of Babylon will do during the tribulation period. Here, in 17:1, Babylon is called "the great whore" to symbolize her religious system that got men to commit spiritual adultery with her, straying away from the religion that God created in His law covenant with Israel. The whole book of Proverbs talks of these two, religious systems as women: 1) Wisdom, found in God's Word rightly divided, and 2) The harlot, which is the religious system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, which together comprise Babylon. Her sitting upon many waters symbolizes that the Babylonian religious system controls Satan's realm, since Satan's realm is symbolized by the sea or the waters.

We should note that Babylon had its official beginnings in Nimrod's kingdom of Babel in Genesis 10-11. This is when Satan implemented his plan to create a system of religion that mocks what God is doing. Since God said He would use the seed of the woman to bruise Satan's head (Genesis 3:15), Satan created a religion that exalts the woman over the seed. Then, he created a mock seed to make people think that his religion is of God. In Nimrod's day, it was said that Nimrod died, he then impregnated his wife, Semiramis, with sun beams to create a child, named Tammuz, who also happened to be Nimrod reincarnated. Thus, Satan becomes God through Nimrod, and Semiramis is his queen of heaven to be worshipped for birthing God. Not too long after Jesus' ascension, this symbolism was applied to Catholicism to make it more believable, although Baal/Queen of Heaven worship was probably merged with God's religion hundreds of years before this in King Manasseh's day, when he built altars to the host of heaven within the temple of the Lord (II Kings 21:3-5).

In Catholicism, the virgin Mary becomes Semiramis, and Jesus becomes Nimrod/Tammuz. Mary is worshipped as the queen of heaven and mother of God, while Jesus is revered as her baby. Nothing was changed except the names, which means that "another Jesus" (II Corinthians 11:4) is

worshipped. This is the baby Jesus, not the resurrected one, so that the woman remains the focus. Thus, the Mary that is worshipped is another Mary. The real Mary had several kids after Jesus was born (Mark 6:3) and sinned just like any normal human being. The Catholic Mary was born without a sin nature, remained a perpetual virgin, never sinned, and is revered as the mother of God, rather than as the mother of Jesus. The reason for this is because this is the story of Semiramis with her name changed to Mary, so that it will be believable to those who claim to be "Christian." Thus, Mary is worshipped as the queen of heaven, over the Lord Jesus Christ being worshipped. Therefore, when the Antichrist comes on the scene, this same Babylonian religious system will be propagated by him, except that the Antichrist becomes the pre-eminent one, so that the world will follow him, instead of the true Christ.

17:2 Romans 13:1 says, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:4 calls a governmental leader "the minister of God." Therefore, "the kings of the earth," in 17:2, should be ruling as God would have them rule. Instead, they align themselves with the Antichrist, who is aligned with Satan, and they rule, as Satan would have them rule. Then, all the people in the nations, instead of having faith in God, follow the Babylonian religious system, as propagated by their leaders.

The reason for this is found in I Timothy 6:10. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

The Antichrist will control the world's money supply, as evidenced by the fact that those, who refuse to take the mark of the beast, will not be able to buy or sell (13:17). Since the Antichrist will have the world follow the Babylonian religious system, those, who do not follow the Antichrist, will be poor. Therefore, "the kings of the earth" will commit fornication with Babylon in order to get rich, "and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:2), in order to prosper economically. In other words, all those, who love money, will covet after money, resulting in most people erring from the faith.

Moreover, the Babylonian religious system will allow these money lovers to appease the guilt feeling that comes from following the evil desires of their hearts. Ephesians 4:19 says that once man is "past feeling," he will give himself "over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." In other words, if man does not feel bad for following the evil desires of his heart, he will follow those evil desires to a greater and greater extent. The religious rules of Babylon will make the world think that they are okay in following their own lusts. In fact, Jesus said, in John 16:2, that the world will think they are doing God service by turning over the believing remnant to be killed!

This is why religion is so dangerous. If I am not religious and follow the lusts of my flesh, I may feel guilty about it and try to stop, or I may go too far because the government may throw me in jail. Either way, I recognize my sin and may look for God's gospel to save me. However, once the lusts of the flesh are sanctioned by the government and religion, the people of the earth will think they are okay in their sin, because their conscience, the people around them, and the government all say that they are doing the right thing. Therefore, they are "drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:2) and are "filled with all unrighteousness" (Romans 1:29). "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

We see this working of the Babylonian religious system going on today in Churchianity and all the religions of the world. The combining of the world's economic system and the world's religion into one will create a situation similar to what was found in Babel in Genesis 11. There, the Lord said, "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis 11:6) This means that they will never hear and believe the gospel, which is why Jesus said that, if the tribulation period is not cut short, "There should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22).

The last time Babel took over the world in this manner, God divided the world into nations. The next time, the Lord Jesus Christ will come, overthrow Babel, and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

17:3 In 12:6 and 12:14, the believing remnant of Israel flies into the wilderness, where she is nourished by God during the Great Tribulation period. I mentioned, there, that this wilderness must be on the earth, and that God's protection is by giving them faith in sound doctrine so that they overcome the Antichrist. This makes sense, in light of 17:3, because this verse says that Babylon is in the wilderness. In other words, both "Babylon the great" (17:5) and believing Israel are in the wilderness together, which means they are both in Jerusalem. This is why Jesus tells believers in Jerusalem to flee into the mountains when the abomination of desolation is set up (Matthew 24:15-16).

It is really a brilliant strategy for God to have the believing remnant in the same wilderness as the Babylonian religious system is in. The reason is because all of the Israel of God must be saved before the tribulation period ends (Romans 11:26; Galatians 6:16). The lost sheep of Israel are scattered among the Gentile nations, due to God's fifth cycle of chastisement of Israel (Leviticus 26:33). Meanwhile, the false prophet causes all to bow down to the image of the beast or be killed (13:15) and causes all to take the mark of the beast or starve to death (13:16-17). Therefore, the nations will be coming to Babylon to do these things. As families go to Babylon, there will be members of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who do not buy into what the false prophet is doing, due to their belief in God over the Anti-christ.

God can then send members of the little flock out of the wilderness to meet these people as they go to Babylon. These lost sheep will then believe the gospel and be water baptized, becoming members of the little flock. Their unsaved family members will then rat on them when they come into Babylon, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy that "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death" (Matthew 10:21).

The point is that, if the believing remnant of Israel was not in Babylon, they would not be present to preach the gospel to these lost sheep of Israel. This understanding also helps us understand Revelation 12. The serpent tries to destroy the believing remnant but cannot (12:15), because God has sealed them. However, he is still able "to make war with the remnant of her seed," i.e., those who believe the gospel as they come to Babylon (12:17).

Note that the beast is "scarlet coloured" (17:3). Scarlet is the color of sin, as God tells Israel in Isaiah 1:18, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Being "full of names of blasphemy" (17:3) shows that the Babylonian religion makes God evil and makes Satan good. This religious system is successful in deceiving the world, because, in 16:9, 11, and 21, we see men blaspheming God for the plagues He sends upon them. The seven heads are seven kingdoms (17:9), and the ten horns are ten kings (17:12). Babylon will rise to power with seven kingdoms, which will rule the world in the first half of the tribulation period. Then, out of the seven kings will come the beast (17:11), which will rule during the last half of the tribulation period, with 10 kings under him (17:12). The fact, that the woman sits on the beast, shows that the beast carries or fully implements Satan's Babylonian religious system during the tribulation period.

Today, Satan is already working through the woman to set the stage for Satan's kingdom on earth. This is seen in that the woman "sits" on many world leaders and implements different Babylonian religious systems across the world—"Christianity" in America; Islam in the Middle East; Buddhism in China; Hinduism in India. In Great Tribulation, there will be one, world religion so as to sanction all evil deeds of man in the name of religion. This situation is explained to us in II Thessalonians 2:7-8. There, we are told that the church, the body of Christ, is on the earth today, keeping the Babylonian religious system from taking over, even though "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," meaning that the Babylonian religious system is at work today in various religious systems. But, when the body of Christ is raptured up, "then shall that wicked be revealed," meaning that it will be combined into the one, world, religious system of the Antichrist.

17:4 The longsuffering of God is seen in the fact that we are now over 6,000 years after Satan's rebellion, when he was clothed in all kinds of precious jewels (Ezekiel 28:13), and Satan's religion is still arrayed with precious stones. Note the contrast between Satan's woman (Babylon) and God's woman (Israel). Israel has birth pains (12:2) and flees to the wilderness

(12:6). Babylon is resting in her own filth in the wilderness and tries to cover up that filth with fancy clothing and jewels (17:4). Since sinful man likes to wallow in his own filth, Babylon's actions are enticing to mankind. Since her filth is covered up with jewels, Babylon also looks like the much better alternative than Israel. Therefore, men will follow after the Antichrist's religion.

Again, Babylon appears to be great, but her golden cup is "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (17:4). In other words, she has a false religious system which requires forsaking the God of Israel and worshipping other gods. Specifically, Daniel 11:38 says that the Antichrist will "honour the God of forces." Is it any coincidence that Star Wars says, "Let the force be with you?" Christians, who are Star Wars fans, will tell you of parallels they see between Star Wars and Churchianity. Therefore, if the world thinks that the god of forces is like the true God, it is no wonder that the world will be deceived and follow the Babylonian religion of the Antichrist, committing irreversible fornication against the God of Israel by worshipping the image of the beast and by taking the beast's mark.

17:5 "Mystery," here, should not be confused with today's mystery dispensation. The mystery is "the mystery of iniquity" (II Thessalonians 2:7). In other words, "Babylon the great" has existed, as Satan's competing religion to overthrow the faith of mankind in what God has told man to believe, ever since the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. It exists today in the Catholic religion with its worship of the virgin Mary, the Islam religion with its worship of the moon god, the Churchianity religion with its exaltation of another gospel, and New Age religions in the exaltation of self. However, it is a mystery, in the sense that mankind, without spiritual discernment, does not recognize the Babylonian religious system as being from Satan. They think that it is of God, because it appears to fulfill "good" goals, rather than evil.

Babylon is "the great," because the world follows after it, even today, as it encompasses all religions. Most of these religions worship some kind of female deity, and this propagates the worship of the queen of heaven, regardless of what a particular religion names the queen. (Modern society is big on feminism because it makes each individual woman a queen to be worshipped. Thus, even atheistic/secularist/humanistic modern societies worship the queen of heaven in this fashion.) As such, Babylon is "the mother of harlots," meaning that this religious system gives birth to all other religions (including atheism in modern societies) that follow Satan's lie program to get mankind away from faith in God. This is why I say that an element of female worship is in many religions.

Therefore, Babylon is also part of the Jewish religious system, for even Jesus declared that the Jewish religious system's greatest adherents were of their "father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). (It is no coincidence that a woman told Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare

Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked” (Luke 11:27) to which Jesus replied, “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28). In other words, the Jewish religious system included the worship of the queen of heaven, and Jesus corrected that by telling them to believe God’s Word, not the queen of heaven.) Doing Satan’s lusts is how Babylon is also “the mother of ... abominations of the earth” (17:5). By getting mankind to abandon faith in God, the result is that man follows Satan’s lie program, which consists of all abominations, since it is rebellious actions against the truth of God.

17:6 “The blood of the saints” refers to all believers in Israel’s dispensation who were killed for their faith before the tribulation period (see 18:24). This coincides with Jesus’ statement: “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets” (Matthew 23:35-37). This shows that Jerusalem ends up being spiritual Babylon.

“The blood of the martyrs of Jesus” refers to those martyred for their faith during the tribulation period. Thus, the drink of the Babylonian religious system is the innocent blood of those with faith in God. This is why false religion will greatly oppose you for taking God’s Word as your final authority, and the greatest opposition comes from within Christian-DUMB because you are exposing them for the frauds that they really are. Even John wonders over what this woman is all about. He probably wonders how someone, who looks so beautiful, could be so deadly. Because man looks on the outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7), the whole world will be deceived into following the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist.

17:7 “Wherefore didst thou marvel?” is a great question to ask all of those who follow Churchianity today. They are impressed by the “worship” music, the stained-glass windows, and the smooth talking preachers of Babylon, when within they are “full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27).

17:8 1:8 says that the Lord Jesus Christ “is, and...was, and...is to come.” In other words, He exists in the present, He existed in the past, and He will exist in the future. The Lord always exists. The beast, or the Antichrist, “was, and is not, and shall ascend” but then “go into perdition” (17:8). If the Antichrist’s condition at the time of this revelation is “is not,” it means that the time of this revelation must be the midpoint of the tribulation period, after the two witnesses have killed the Antichrist (11:5), but before the beast has risen up to kill the two witnesses (11:7 and 13:1-3). Because Jesus is God, even when He was in the grave, He did not cease to exist, even though the man, Jesus, was temporarily dead. By contrast, because the beast is not

God, he ceased to exist when the two witnesses killed him. Thus, he “is not,” while Jesus always “is.”

This is an extremely important point to note, which is why God even calls Himself the “I AM” (Exodus 3:14). In other words, because God is the “I AM,” He always exists, which means that He has the power to give all believers abundant, eternal life. By contrast, when God defeats the Antichrist and Satan, there is nothing either one of them can do, because there is no life in them. Think of it like a car battery. If there is no life in a car battery, it cannot jump start another car battery, but a car battery with unlimited power could very easily give life to a dead battery. So, too, God can give us life, since He is the “ONLY Potentate” (I Timothy 6:15), while Satan is dead in his sin, and, thus, cannot give life to anyone.

Also, note that Jesus’ future is “is to come,” while the beast ascends, but then goes into perdition, showing that the Antichrist’s future is death, just like his past. Jesus’ kingdom is on earth forever, while the Antichrist gets to rule the world for a scant, forty-two months (13:5), has a temporary kingdom, and his eternal dwelling place is the lake of fire (19:20). The Antichrist is a man, during the first half of the tribulation period, while he is a beast during the last half of the tribulation period. Although he represents Satan on earth during the first half, he is at his worst in the last half. This is when he breaks his covenant with Israel, sets up the image of the beast in the temple, sits in the temple, declaring himself to be God, has himself and the false prophet performing miracles to deceive the nations, and requires the world to pledge their allegiance to him, by taking the mark of the beast. This is when he goes “into perdition” (17:8).

It is interesting that he ascends out of the bottomless pit. This means that the beast existed before, as evidenced by him being “was, and is not.” John 17:12 says that Judas Iscariot is the son of perdition. II Thessalonians 2:3 says that the Antichrist is also “the son of perdition.” Therefore, the Antichrist, who is a man during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, is probably some unknown man, while the beast could be Judas Iscariot put into a beast’s body. Therefore, we have a return of the one, who betrayed Jesus. Who better to “go into perdition” than the son of perdition himself? After all, if the fallen angels of Noah’s day are “delivered...into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (II Peter 2:4), why can’t Judas Iscariot be in the bottomless pit right now, reserved to become the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation period?

Now, we already saw that John “wondered with great admiration” (17:6), regarding the woman. It should be no surprise, then, that the world will “wonder...when they behold the beast” (17:8). The reason that they wonder after him is because Satan resurrects him from the dead, as proven by one of his heads being wounded to death but then killed (13:1-3). Thus, many in Israel will believe that the beast is their Christ, resurrected from the dead to bring in God’s kingdom on earth, just like raptured Christians said that

Jesus was. This is why the Antichrist is able to go into the temple and declare himself to be God. But, note that only those, “whose names were not written in the book of life” (17:8) will wonder after the beast. This shows that those, with faith in what God has told them in His word, will not be deceived by this great deception!

Now, we covered the book of life in the notes on 3:5. Basically, it appears that all men’s names were written in the book of life “from the foundation of the world” (17:8), and that, when people finally decide not to have faith in what God has told them, God blots their names out of the book of life (3:5). For those, in the Great Tribulation, this would happen when they worship the beast or take the mark. By putting this fact together with 17:8, we can conclude that those, who wonder after the Antichrist, are those who follow him, take his mark, and worship his image. Thus, wondering after the beast is just a symptom of the reprobate mind of unbelief in God’s plan to redeem the earth through saved Israel.

17:9 The woman is identified as the great city of Babylon (17:18), which also encompasses the Babylonian religious system. Mountains represent kingdoms. The fact, that the woman sits on seven mountains, tells us that Babylon is over all religions of the world. Very few people today understand this. They think that Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Atheism (New Age) are all different religions. The truth is that all religions fall under the Babylonian religious system, headed by the Pope. In fact, the word “Catholic” means universal. Islam was started by Catholicism, and, the fact, that Babylon sits on the seven mountains, tells us that the Pope controls all world religions. It is quite possible, then, that the seven religions, mentioned in this paragraph, are the seven mountains upon which the woman sits.

In Genesis 11, “the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech” (Genesis 11:1). Satan used this situation to get the people to be of one mind (Genesis 11:6) to follow one, world religion (Genesis 11:4). God said that, if He did not stop them, mankind would have done what they wanted to do (Genesis 11:6), i.e., become forever lost in their own depravity. Therefore, God created nations, such that the people could not understand each other. “Therefore is the name of it called Babel” (Genesis 11:7-9).

Since Revelation 17 is talking about Babel and 17:9 says that Babel sits on seven kingdoms, we must conclude that, from Genesis 11 until Revelation 17, Satan was able to consolidate the 70 nations of Genesis 10 down to 7, religious kingdoms over which Babylon rules. This idea seems preposterous to the fleshly mind, because people will say that it is clear that these seven religions all teach different things. However, they all teach one great error—Man is god—because they all say that their adherents can obtain spiritual life through their own works. The fleshly mind cannot understand this, which is why 17:9 says, “Here is the mind which hath wisdom.” In other words, it takes the wisdom of God, imparted to the believer who uses the

mind of Christ, to understand that the seven, major, world religions are really one Babylonian religious system, i.e., Catholicism.

During the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, the world is ruled by a confederacy of these seven kingdoms. (The Antichrist is one of the seven (see 17:11).) Their common bond is the woman. The Babylonian religious system controls the world through these seven, religious systems. During these 3 ½ years, the Antichrist is still practicing Judaism, as he made a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). Thus, during the first half of the tribulation period, the Antichrist worships the Jewish god (This is NOT the God of the Old Testament, but a god that the Jews' religion make in their own image. After all, Jesus said that the Jews have laid aside the commandments of God for the traditions of men (Mark 7:8). This is also seen in that Israel worshipped "the queen of heaven," i.e., Babylon (Jeremiah 7:17-19), which shows that Judaism falls under the Babylonian religious system.).

17:10 We learned, in chapter 12, that Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven unto the earth, halfway through the tribulation period. 12:12 says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Therefore, Satan ratchets up his program by seeking to consolidate the seven, world religions into one. Satan probably goes to each of the seven kings and gives them the same offer that he gave to Jesus. He shows them "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." He then says to each of them: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:5-7).

The Antichrist and the Pope must be the two who take Satan up on his offer. I conclude this based upon the statement that "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come" (17:10). We also know, from 13:1,11 that Satan raises two beasts from the sea at this time. The first one is the Antichrist, and the second one is the false prophet, who is the Pope. Therefore, the way, that Satan gives the kingdoms of this world to the Antichrist and the Pope, is by giving them beastly bodies that allow them to take over the world.

We have previously said that the Antichrist will be killed by the two witnesses, halfway through the tribulation period. This makes him the one who "is not yet come" (17:10). His continuing for "a short space" is the forty-two months of 13:5, i.e., the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. Since the Pope was not killed, he is the one who "is", in 17:10. This means that, the five that are fallen, in 17:10, are the ones who rejected Satan's offer. Therefore, he killed them.

17:11 Because the Antichrist is going to be the one, world leader under Satan, he is the one, who ascends out of the bottomless pit, kills the two

witnesses (11:7), and sits in the temple, proclaiming himself to be God (II Thessalonians 2:4). It is essential that he sit in the temple in Jerusalem, because God promises that He will rule the entire earth from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:8-9). Therefore, Satan must establish his seat (2:13) in Jerusalem in order to mimic God's rule over the whole world.

He is "the beast that was, and is not" (17:11), because he was killed by the two witnesses. He "is of the seven" (17:11), because he was one of the seven religious heads of the world, being the leader of Judaism during the first half of the tribulation period, having made a seven-year covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27). "He is the eighth" because, as the world's leader, he abandons Judaism (Daniel 8:11-12, 9:27, 11:31) and adopts New Age religion. Therefore, he is different in the last half of the tribulation. New Age religion is all about using the energy within you to become God yourself. This is prophesied of the Antichrist in Daniel 11:37-38, which says that "he shall magnify himself above all," i.e., he makes himself God through the energy within himself. He then honours "the God of forces; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things" (Daniel 11:38).

Hinduism teaches that the energy within yourself is like a coiled snake at the base of your spine. The snake's energy must be released through the third eye in your forehead. 17:11 says that the Antichrist "goeth into perdition." As mentioned previously, the only two people in the Bible, referred to as "the son of perdition," are Judas Iscariot (John 17:12) and the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2:3). In order to get Iscariot to betray Jesus, Satan literally entered into him (John 13:26-27). Therefore, Satan will also literally enter into the Antichrist. Since Satan is the serpent (12:9), the ultimate snake himself will enter the Antichrist. This is how he will excel in magnifying himself above all gods, and how the dragon gives him power to be the world's leader for 42 months (13:2-8). This Satanic possession is how the Antichrist "goeth into perdition" (17:11). Because he follows the belief that Satan's energy is released through the third eye in his forehead, the false prophet "causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16). It is no coincidence, then, that the mark is placed "in their foreheads."

Note also how the Pope is involved in exalting the Antichrist. The Pope becomes God with the devil, such that the unholy Trinity mimics the real Trinity. Jesus would only do and say what His Father told Him to do and say (John 8:28), such that He was one with His Father (John 10:30). Similarly, the devil gives the Antichrist "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (13:2). The Holy Ghost was not given until Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). He brought to believers' remembrance the things Jesus taught them (John 14:26), and did great wonders so that people may believe the gospel (Acts 2:4,11; Mark 16:15-20). Similarly, the Pope does not become a beast until after the Antichrist is glorified as God in Satan's kingdom (13:11). He then leads the world to worship the Antichrist (13:12), does great

wonders (13:13), deceives the world into following Satan (13:14), and gets them to worship the queen of heaven (13:14-15). This results in the world worshipping the dragon (Satan) and the beast (the Antichrist) (13:3-4); thus, creating the new world order of the new age.

17:12 This verse says that the “ten kings...have received no kingdom as yet.” This tells us that the original seven are not part of the ten. Thus, Satan formed his unholy Trinity with the Antichrist from Judaism and the False Prophet from Catholicism, while killing the representatives from the other five religions, due to them not agreeing to give up their religious headship.

Since the ten kings “have one mind” (17:13), this means that they rise to power by agreeing to implement the New Age religion of the Antichrist in their respective regions. Psalm 83:5-8 tells us that these 10 kings come from: 1) Edom, 2) Ishmael, 3) Moab, 4) The Hagarenes, 5) Gebal, 6) Ammon, 7) Amalek, 8) Philistia, 9) Tyre, and 10) Lot with the tribe of Asher being joined to them. (There seems to be a connection, here, between these kingdoms and them cursing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis. Perhaps this is how God curses those who curse Israel (Genesis 12:3).)

In Genesis 11:6, at the Tower of Babel, God said that He must scatter the people into nations because they are united as one in their rebellion against God. Similarly, God must destroy the Antichrist’s kingdom at the end of the tribulation period, because they have “one mind” in their rebellion against God.

Thus, the first half of the tribulation period has a confederacy of seven kings under Babylon, each one of them practicing their own religion. Then, the last half of the tribulation period is characterized by the beast, ruling over the world, with ten, puppet kings, who only become kings, once the beast rises to world power.

Thus, the world is now united behind the Antichrist and will do whatever he says do. This is how the Antichrist can then have the image of the beast, the mark of the beast, and capital punishment for those who will not follow Babylon, while declaring himself to be God, abolishing the sacrifices under the Jewish religion, and blaspheming God to no end. Of course, the big reason this does not happen in the first 3 ½ years is because God does not allow it to happen then, as He has His two witnesses there to stop it and to save true Israel through the gospel of the kingdom. (The “one hour” (17:12), in which the ten kings receive power with the beast is a reference to the Great Tribulation period.)

17:13 Note that there are not multiple kingdoms in the last half of tribulation, as there were in the first half. There is only one kingdom, which is Satan’s kingdom. He rules the whole world through the Antichrist, having united the world in rebellion against God with his Babylonian religion, just like he did in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel. The ten kings are, then,

under the Antichrist and help enforce the Babylonian religious and economic systems within Satan's kingdom. They have the "one mind" (17:13) with the Antichrist, in imitation of "the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:5), which is in the body of Christ today.

This one mind is that we can all be our own god; thus, ushering in the "New Age" of replacing God with man. This is the original lie that Satan told Eve in Genesis 3:4-5, and the whole world buys into it. Man's pride is so great that it is very easy for him to believe the lie of Satan and become god himself. Every person knows there is a God and we should worship Him (Romans 1:19-20); therefore, if Satan can get us to use our flesh to achieve a fake spirituality, he can get us to believe that we are god ourselves. In so doing, we permanently reject the God of the Bible. This is why James 3:15 says that Satan's wisdom is sensual, relying upon the senses to get people to follow the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). Therefore, in the Antichrist's kingdom, the world will follow his lying signs and wonders (II Thessalonians 2:9). We already see this today, as most "spiritual" people rely upon good feelings in order to determine that they are doing well, spiritually speaking. Practically no one walks by faith in God's Word (II Corinthians 5:7).

17:14 16:12 says that the Euphrates River is dried up so that the kings of the east may gather "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14), which happens after the tribulation period is over. This is the "war with the Lamb" (17:14) talked about here. 19:15 says that the Lamb overcomes the Antichrist's army with the sharp sword coming out of His mouth, which Hebrews 4:12 tells us is the Word of God.

The reason that the Word of God defeats the Antichrist's army is because God's Word is above all His name (Psalm 138:2). There is nothing higher, and it is that Word that says that the Lamb "is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (17:14), because the Lamb met the requirements of the law in obeying it perfectly and then providing the substitutionary death for all believers, conquering death and hell for us.

17:13 stated that, the way the Antichrist rules the whole world, is by the world's rulers being of "one mind." This one mind, as we stated in the notes on that verse, is to follow Satan's lie that you can be your own god. Then, the Lamb comes with the truth, i.e., the Word of God, and defeats Satan's forces. This shows that spiritual battles are fought between truth and lies, not with guns and bullets. This is why Ephesians 6:12-18 says that we win the victory over Satan's forces by using the defensive weapons of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation, and the offensive weapon of praying the Word of God. Thus, Satan comes to the world with his fiery darts of the lie that man can be god, and it takes the Lamb, using the Word of God, to overcome Satan.

Since the context of Revelation is Israel's prophecy program, those with Him are saved Israel, as we saw in 14:1. All Jews were called to be part of saved Israel. Only 144,000 were chosen, halfway through the tribulation period, because they were the only ones who believed God would redeem them through the law covenant He made with them. Then, they remained faithful to God until the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13) in order to be saved. The reason they are mentioned as being with the Lamb is because they are His bride (21:9), and so they are one with the Lamb (Matthew 19:6), which means that they overcome (21:7) with Him. As the Body of Christ, we saw, in Ephesians 6:12-18, the process of how we overcome with Jesus. This process is the same for believing Israel. By being one with Christ and allowing Christ to live in them, they overcome Satan's forces with the Lamb. Therefore, they are by His side when He defeats Satan at the battle of Armageddon.

Predestination and free will work together for the salvation of man. God predestinated a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) to rule with Him in God's eternal kingdom on earth. This is "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). Jews join God's predestinated group by their free-will actions to believe the gospel of the kingdom and to remain faithful to God until the end of the tribulation period. This means that the individual members of the Israel of God are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (17:14).

17:15 Waters, in the Bible, refer to Satan's realm. Since Satan is "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4), the waters represent all peoples, showing that, although there is just a seven-king confederacy in the first half of tribulation and one, world ruler with 10 kings under him in the second half of tribulation, the whole world will be ruled by Babylon throughout the tribulation period, and it will take wisdom to figure this out (17:9), since ruling is done on a spiritual level with religions and most people concentrate on economics instead. This is especially true today, when people think spiritual matters are foolish and scientific evidence is what is real. This is a great lie of Satan to get people to take the beast's mark and bow down to the beast's image, in order to save their lives and prosper economically. People will think the beast's religion is some silly superstition, so, it is no big deal if they obey in order to get rich economically. However, God says they will burn forever in the lake of fire for following the beast's commands (14:9-11). Of course, Satan will have the world convinced that God is not real and that the Bible is fiction. Therefore, not many people will heed God's warning, resulting in the whore controlling the world.

17:16 Because Satan "was a murderer from the beginning" and is the father of lies (John 8:44), it should come as no surprise that the way Babylon is destroyed is from within. The ten kings will "give their power and strength unto the beast" (17:13), but they will, ultimately, follow in the footsteps of their father, Satan. That is, they will be lifted up with pride and think that they can become God themselves. Therefore, after God divides Babylon into three parts with an earthquake (16:19), the ten kings take care

of the rest, by destroying both the religion and the economy of Babylon. Yet, they still fight against God (16:12) at Armageddon (16:16), because they want to be God themselves. In other words, Satan's lie will work so well that the ten kings will become prideful enough that they will think they can overthrow God's kingdom so that they are God themselves, rather than having confidence in the Antichrist's kingdom to overthrow God, where they would continue to be high-ranking minions of Satan. Therefore, they overthrow the Antichrist's kingdom here as the first step in becoming God themselves.

Because the woman is the Babylonian religious system, the kings do not literally eat her flesh. Making her desolate and naked refers to overthrowing her economic and religious system of taking the mark of the beast in order to buy or sell (economic) and bowing down to the image of the beast (religious).

17:17 Although the ten kings are on Satan's side initially and on their own sides ultimately, God uses their selfishness to accomplish His purposes. First, God lets man get as wicked as possible, which is accomplished by the whole world being united against God, as they were in Genesis 11. (This is not unlike God waiting until the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Genesis 15:16) before leading Israel to go into the Promised Land.)

This happens, in large part, due to the ten kings giving their kingdoms over to the beast. Then, when God says it is time, God uses the ten kings to destroy Babylon. Therefore, the ten kings actually fulfill the will of God through the rise and fall of Babylon. This is not unlike the high priest, Caiaphas, speaking the prophecy that Jesus would die for the whole nation, not realizing that God's salvation would come that way (John 11:49-52). Therefore, we see how God can use the pride and selfishness of men to accomplish His will.

17:18 The woman is Babylon. Note that this verse says that she "reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17:18). This is present tense. It shows that, even today, Babylon rules over the world. She just does so in mystery form (17:5). In other words, you do not see her ruling, unless you have the spiritual eyes to see this. Babylon is the religious system of Satan that is seen in all of man's religions, especially Churchianity, since Satan wants to corrupt Churchianity the most, since it is the only religion with the saving gospel for today in it. Babylonianism is "the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2) by which Satan operates. Her symbol is the queen of heaven, which is also seen in today's religions. Thus, the queen of heaven will be the image of the beast that the world will be required to worship during the Great Tribulation, or they are to be killed (13:15).

18 This chapter focuses on the economic system of fallen Babylon. "All nations" are led astray through "the abundance of her delicacies" (v. 3). Therefore, God destroys her (v. 2), and Israel needs to stop believing the lies

of Babylon, so that they are not destroyed along with her (vs. 4-6). This is difficult to do, due to Babylon's sorceries (v. 23). The kings of the earth (v. 9), the merchants (v. 11), and the seamen (v. 17) profited from her. Therefore, they are the ones to lament her fall. By contrast, the heaven rejoices (v. 20) because the system, that slew all the righteous people on earth (v. 24), has been destroyed. Babylon represents the best that man can do, yet this is nothing compared to God's kingdom, as God destroys Babylon "in one day" (v. 8), "in one hour" (v. 10, 17, 19). The result of this destruction is that the earth is lightened with God's glory (v. 1).

18:1 When God had Moses build the tabernacle in the wilderness, "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34). God said, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" (Isaiah 66:1). It turns out that the place of God's rest in Israel's program is with believing man on earth (21:3), but the glory of the Lord cannot fill the whole earth, as it did in Moses' day in the temple, until Babylon falls.

Now that Babylon has fallen (18:2), the earth can be "lightened with His glory" (18:1), as the fulfillment of Isaiah 6:3. The fact, that "the earth was lightened with HIS glory," makes me think that this angel is the Lord Jesus Christ. Even if it is not, the point is that, with Babylon fallen, the glory of the Lord can return to the earth, and especially to Israel, where there will be no need for the "light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (22:5).

18:2 As mentioned in 14:8, "is fallen" is given twice—once for the fall of Babylon's religion and once for the fall of its economic empire. While chapter 17 focused more on Babylon's religious fall, chapter 18 focuses more on Babylon's economic fall. Isaiah 13:19-22 says that, once Babylon falls, "it shall never be inhabited." The reason is because, since Satan's kingdom was seated there, it is not fit for man to dwell in. The point of this verse is that Satan's kingdom had to be utterly destroyed before God could dwell on earth. Thus, we saw, in 12:7-9, how the devil was cast out of heavenly places. Now, we see how he is cast out of earthly places.

Now, this verse does say that "Babylon ... is become the habitation of devils" (18:2). However, from 18:4, we see God's call to the little flock of Israel to "come out of her." Since Babylon was burned with fire (17:16 & 18:8), "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isaiah 13:19), we can conclude that the earth in Babylon has been thoroughly purged of the evil in Babylon. Therefore, Babylon, being the habitation of devils, must refer to spiritual Babylon. The earthly Babylon had to be purged of all evil with fire, because the Lord Jesus Christ will dwell for 1,000 years on that land that was once known as Babylon. (The land will become "Beulah" or "married" (Isaiah 62:4), and the Lord Jesus Christ cannot marry corrupt land.) Therefore, it is spiritual Babylon that holds devils and foul spirits, and this spiritual place will be cast into the lake of fire. Thus, Babylon falls, being purged of wickedness so that Jesus can have His millennial reign from that part of the

earth, but it is still a habitation of devils, spiritually speaking, in the lake of fire. Thus, God moves Babylon from being on the earth to being inside the earth where the lake of fire is.

If Babylon is going to the lake of fire, you may wonder why “every unclean and hateful bird” (18:2) ends up there, as well. God created animals for man. Animals do not have eternal souls that go to heaven or hell. Therefore, there is no moral issue with killing and eating them, having them as pets, or using them for other purposes. Apparently, then, God uses unclean and hateful birds for the purpose of tormenting people in the lake of fire, which is just as valid of a purpose for animals as God having wolves and lambs dwelling in peace with each other in His kingdom (Isaiah 11:6), because they are created beings with a finite life and no soul.

18:3 The kings of the earth are powers ordained of God (Romans 13:1). Thus, when they take up Babylon’s religion, they commit fornication against God. The merchants of the earth abide by her religion so that they can benefit from her economy. Regular people abide by both her religion (by bowing down to the image) and her economy (by taking the mark) so that they are not killed by the Antichrist. Putting this all together, then, “all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (18:3). In other words, all nations have rebelled against God by participating in Satan’s kingdom through the Antichrist and Babylon.

This really shows the completion of God’s nationalism program under the curse of sin. When the whole earth rebelled against God with the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, God separated the people into nations. Now, Satan has united the nations in their rebellion against God, once again, with Babel. Therefore, Babylon needs to be destroyed, and it is time for God to reconcile the nations back to Himself through the nation of Israel in the millennial reign.

18:4 John 10:3-4 says that Jesus’ sheep hear His voice and follow Him. Thus, it is the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Good Shepherd, who speaks here, from heaven. Only those Jews, with faith in God’s covenant with Israel, will hear His voice and come out of Babylon, as a result. The tribulation period begins with apostate Israel making a seven-year covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27), and the Good Shepherd calls to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6) during the whole, seven years for them to “come out of her” (18:4). For those, who do not, they will receive of the plagues given to Babylon, which include being thrown into the lake of fire. We see this same command from God, to come out of Babylon, in Jeremiah 51:9. God even tells us to do the same with unbelievers today in the dispensation of grace (II Corinthians 6:17).

18:5-6 17:4 says that Babylon’s false religion resulted in her “having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” Meanwhile, God has a cup of His Own to give her, which is “the

wine of the wrath of God” (14:10). The order from heaven is for Babylon to receive double the wrath, “according to her works” (18:6). In other words, she is to receive double the punishment that will come upon the Jews for following this false religious system. This is the fulfillment of Matthew 23:15, which says that proselytes made by the Pharisees are “twofold more the child of hell than” they are. In other words, apostate Israel, joined to Babylon, receives double the punishment in hell than the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day, because they rejected the Christ and followed the Antichrist, while the Pharisees of Jesus’ day just rejected the Christ.

Also, note that Babylon “hath filled fill” her cup (18:6). This means that her iniquity has reached its fullest. In other words, she is wicked to the point of no return. Therefore, she cannot be saved, which is why judgment is coming upon her now.

18:7 Babylon claimed to glorify God, but she really only glorified herself. Similarly, Churchianity today claims to glorify God, and even quotes scripture, but is only glorifying herself. II Timothy 3:5 calls this “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” Such is the case with Babylon in the tribulation period, as well. The result of Babylon’s glorification of herself is that she lives deliciously, meaning that she follows the lusts of this world. Therefore, she is deserving of “much torment and sorrow” (18:7).

Note how similar the Babylonian religious system is to Satan. Satan says, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne ..., [and] I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). Babylon says, “I sit a queen” (18:7). Thus, she is the “queen of heaven” (Jeremiah 44:17). The king, Satan, and the queen, Babylon, will ultimately spend eternity in the lake of fire. Babylon was “married” to the people of the world in Genesis 11 and will be “married” to them again in the Great Tribulation. However, the people of the world die in eternal judgment in the lake of fire, due to their unbelief in God. This is how Babylon is a widow. She will see sorrow, because her adherents will perish.

Isaiah gives further detail about her attitude of not being a widow. She says, “I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:...I am, and none else beside me” (Isaiah 47:8,10). This is important to note because, just two chapters before this statement in Isaiah, God says, “I am the LORD; and there is none else...I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18,22). Therefore, Babylon’s statement that “I am, and none else beside me” is her statement that she is God, not unlike Satan’s statement, in Isaiah 14, regarding himself becoming God. Therefore, when Babylon says, “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow,” she is really saying that she is God. This is why she must be destroyed. (Ultimately, this is what New Age religion says today when it says that you cannot judge them. They can do what they want to do.)

18:8 The “one day,” here, is at the end of the tribulation period. She experiences death will all of her adherents being gathered in Armageddon to battle the Lord, only to be destroyed. Babylon experiences mourning, over all those leaving her. Then, she experiences famine, in that she has no adherents after God judges them all. Babylon is Satan’s religion, and he will appear to be God during the Great Tribulation. However, the Lord God is the strong one. Therefore, Satan will be powerless in trying to keep his queen Babylon’s empire from crumbling.

As stated previously, she must be burned with fire to purge the land of her sins so that it will be a holy place for the Lord Jesus Christ to dwell with His bride, Israel.

18:9-11 The people of the earth are selfish. They do not really care if Babylon falls, for Babylon’s sake. They mourn because their riches are taken away because they got rich and powerful by aligning with her. Babylon’s fall takes away the power of the kings of the earth, which makes them mourn (18:9). Babylon’s fall takes away the economic prosperity of the merchants of the earth, which makes them mourn (18:11).

Note how the kings of the earth stand afar off from Babylon, because they are afraid of being punished, as well. Nevertheless, their pride causes them to gather to fight against God, even though the destruction of Babylon should have made it clear to them that God is more powerful than they are, even if they did contribute to the destruction of Babylon themselves (17:16).

18:12-13 Each of these verses lists 14 items that the merchants of the earth sold in Babylon. This is 7 times 2. Thus, we see the number “7” in Revelation again. Note that the last item of merchandise listed is the “souls of men” (18:13). This is not slave labour, because the item before it is slaves. Rather, what this means is that the Antichrist will put a bounty out there on people, who do not worship the image of the beast. (How do you think Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were brought before Nebuchadnezzar and thrown into the fiery furnace for not bowing down to the image (Daniel 3:8-13)?) A person will receive a certain amount of money for each person turned in. Therefore, there will be bounty hunters, making a living out of turning members of the little flock over to the Antichrist. This is the merchandise of the “souls of men.”

By the way, Jesus Christ is our kinsmen redeemer. The Antichrist will probably proclaim that he is “redeeming” believers, rather than buying them in order to destroy their souls by getting them to worship the image. In other words, the Antichrist will say that, it is out of his great love for the world, that he is willing to pay to bring them to God by having them take the mark. After all, these are poor, misguided souls, who God wants to redeem for His Own. This is the lie that the Antichrist will probably tell. Of course, the truth is that the Antichrist is really destroying men’s souls by getting them to align with Satan.

18:14 “The fruits” of the merchandise are what are produced spiritually from the merchandise of 18:12-13. Of course, all of the spiritual fruit from Satan’s kingdom is bad. The fruit would be the works of the flesh that we see in Galatians 5:19-21. Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16). Therefore, although apostate Israel will appear to be godly, by speaking of God, doing miracles, and quoting scripture, their fruits will give them away as being aligned with Satan, because their fruits will be the works of the flesh. Jesus said that, “every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 7:19). That is what has happened, here, with Babylon, its rulers, and its merchandise. They are destroyed.

18:15 Just like the kings of the earth stood afar off when Babylon was destroyed (18:9-10), the merchants do the same (18:15). The reason is because God will judge the men of Babylon separately from the city of Babylon. Armageddon is when God gathers the men of the Antichrist’s kingdom away from Babylon (16:16). He then destroys the city of Babylon (chs. 17-18), while the men watch from Armageddon. They weep because everything they worked for in this world has been destroyed. That is why Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth..., but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20).

Next, the men of Babylon will be destroyed in chapter 19. They know that they will be destroyed, too, because, when Jesus appears, they will say “to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (6:16-17). Therefore, part of their weeping is due to the fact that they know that their destruction is coming next.

18:16 Note that Babylon bears the number of man by being clothed with six things: fine linen, purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls. It even mimics the holy city, since Jerusalem has streets of gold, gates of pearl, and precious stones. Jerusalem also has the righteous clothed in fine linen. Thus, Satan made Babylon to look like God’s holy city, Jerusalem, as part of his deception.

18:17 Now we see the merchants outside of the Babylonian area, crying over Babylon’s destruction. The kings of the earth feared her torment (18:10), as did the close merchants (18:15). There is no mention of the far-away merchants fearing Babylon’s torment, probably because they were not closely tied to her religious blasphemies. However, they do stand afar off, just like the others, which shows just how frightening Babylon’s destruction is.

18:18-19 “By reason of her costliness” (18:19) tells you that the merchants and business owners will get rich off of Babylon’s economic system. The

“middle class,” if there is one, will struggle to make ends meet, as all of the profits go to the businesses aligned with the Antichrist’s empire. This is seen in the fact that the only group, other than the little flock, that does not mourn over the fall of Babylon, is the common folks, since they are not mentioned.

The shipmasters, though, do mourn, because they “were made rich” (18:19) by Babylon. Note also how the ship merchants only care about the material world, as they exclaim, “What city is like unto this great city!” (18:18). In 21:10-27, we will get a description of a far greater city—the New Jerusalem. But, the merchants chose not to place their faith in God and be inhabitants of that city, because doing so means suffering through the tribulation period. Therefore, they choose “to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,” rather than “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in” Babylon (Hebrews 11:25-26).

18:20 Now, the scene shifts to saved Israel in heaven, who is waiting for God’s overthrow of wickedness upon the earth so that they can rule and reign with Christ on earth. Since Babylon has been overthrown and the wicked people will soon be slain, saved Israel in heaven starts rejoicing. Although all of saved Israel rejoices, there is a greater rejoicing among the apostles and prophets of Israel’s program, because they were subjected to greater persecution and death by the Babylonian religious system.

In Revelation 6:10, martyred members of the little flock asked the Lord: “How long ... dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” By the time we get to 18:20, “God hath avenged you on her.” Therefore, they rejoice, because their prayer has been answered. Note the great contrast in God’s two realms: heaven rejoices and the earth mourns over the destruction of Babylon (18:9-20). (We also saw the heavens rejoice in 12:12 at the midpoint of the tribulation period when Satan was cast to the earth. That rejoicing was due to the body of Christ being able to take Satan’s positions in heavenly places.)

18:21 Babylon’s fall fulfills the prophecy of Jeremiah 51:63-64. The important part of 18:21 is the phrase: “and shall be found no more at all” (18:21). Babylon rose up against God in Genesis 11. It continued in mystery form after that. It will then rise up in its full power in the Great Tribulation period. “And shall be found no more at all” tells us that, at the end of the Great Tribulation period, God will utterly destroy Babylon, never to rise again. Praise the Lord!

We should also note that Jesus said that it were better for a millstone to be hung around someone’s neck and that person be drowned in the sea than to offend little ones, keeping them from entering into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:4-6). This shows that Jesus did not choose this illustration by accident, since the mighty angel, in 18:21, also takes up a millstone and

casts it into the sea to describe the great violence with which Babylon is destroyed.

18:22-23 Following after a false religion is considered by God to be fornication. The way that Satan gets people to follow religion is described here by God as by “sorceries” (18:23). In other words, Satan uses “cunning craftiness” (Ephesians 4:14), having transformed himself “into an angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:14), to get people to follow their own lusts of the flesh, while making them think that they are following the Word of God.

In other words, Satan casts a spell upon people by turning God’s Word into a sorcery book to get men to follow him and think that they are following God. Barjesus is a type of this, being a sorcerer, who desired to hear the Word of God so that he might turn people away from the faith (Acts 13:6-8). That is exactly what Satan does. He recognizes the power of God’s Word (Hebrews 4:12) and uses that power for his own, selfish purposes.

Paul asked the question: “O foolish Galatians, who hath BEWITCHED you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Galatians 3:1). If they were “bewitched,” then a spell was cast on them from a spiritual sorcerer. In the tribulation period, Satan’s ministers will cast spells upon apostate Israel by transforming themselves into “the ministers of righteousness” and “the apostles of Christ,” when they are really “false apostles, deceitful workers” (II Corinthians 11:13,15). Thus, “by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (18:23).

Five groups of people are mentioned in 18:22-23: 1) Entertainers (musicians), 2) Skilled and unskilled workers (craftsman and the sound of a millstone), 3) Educators/scholars/philosophers (light of a candle), 4) Young people in love (bridegroom and bride), and 5) Businessmen (merchants). Primarily, these are the five ways that the people of this world are made happy—they enjoy entertainment, working at a job, studying for education’s sake, pursuing love, and making money. This shows that those, who pursue these things, for their flesh’s sake, are under the spell of Babylon, thinking they are doing good, when they are really just following their own lusts.

These worldly pursuits are not found anymore, because the things of this world pass away with the destruction of the world’s system (I Corinthians 7:31). Today, everyone on earth, including Churchianity, seems to be pursuing happiness. The US Constitution even gives everyone the opportunity for “the pursuit of happiness.” This shows how entire nations can be cast under the spell of Babylon, as seen here.

18:24 In talking to the Jewish religious leaders of His time, Jesus said, “Upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.... All these things shall come upon this generation” (Matthew 23:35-36), referring to the “generation of vipers” (Matthew 23:33). Now, in 18:24, we are told that

“the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” is found in Babylon. This shows that the religion of apostate Israel in Jesus’ day was the Babylonian religion, which is the religion of Satan. Therefore, we can also say that, today, the greatest enemy of Christians is the “Christian” religion, because man thinks that it is of God, when it is really of Satan. “Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall” (Jeremiah 51:49) by her false religion; therefore, God destroys her at the end of the tribulation period.

19 With the city of Babylon destroyed, God now focuses on destroying all those aligned with the Antichrist. First, we see saved Israel in heaven, praising God for destroying Babylon (18:20; 19:1-6). They are then given their wedding garments so that they can be married to Christ (vs. 7-9). However, Christ has to come to the earth and clean off a place for Him and His wife to dwell together forever. He has all of Satan’s followers gather together for the battle of Armageddon (v. 19; 16:12-16). The Lord Jesus Christ then comes on a white horse (vs. 11-13) and completely destroys Satan’s armies (vs. 20-21). Note that there are no casualties on God’s side; God totally annihilates Satan’s armies. Jesus destroys them with the Word of God (v. 15). It is such a destruction that all the birds are called to feast on the flesh of the wicked (vs. 17-18), and they actually become full from the feast (v. 21)! The beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire to burn forever (v. 20), while all men aligned with them are killed (v. 21) and will be judged into that same lake of fire after the millennial reign is over (20:11-15).

19:1 “After these things” tells us that God’s judgment of the people, who followed the Antichrist, takes place after Babylon falls. In the sixth-vial judgment, God allowed the unholy trinity (Satan, Antichrist, and False Prophet) to perform miracles to get as many unbelievers as possible to follow them to the battle of Armageddon (16:12-16). This may seem like a cruel thing, but it was actually a show of God’s mercy. The reason for this is because, in chapters 17-18, Babylon was destroyed. By getting the Antichrist’s followers to come out of the city before its destruction, it enabled the people to see all of this take place. There should be no doubt now, in the minds of the remaining members of the lost sheep of the house of Israel who have not believed the gospel yet, that they need to “come out of her, My people” (18:4).

(Perhaps the fall of Babylon coincides with the midnight cry of the believing remnant to the virgins who are still sleeping, resulting in their salvation (Matthew 25:5-10). As mentioned in the notes on 6:12-14, the Lord’s coming for this final battle will be after a period of darkness for, possibly, 45 days (1,335 days in Daniel 12:12 minus 1,290 days in Daniel 12:11). After the whole world gathers for this battle, God turns off all the lights: the sun is black, the moon is blood, the stars fall, and the heaven is taken away (6:12-14). Therefore, the lost sheep of Israel have 45 days to sit in darkness to contemplate what the fall of Babylon means before they decide to actually go

into battle with Satan or not. This gives them plenty of time to believe the gospel and be saved.)

19:1-6 ends up being the fulfillment of the command in 18:20 to “rejoice over her, thou heaven.” In 19:1, we see the people in heaven praising God, because man’s kingdom has been destroyed, and God will soon set up His eternal kingdom on earth (Daniel 2:44). The four characteristics of this are: 1) Salvation, 2) Glory, 3) Honour, and 4) Power. Salvation has come, because God has saved His people from their sins and from the adversary (Matthew 1:21; Jeremiah 31:11). Glory comes to God for the great victory He won over Satan. Honour comes to Him as the Gentiles come to Him during the millennial reign, to worship Him as King of kings and Lord of lords (Isaiah 66:23, 2:2-3, and Revelation 19:16). Power is unto Him, as He keeps sin at bay during the millennial reign, by ruling the Gentiles “with a rod of iron” (19:15).

19:2 Babylon caused the world to rebel against God, their Creator, and serve Satan instead. Then, members of the believing remnant were killed by Babylon’s followers. God’s punishment always fits the crime. Since the crime was leading people into the lake of fire and killing the little flock of Israel, Babylon’s punishment is for Babylonians to be killed (19:21) and be thrown into the lake of fire themselves (20:11-15). This makes their punishment “true” (19:2), i.e., their punishment fits their crime, and “righteous” (19:2), i.e., it is a fair punishment. This punishment also makes God faithful to His promise to avenge the blood of His people.

19:3 Mark 9:43-48 says that the fire of hell is never quenched. In Revelation 14:9-11, we were told that those, aligning themselves with Babylon by worshipping the image and taking the mark, will burn forever in the lake of fire, and that “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” Therefore, when we see Babylon’s smoke rising up for ever and ever (19:3), we can conclude that the city of Babylon also burns for all eternity in the lake of fire. This shows that God judges both Satan’s religion and the people that follow it in the same manner.

19:4 In 4:10-11, we saw the 24 elders before God’s throne say, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power.” That was at the beginning of the tribulation period. Now that the tribulation period has ended, we see the 24 elders again, just after we are told: “salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God” (19:1). This means that additional glory and honour comes to God through the salvation of Israel, and it takes the events of the tribulation period to bring Israel to a place where they have the faith to allow God to save them. With Israel having been saved, the four beasts and the 24 elders declare “Alleluia,” meaning “glory to God” or “praise to God.” Note how prevalent the praise of God is with the destruction of Satan’s kingdom, as we hear “Alleluia” in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6.

19:5 The voice, coming out of the throne, is probably Jesus, the man, leading Israel in praising God. (Alternatively, it could be David doing this, since David will be co-regent with Jesus in the earthly kingdom (see Ezekiel 37:24-25).) In any event, this praise comes after Babylon is destroyed, but before Jesus' second coming. Therefore, saved Israel has not yet received the atonement. That is why they are still called God's "servants," here, while today, in the body of Christ, we are His sons (Galatians 4:5-7). Once Jesus comes back, Israel receives the atonement, and they become God's sons at that time (21:7).

"Ye that fear Him" (19:5) would be Gentiles in Israel's program, who get to enter God's eternal kingdom, because they blessed Israel (Genesis 12:1-3 and Matthew 25:31-46). God says that "the fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). These Gentiles will be on the earth to be ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ for 1,000 years, as believing Israel goes to them as a kingdom of priests to reconcile them back to God (Exodus 19:5-6; Zechariah 8:23). Then, those Gentiles, who trust in God to give them righteousness, rather than trusting their own self-righteousness, will side with the Lord Jesus Christ in God's final battle with Satan (20:7-10). The result will be that these Gentiles will be eternally saved in God's earthly kingdom. These Gentiles, then, are encouraged to praise the Lord for giving them this second chance to enter God's kingdom in Israel's program.

"His servants" (Israel) and "ye that fear Him" (Gentiles) (19:5) together comprise all those saved during the prophecy dispensation.

19:6 Since the multitude covers all saved people throughout history, except for the mystery dispensation, this is "a great multitude" of people. Note that they call the Lord God "omnipotent" or all powerful. No one can say that, "I made it into God's kingdom by my good works," or "I made it by keeping the law." All men are powerless to save themselves. It is the omnipotence of God that takes man from being Satan's "lawful captive" (Isaiah 49:24-25) and brings him into God's eternal kingdom. Since the Lord Jesus Christ is "the blessed and only Potentate" (I Timothy 6:15), no one can stop Him from doing this.

Also, note how loud the saved are. They are "the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings" (19:6). This shows that they are a large group, and they are an excited group! All saved people are excited to give praise to the Lord for all eternity for giving them eternal life in His kingdom on earth. The Trinity is also seen here. The great multitude of people would be those who are in Christ. The "many waters" represent the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). The "mighty thunderings" represent God the Father's voice (John 12:28-29). Thus, God's "eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20) are both seen here.

19:7 Isaiah 62:1-4 says that Jesus marries the land of Israel. When we see the bride in 21:9-27, it is a city—the New Jerusalem. Romans 11:26 says,

“all Israel shall be saved.” Thus, the marriage of the Lamb is when the Lord Jesus Christ marries all Jews, who, by faith, are part of saved Israel. In other words, believers make up the city, just like the body of Christ today is said to be “the building” that “groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:21).

The Lord Jesus Christ has been waiting a long time, until “His wife hath made herself ready” (19:7). Israel is not “ready” to marry Christ until she has faith in God. She does not have faith in God until she has been tried by the fires of the tribulation period. God puts Israel through the refiner’s fire of the tribulation period. The result is a pure bride, who has faith in God, so that they are pleasant unto the Lord (Malachi 3:2-4). They have repented from following the Babylonian religious system, the Antichrist, and apostate Israel, and have faith that God will deliver them from Satan via the law covenant He made with them. It is, then, by this faith that “His wife hath made herself ready,” such that she can now marry the Lamb (19:7). Christ is seen as “the Lamb” because He is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), and so His bride sees Him as “the Lamb” (see 5:6).

19:8 Because Israel is holy by faith in God to save her from being Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25), she receives the righteousness of God imputed unto her, as evidenced by the fine, clean, white linen she receives here. In Isaiah 1:18, God said, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” They were scarlet when they followed the “scarlet coloured beast” (17:3). Now, by faith, they are white, and so they receive the white linen, which “is the righteousness of saints” (19:8).

In 3:4-5, believers in Sardis are said to “walk with [Jesus] in white: for they are worthy.” The reason they are worthy is because they overcame. “They overcame...by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (12:11). This is why 19:8 says that “to her was GRANTED that she should be arrayed in fine linen.” She did not earn salvation by her works. Rather, she had faith to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and so God GRANTS that she receives His imputed righteousness.

19:9 The “he,” of this verse, is a member of saved Israel, as seen in 19:10. So, who are “called?” The answer is in 22:17—“whosoever will” may come. This would be the “whosoever will” of Israel specifically, as Matthew 22:14 says “MANY are called.” The “many” represent Israel. Of course, the Gentiles may be saved in Israel’s dispensation as well, but they are not part of the bride unless they become proselytes.

The problem is that, although “many are called,” “few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). The reason that few are chosen is because many Jews try to come to God with their works, rather than by faith. Therefore, they come to the marriage supper without a wedding garment on (Matthew 22:12). In other words, they are not wearing the fine linen, which is the righteousness of the

saints. Therefore, they are unholy and must be cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:13). “Outer darkness” is a place outside of God’s kingdom, where they will wait until the great white throne judgment, when they are cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 13:42; Revelation 20:11-15). That is when “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13).

Now, getting back to 19:9, those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed because they have the opportunity to be married to the Lord Jesus Christ forever. Just like a woman is blessed when she finds and marries a godly man, all Jews, with faith in God, are blessed, because they get to be married to the perfect man—the Lord Jesus Christ—for all eternity.

Note that 19:9 ends with “these are the true sayings of God.” This tells us that Satan will so blaspheme God and His Word that he will convince Jews that the marriage supper is a bad thing. After all, Jews expect their Messiah to overthrow the government and begin world rule immediately. That is what the Antichrist will do. Jesus did not do that. Instead, He came and suffered and died first. Therefore, Jesus will be depicted in the tribulation period as the false christ. Therefore, marrying Him would be a bad thing in that view. This upside-down view, that will be prevalent during the tribulation period, is why “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14).

19:10 Since the one, standing before John, is a member of saved Israel, he is not God and should not be worshipped. Now, John knows to worship only the true God (I John 5:20-21). However, John seems to see God everywhere he turns, whether it is Jesus the man, Jesus the Lamb, Jesus the angel, etc. Therefore, John may think that this angel is Jesus the man, but he is not. He is just a plain, ordinary man. Therefore, he should not be worshipped. We know that he is a member of saved Israel because he says, “I am ... of thy brethren” (19:10).

The phrase “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10) is very illuminating. Old Testament prophecy is focused on getting Israel to have faith in God’s law covenant with them, such that they turn from their religion and idolatry to serve Jehovah God so that He may give them eternal life in His kingdom on earth. That is the goal of prophecy. “The spirit of prophecy,” though, may not be clear from the Old Testament prophets, which is why it is great that this illuminated, saved member of Israel reveals that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

“The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life” (II Corinthians 3:6). The letter of the law covenant cannot bring Israel into the kingdom, as God had promised. It takes Jesus’ perfect life and sacrifice for sins in order to bring Israel into the kingdom. Therefore, while the letter of prophecy focuses on the faith that Israel needs for God to give them His kingdom (Luke 12:32), the spirit behind all of this, or, the ability to give eternal life to Israel, is in “the testimony of Jesus.” Therefore, even under the law covenant, it is

Jesus' fulfillment of the law, as a man, rather than Israel's obedience of the law, that gives them eternal life in God's kingdom on earth.

The testimony of Jesus is that He found God to be faithful to His promises to Him. God promised to sit Him at His right hand (Psalm 110:1). Jesus endured the cross, having faith that God would give Him this promise (Hebrews 12:2). Since Jesus is "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), He has received the new body after His resurrection and has sat down at the Father's right hand. At the time of the writing of the book of Revelation, Jesus is still the only One Who has ever received the new body, and so He can testify that God is true to His promises to Israel, when no one else has this testimony.

(The book of Revelation starts with: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). Revelation is the last prophetic book of Israel's program. God gave similar revelations to Daniel, but God told him to: "Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4). Perhaps the reason that God does not reveal many end-time prophecies until after the cross is because He wanted to make sure that the spirit of prophecy, i.e., the testimony of Jesus, was known to Israel so that they would have the letter of end-time events until they had the spirit, as well.)

We should also note how smart saved man becomes, once he begins eternity with God. Before the Holy Ghost came in Acts 2, I dare say that no one understood that Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Not even the 12 apostles knew this, since they did not even believe that Jesus would die for their sins (Matthew 16:21-23)! In heaven, however, this truth is now clear to saved Israel. This shows that, regardless of how much of God's Word we allow the Holy Ghost to teach us on this earth, the majority of our learning will occur in heavenly places throughout all eternity.

19:11 This verse refers to the second coming of Christ. At the beginning of the tribulation period, Satan copies Jesus' second coming by riding in on a white horse (6:2), but the real coming of Jesus is at the end of the tribulation period, here in 19:11.

"Heaven opened" (19:11) means that the glass sea beneath God's throne in heaven is opened (4:6) so that Jesus enters into the heaven surrounding the earth to judge the wicked. Jesus is "Faithful," because He does and has done everything that the Father tells Him to do. Thus, He has total faith in God the Father. He is "True," as opposed to the lies of Satan. Satan is the father of the lie (John 8:44), while God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Therefore, His being "Faithful" speaks of Jesus' perfect humanity and His being "True" speaks of His deity. Therefore, the one, coming to judge the Antichrist and His forces, is the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. ("For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).)

His judgments are in righteousness, meaning that He will pardon the saved, while destroying the wicked. This goes back to Abraham's question in Genesis 18:25: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The answer is, "absolutely yes!" The "right" thing to do in Genesis 18 was to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness. The "right" thing to do in Revelation 19 is to destroy all those individuals mixed up with Babylon for their wickedness. (Sodom and Gomorrah are actually "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).) Therefore, He will "make war" (19:11) with Satan's forces because the people of Babylon are guilty. The first thing Jesus does at His second coming is to destroy the wicked, because the earth must be cleansed from the curse of sin before He can give saved Israel eternal life in the kingdom.

19:12-13 In 1:14, we saw Jesus' "eyes were as a flame of fire." He used that fire to refine Israel, so that they would have the faith to enter the kingdom (Malachi 3:2-4). Now, at His second coming, He will use those same, fiery eyes to consume His enemies. God is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13), and sin is consumed by God's fire (Hebrews 12:29). Therefore, in order to maintain His holiness, Jesus' eyes must be "as a flame of fire."

The beast was over 10 kingdoms (17:3). But, because Jesus is "King of kings" (17:14), He has "many crowns" (19:12), because He is over all kings. The beast was "full of names of blasphemy" (17:3). The Lord Jesus Christ has one name written (19:12). So holy is His name that "no man knew" it (19:12), so that they will not be able even to attempt to blaspheme it.

The name, that man will call Him, is "The Word of God" (19:13). John 1:1 says, "in the beginning was the Word." Now, we see the Word is the end, too. He has come to the earth "to make an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24). Since the Word begins and ends everything, this makes Him, the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (21:6). Psalm 138:2 says, "for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name." Therefore, the name, "The Word of God" (19:13), is the Lord Jesus Christ's highest name and is why that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

All of humanity, regardless of dispensation, is in two men. If you do not have faith in what God has told you, you are in Adam. If you do have faith in what God has told you, you are in Christ (Romans 5:12-21 & I Corinthians 15:22). God said, when I see the blood, I will "pass over" you (Exodus 12:23), meaning that the blood of the Lamb keeps people from suffering death. Here, in 19:13, we see that Christ's vesture is dipped in blood. This is the pure, spotless blood of the Lamb. The Lord Jesus Christ offered His blood for atonement in heaven. He then put the blood on His vesture. For all those

in Christ, we are covered by His blood, such that, God passes over us, when He brings death upon the world, and we receive eternal life. Those in Adam are not covered by the blood, because their lives not hid “with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Therefore, they suffer eternal damnation in the lake of fire.

An alternative view, regarding the blood, is found in Isaiah 63:1-4, which says that the blood is the blood of the wicked, who He has destroyed. This would coincide with all of the blood seen in the winepress of the wrath of God at Jesus’ second coming (14:20). While this is true, I do not think this is the primary blood seen in 19:13, because the vesture here is “DIPPED in blood,” as opposed to being “sprinkled” upon His garments, as in Isaiah 63:3. In other words, I think 19:13 is showing Jesus with His vesture already dipped in blood so that believing Israel will be spared His judgment. Jesus will then slay the wicked at Armageddon (19:21), resulting in the blood sprinkled on His garment, as detailed in Isaiah 63:1-4.

19:14 Thus, Jesus’ first order of business in His second coming in Israel’s program is to judge the wicked, not to bring salvation to the righteous. “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Luke 17:36). Churchianity says that they are taken to heaven, but the Lord Jesus Christ says they are taken to where the eagles are gathered (Luke 17:37) in order to feast on the carcasses of the wicked that the Lord kills at this time (Matthew 24:28). This is why 19:14 says that Jesus brings His armies with Him to come to the earth and destroy the wicked. The righteous are not destroyed with the wicked (Genesis 18:23), because the righteous are covered by the blood of the Lamb. The armies in heaven are “clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (19:14). 19:8 says that the Lamb’s wife is “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” Thus, the armies, coming with the Lord, are the saved of Israel.

When Jesus comes to the house of Israel, the “strong man” (Matthew 12:29), i.e., Satan, is in the house and has Israel as his lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25). Therefore, Christ comes into this house and kicks Satan and his host out of the earth, so that Jesus can dwell in Jerusalem with His wife forever.

19:15 Hebrews 4:12 says, “the Word of God is ... sharper than any twoedged sword.” Ephesians 6:17 says that “the sword of the Spirit ... is the Word of God.” Therefore, we can conclude that the “sharp sword” in 19:15 is the Word of God. It comes out of the Lord Jesus Christ’s mouth, which shows that the way He smites the nations is by speaking God’s Word, showing them where they have failed in keeping God’s commandments. In Genesis 1, God spoke everything into existence (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26), and now God speaks to destroy those aligned with Satan against Him.

Jesus’ ruling “them with a rod of iron” (19:15) refers to the millennial reign (2:27), as seen in Psalm 2:7-9. This “rod of iron” is God’s law, as given to Israel in Exodus – Deuteronomy, according to Isaiah 2:2-3. Thus, Jesus

comes against the Gentiles with the Word of God. He smites them with it, if they have aligned themselves with Satan at the battle of Armageddon. The remaining Gentiles enter the millennial kingdom, where Jesus Christ will rule them by the law found in His Word.

The wicked are killed at Jesus' second coming. This is the treading of "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:15). The details of this are given in 14:14-20. There, we see the angels go to work in reaping the harvest of the earth's fruit (This means that they take away the wicked to be killed. In Matthew 13:30, this is called separating the wheat from the tares and taking the tares to be burned.), and then taking the earth's grapes and thrusting them into the winepress of God's wrath.

A comparison of Genesis 1-3 and Judges 9:7-15 reveals that the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a grape. Eating a grape, then, stands for sin. This is why 19:15 refers to this judgment time as treading the "winepress" of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 14:20 says that "the winepress was trodden without [outside] the city." From 16:12-16, we see the people of the earth are gathered to Armageddon, which is outside Jerusalem, via the sixth-vial judgment. Therefore, Armageddon is probably the location of God's "winepress."

19:16 How appropriate that Jesus' bloodied vesture says "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," since He had to win the battle over Satan, both on the cross and here, in order to earn that title. Note from 19:14-16 that, while saved Israel—Christ's wife—is at the battle, Christ does all the fighting for her. However, the blood of the wicked, from 14:20, will get on believing Israel's feet, which is why Jesus told His 12 apostles: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10). In other words, saved Israel is clean, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb and having been water baptized. However, their feet will have wicked blood on them, such that they will need to have their feet washed by Jesus before they actually take their positions of authority in God's kingdom on earth.

19:17-18 Since many in the world go to the battle of Armageddon, there are an innumerable amount of dead bodies on the ground that need to be cleaned up. Therefore, God summons all the birds to come and clean up for Him. ("Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28).) It is estimated that there are over 1 billion birds in the world today. Now, you know why there are so many. Note that God is no respecter of persons. The mighty, the weak, the free, the bond, the small, and the great are all subject to God's wrath. God judges men for their lack of faith, not for their lack of money, power, or anything else.

Note, from 19:17, that the angel stands "IN the sun." Perhaps this just means that the angel stands in the sun's rays. However, Malachi 4:2 calls the Lord, "the Sun of righteousness." Therefore, it could mean that the angel

stands in the Lord when He commands the birds to come to the great God's supper. If so, does this mean that the Lord guides birds where to go? Maybe this explains how birds can fly thousands of miles back and forth each year to the exact location as previous years and never get lost—they are guided by the Lord, the Sun of righteousness.

19:19 What a sight this must be to see many in the world gathered to battle against God with 1 billion birds circling overhead, so that they can clean up the carnage that is left behind. Perhaps this is the absolute last chance for unbelievers to change their minds about battling against God. However, all, who have taken the mark or worshipped the beast, are hardened to the point of no return. Therefore, they will never believe God, regardless of the evidence that is put before their eyes.

19:20-21 What is striking is what these verses do NOT say. Hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people are gathered to fight against God and His saved millions. God's army is vastly outnumbered in terms of people. Yet, the account of the battle is not: "They fought, back and forth for years. There were many casualties on both sides. Finally, Satan made a tactical error, and God squeaked out a victory." You have none of that here. The war seems to last only seconds. The Lord Jesus Christ, ALL BY HIMSELF, destroys all of the people who are on Satan's side. So many people are killed that over 1 billion birds become completely full of the carnage.

Note the language: "and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet ..., and the remnant were slain" (19:20-21). This language shows that the battle was absolutely no contest. The Lord Jesus Christ destroyed them all with the sword, which is the Word of God. I doubt any of Satan's people even had time to draw their weapons before they were utterly destroyed. This shows how powerful God's Word really is, which is why we are told to use it in our spiritual warfare today (see Ephesians 6:11-18). The people of Satan's army will be thrown into the lake of fire, along with all other unsaved people, after the millennial reign is over (20:11-15). Therefore, they are killed and their souls are brought to hell, awaiting that judgment. The beast and the false prophet, however, are part of Satan's unholy trinity, being Anti-Christ and Anti-Holy Ghost, respectively. Therefore, they are immediately judged and thrown into the lake of fire to burn for all eternity.

20 With the beast, the false prophet, and their armies taken out of the way (19:19-21), God throws Satan into a bottomless pit (vs. 1-3). With all of Satan's forces, including Satan himself, being taken off of the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ now establishes God's kingdom on earth. For the first 1,000 years, saved Israel rules the earth with Christ as a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles (vs. 4-6). Once the millennial reign is over, Satan is loosed so that the Gentiles can use their free will to decide if they will believe God or Satan (v. 7). Although Satan is only loosed for "a little season" (v. 3), he manages to convince an innumerable amount of Gentiles (v. 8) to rebel

against Christ's rule, and oppose God for the final battle (vs. 7-9). It is not much of a battle, since God destroys them with fire that comes down from heaven (vs. 9-10). Then, God resurrects all unsaved men and judges them according to their works, resulting in them being cast into the lake of fire (vs. 11-15). This is an eternal fire of torment that is in stark contrast to the glories of God's kingdom that the saved will experience.

20:1-3 We saw that the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the tribulation period (19:20). However, Satan is not judged yet, because God must be just in giving the Gentiles an opportunity to make a free-will decision to side with God or with Satan. Therefore, Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. During the next 1,000 years, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron (19:15). Then, Satan will be loosed so that he can deceive the nations for a final battle against God once the millennial reign is over (20:7-10).

Note that Satan is bound by a great chain. People do not take this literally, because they say that Satan is a cherub, which is a spirit, and so he cannot be bound by a chain! But, that is not true. If God can create spirits, then He can create a different type of chain than what we have on earth, that can bind a cherub for 1,000 years. In Jude 6, the angels, that sinned in Noah's day, are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." This tells us that spiritual chains are actually stronger than physical chains, since physical chains do not last forever.

In case there is any doubt as to who is bound for 1,000 years, 4 of his names are given. He is "the dragon," who orchestrated the angelic rebellion in heaven (12:3-9). He is "that old serpent," who tempted Eve to disobey God (Genesis 3). He is "the Devil," who walks about as a roaring lion on the earth, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). He is "Satan," who deceives the world into following him, instead of God (20:7). Thus, we see that Satan takes on different forms to get the world into his kingdom, just like we have seen in Revelation that the Lord Jesus Christ takes on different forms in order to save those with faith in God.

Today, as members of the body of Christ, we are sealed with the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 1:13-14), which ensures that we will receive our new bodies. Well, God seals Satan, too, except Satan's seal is to keep him from deceiving the world during Jesus' millennial reign, by getting out of the bottomless pit. Thus, Satan is chained and sealed in prison for 1,000 years.

We are not told how long the "little season" lasts in which Satan is loosed to deceive the nations after the millennial reign is over. It is probably just long enough for the world to understand what Satan offers so that they can make a free-will decision regarding who will be their master. My guess is that the little season will only be for a few months.

20:4 Now, we see Jesus' millennial reign. We see, here, that the method of killing by the Antichrist of those, who will not worship the image of the beast, is beheading. In 6:9, these souls were seen under the altar in heaven. Now, with the victory won over the Antichrist and his forces, they are given thrones to sit on in God's eternal kingdom. Matthew 24:13 says that "he that shall endure unto the end [of the tribulation period] shall be saved." Now, we see what enduring unto the end means. It means they "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands" (20:4). Note that believing Israel is not saved by keeping the law, as many people think. They can only lose their salvation by pledging their allegiance to Satan through the mark or bowing down to the image. "For by the works of the law shall NO flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

These verses, in Revelation 20, give further revelation about God's eternal kingdom on earth. Granted, Old Testament prophecy does say that Israel will be in God's eternal kingdom on earth, but there is no mention in the Bible, except for here, that there is an initial 1,000-year reign, followed by Satan's rebellion. In other words, God did not reveal these two events until here in Revelation 20.

Note also that the reason the Antichrist beheaded souls was "for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God" (20:4). Jesus said, "whosoever shall deny Me before men, Him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:33). Members of the little flock, who appear before the Antichrist, will be asked to deny Christ. If they do not deny Him, they will be beheaded. Thus, they are beheaded "for the witness of Jesus." Of course, the reason they believe this witness is because it is based on faith in the word of God, which is the second reason why they are beheaded.

We should also note that the believing remnant of Israel's reign on earth with Jesus does not stop after the 1,000 years are over, because 22:5 says that "they shall reign for ever and ever." Therefore, the 1,000 years are mentioned, not to limit Israel's reign, but to limit the time they have to reach the Gentiles before Satan is loosed and goes about to deceive them.

20:5 The first resurrection is not a reference to the rapture of the body of Christ. The rapture occurs before Israel's program is resumed, which is before the tribulation period starts. The first resurrection is a reference to the first resurrection in Israel's program. This is a resurrection of the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16) for them to rule and reign over the Gentiles during the millennial reign. Initially, you may think this resurrection involves only those, who were believers during the tribulation period. However, the only other resurrection, mentioned in Revelation, is of all unbelievers (20:13). Therefore, "the first resurrection" must include all saved Jews in Israel's program, going all the way back to Abraham, while "the rest of the dead" refers to all unsaved people from all dispensations. They stay in the grave until death and hell give them up after the millennial reign. They are then

judged to the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15). (Gentiles, who were not destroyed at Armageddon, go into the kingdom to be ruled with a rod of iron by Jesus. They are judged at the end of the millennial reign into either God's kingdom or hell, based upon either blessing or cursing Israel, respectively (see Matthew 25:31-46).)

20:6 Another proof that the first resurrection includes all saved people in Israel's dispensation is the statement, here, that they are blessed because the second death has no power over them.

Obviously, since only saved Israel is part of the first resurrection, while apostate Israel remains in their graves, those, who are a part of this first resurrection, are "blessed and holy" (20:6). They are "blessed" by ruling with Christ for all eternity, and they are "holy" because they have been justified by faith plus works (James 2:24) in order to be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

"The second death" (20:6) comes upon those, who are part of the Great White Throne Judgment. The term "second death" is defined in 20:14 as being cast into the lake of fire. Thus, the Israel of God does not receive the second death.

Back in Exodus 19:5-6, God told Israel that they would be a "kingdom of priests" to the Gentiles. God specifically said in that passage that "these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of ISRAEL," proving, once again, that the book of Revelation is written to Israel, and not to us today. Here, in 20:6, we finally see them fulfilling this calling in the millennial reign. Isaiah 61:6 mentions this, as well. A priest's job is to be a mediator between God and man. Since Jesus is ruling with the rod of iron of the law (19:15), saved Israel, as a kingdom of priests, will go out to the Gentiles and "teach all nations," "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). The Gentiles then respond, as seen in Zechariah 8:23: "Ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." As they go to Jerusalem, they say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3). Thus, we see how God uses saved Israel as a kingdom of priests during the millennial reign to reach the Gentiles with God's law.

In addition to being priests, Israel shall also reign with Christ for 1,000 years. Deuteronomy 32:8 says that the Gentiles will be divided into 12 territories. Each territory will have one of the 12 tribes of Israel over it. Then, Matthew 19:28 says that the 12 apostles will sit on "twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Therefore, in addition to getting the law out to the Gentiles, we also see a governmental structure, where Israel

reigns with Christ over the Gentiles. Now, Daniel 7:18 says that Israel will “possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” It is not just for 1,000 years. The reason that Revelation 20:6 says 1,000 years is because of the Satan-led rebellion that comes after that. However, that rebellion will be quickly overthrown. Then, God’s kingdom will continue for ever and ever.

20:7-8 You may wonder why God would allow another Satanic rebellion. After all, why not completely destroy Satan and his forces at the battle of Armageddon at the end of the tribulation period?

The reason that God allows another Satanic rebellion is that the only way to please God is by faith (Hebrews 11:6). The millennial reign includes Gentiles who just feared God and obeyed His law for 1,000 years because they did not want to be killed. Thus, they obeyed out of fear, and not out of faith. “The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10), which is why God starts with the fear of the Lord via the law. The purpose of the law for the Gentiles in the millennial reign is for them to learn that they are sinners and must have faith in God in order to receive justification (Galatians 3:24), so that they can live in God’s eternal kingdom. Therefore, God lets Satan loose from his prison in order to give these people the opportunity to either have faith in God or believe Satan’s lies. They must make a choice.

Satan, being the great deceiver, does a great job amassing an army so vast that “the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (20:8). God promised Abram that He would make his seed as numerous “as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Genesis 22:17). Several thousand years have passed since God made that promise to Abram, and it still has not come to pass. (It probably will not come to pass for Israel until the dispensation of the fulness of times.) Meanwhile, Satan is able to amass an army that size in only “a little season.” This shows how great of a draw the lusts of the flesh are to man, and this probably gives Satan confidence that he will defeat God. However, because God is the “ONLY Potentate” (I Timothy 6:15), God’s power alone will easily overcome the power of Satan and his army, regardless of how large that army is.

“Gog and Magog” are names of the people, who come up against God. These are not tribes of Israel. Rather, they are people, who are in rebellion of God’s governmental structure on earth. Magog was a son of Japheth, who was Noah’s son (I Chronicles 1:4-5). Gog was of the tribe of Reuben (I Chronicles 5:3-4). No detail is given about their lives. Therefore, we cannot determine why all unbelievers at the time are named after them.

Ezekiel 38-39 gives more detail of this final battle. Ezekiel 38:16 says that Gog and Magog will be so vast that they will cover the land as a cloud. They will come against Israel. God says in Ezekiel 38:16 that the purpose of this battle is “that the heathen may know Me.” In other words, the Gentiles are out of the rod-of-iron rule of God from the millennial reign, and they now

have a choice to know God by faith, as the God of all, and take His side and be in His kingdom for all eternity. Alternatively, they can follow the lusts of the flesh and side with Satan and spend eternity in the lake of fire. As we see in 20:8, the flesh is so strong that most people side with Satan in his rebellion. Of course, many also side with God, and they do so by faith, not by fear, because they have Satan as an alternative to God and they have chosen God instead. Thus, these Gentiles please God (Hebrews 11:6) and are rewarded with dwelling with God in His eternal kingdom on earth.

20:9-10 Before the millennial reign began, the beast (Anti-christ) and the false prophet (Anti-holy ghost) led an army against the true Christ, and the true Christ destroyed them in an instant (19:19-21). Now, after the millennial reign is over, Satan (Anti-god) leads an army against the true God again, and the true God destroys them in an instant, too.

This shows us that God fights Satan on his level. In Revelation 12:7, there is a fight in heavenly places between God and Satan. Since Satan is a cherub in heaven (Ezekiel 28:14), God has the angels, led by Archangel Michael to fight against Satan and his angels. In Revelation 19, the Antichrist fights, and so the true Christ fights him. Now, in Revelation 20, the Antigod fights, and so the true God fights him. Thus, God fights Satan on his level each time and defeats him every time.

This time, in Revelation 20, God destroys Satan's army with fire that comes down from heaven to devour them (20:9), just like God did with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25). This is the final defeat of the devil; therefore, he is now cast into the lake of fire. All members of the unholy trinity are now in the lake of fire, where they will be tormented without a break for all eternity. Note that even the devil himself is tormented day and night for ever and ever. This shows that the devil is not having fun in hell tormenting people, as some believe, but the devil is tormented himself for all eternity without a break!

To get an idea of what a massive destruction this is, you need to read the detailed account in Ezekiel 38-39. There, we are told that it will take seven years for Israelites to burn all of the weapons that Satan's forces used against God in the war (Ezekiel 39:9-10). We are also told that all of the house of Israel will work on cleansing the land of the dead bodies, and that it will take them seven months to bury all of the dead bodies (Ezekiel 39:11-13)! Even after the seven months are over, there will be bones, here and there, that travelers to the land will find that will need to be buried, also (Ezekiel 39:14-15). Thus, the Satanic army that is destroyed is massive compared with saved Israel! (Remember, saved Israel will not become as numerous as the sand of the sea until the dispensation of the fulness of times. Therefore, they are vastly outnumbered by Satan's army in this final battle between God and Satan.)

It must be a comical sight for billions of people to come with weapons in hand to battle God. They never get a chance to use their weapons, since God devours them with fire. A good comparison would be like an ant coming to you to fight you with a weapon of its own devising, and you simply step on it when it shows up. That is how lopsided this final battle is, yet man is so prideful that he honestly thinks he can defeat God with his crummy weapons!

Note that this final battle is against “the saints ... and the beloved city” (20:9). This is Israel’s program. Israel has ruled and reigned with Christ as priests for 1,000 years (20:6). The Gentiles have had ample opportunity to see that the Lord is God over all and worthy of worship. Gentiles, who believe the gospel of the kingdom, are part of this camp of saints in Jerusalem, and all of Satan’s forces come against Jerusalem to try to overthrow it, since that is the place from which the Lord Jesus Christ has been ruling over the universe for the last 1,000 years.

Since God has overthrown Satan’s rebellion for the last time, eternity now begins. With God’s purpose fulfilled with man, time is no longer (10:6). Thus, “the dispensation of the fullness of times” begins, in which all things in heaven and in earth are reconciled together in one in Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Also, “the camp of the saints ..., and the beloved city” (20:9) represent the holy place, since it is where God dwells. Thus, just like those approaching the holy place in the temple without being cleansed were killed under the old covenant, so, too, Satan and his army are destroyed by fire in order to protect the holy place of God’s throne.

20:11 II Peter 3:10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” 21:10 mentions the heaven and the earth fleeing away in the past tense, meaning that, once the devil is cast into the lake of fire, the heaven and the earth vanish, since he no longer has the ability to corrupt those realms.

Isaiah 51:6 says that “the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment.” This happens because both realms (heaven and earth) are polluted with sin. Sin must be completely removed so that none of the effects of sin are felt in God’s kingdom. Therefore, just like mankind dies, due to the curse of sin, so does the heaven and the earth.

God’s universe is now in a position, not unlike it was in Genesis 1:2, when “the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Before bringing in the new heaven and the new earth, God must banish all sin from His universe. This is accomplished with two judgments.

The first judgment is the judgment of the nations, mentioned in Matthew 25:31-46. This is when all Gentiles on the earth for the final battle against

God are judged based upon how they treated Israel. In other words, if they believed God, then they blessed Israel, doing whatsoever Jesus commanded in the kingdom (Matthew 28:20; Isaiah 2:2-3), and they receive eternal life in God's kingdom on earth. If they did not believe God, they cursed Israel, joining forces with Satan here, once they are no longer under Jesus' rod-of-iron rule (Psalm 2:7-9). They are then sent into everlasting fire. This judgment is not mentioned here, because Revelation is concerned with Israel. ("The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants [Israel] things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1).)

Having said this, it is possible that this judgment happens at the end of the tribulation period. The problem with this view is that it leaves no Biblical account of a judgment for believing Gentiles at the end of the millennial reign. Also, if the judgment is at the end of the tribulation period, then why have a millennial reign, since the fate of Gentiles in Israel's program has already been decided beforehand? It is for these reasons that I believe this judgment occurs here.

Once the judgment of the living Gentiles occurs, the judgment of all spiritually dead people takes place. That is what is mentioned here, and is called the Great White Throne Judgment, because God sits on a great white throne (20:11). This is when all dead unbelievers from all dispensations are judged into the lake of fire. Once sin is thrown into the lake of fire, it will not be around to corrupt the heaven and the earth any more. Therefore, God creates a new heaven and a new earth (21:1) that has not been corrupted nor has been cursed with the curse of sin. Through all of this, God's Word still stands, as Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

20:12 Note that it is "the dead," who stand before God. (This refutes Jehovah Witness' teaching that the dead are not tormented in fire because they are unconscious. God says that the dead STAND before God. If they can stand, they can feel pain forever in the lake of fire.) "The dead" are those, who did not take part in the first resurrection before the millennial reign (20:5-6) or in the rapture of the body of Christ (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). Thus, this judgment is of all unbelievers from all dispensations. We know this because all believers have the abundant life of Christ (John 10:10). They "WERE dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), but NOW they are "quicken...together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5). Therefore, "the dead" must be a reference to all unbelievers.

"The books" being opened is a reference to the books of the Bible. They "were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (20:12). The book of life is opened, too (20:12), but their names are not found in the book of life. Therefore, their works must be compared with the Word of God to find out if they earned righteousness by living a holy life. If they have "patient continuance in well doing," they will receive eternal life (Romans 2:7). The problem is that "there is none

righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). Therefore, they all go to the lake of fire. This is why 20:15 says, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Without the gift of life, they must earn life by their works. Since everyone’s works fall short, all are thrown into the lake of fire, who are judged by their works compared with the Bible. Therefore, the ONLY way to please God is by faith (Hebrews 11:6).

20:13 “The sea” (20:13) is used in the Bible to refer to Satan’s realm, e.g., “the great whore...sitteth upon many waters” (17:1). Therefore, this does not just refer to those buried at sea. Rather, this is a reference to all of those, who are in hell, being brought to this judgment. When a believer dies today, his soul and spirit go to heaven. (“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:8).) His flesh stays in the grave until the rapture, at which time his flesh is raised as incorruptible. In other words, this mortal puts on immortality (I Corinthians 15:53), and our vile flesh is changed to be fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

When an unbeliever dies, his soul and spirit go to hell. This is referred to as “the sea” (20:13), here, meaning a sea of fire. His flesh remains in the grave, since mortal flesh would burn away in hell. Then, at this judgment, the flesh is raised up to put on immortality. This event is referred to, here, as death and hell, delivering up the dead. Hell contains all unbelievers’ souls and spirits, while death contains all unbelievers’ fleshly bodies. These all come together for the great white throne judgment. Unbelievers’ flesh is transformed so that it will last forever in a burning lake of fire. Scripture refers to this immortal flesh in hell as “their worm” (Mark 9:44,46,48), which is an abhorring to all those who see it (Isaiah 66:24). Therefore, believers’ bodies are glorified, while unbelievers’ bodies degenerate.

20:13 emphasizes, as does 20:12, that all those at this judgment are judged according to their works. Romans 2:6-10 gives the details of this judgment. Those “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality,” receive “eternal life” (Romans 2:7). Those, who “do not obey the truth,” receive “tribulation and anguish” (Romans 2:8-9). In other words, if you are judged according to your works, you are thrown into the lake of fire, because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). This is why all those in death and hell are cast into the lake of fire (20:14), no exceptions.

20:14 Since death and hell have been corrupted by sin, they, too, are thrown into the lake of fire. Implied in this is that all “the dead which were in them” (20:13) are thrown into the lake of fire with death and hell. Since they have their immortal bodies now, they will burn forever. Their bodies burn down to what they really are without Christ, which are worms. And, in the lake of fire, “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). This eternal burning is “the second death” (20:14). We have already seen, from Isaiah 66:24, that all those in hell are “an abhorring unto

all flesh.” 14:9-11 says that they are “tormented with fire and brimstone” and that “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” Therefore, they both look and feel horrible.

For the saved, however, “the second death hath no power” (20:6). “Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:54). Death has finally been destroyed (I Corinthians 15:26). Glory to God!

What this shows us is that “life” and “death” are conditions. What I mean is that most people look at life and death from a fleshly perspective. They see “life” as all those who are breathing. Therefore, a top athlete has “life” just like someone on “life support,” who cannot breathe on his own. Then, they see “death” as like being in an unconscious state, where you simply cease to exist. However, God’s perspective is completely different. God says that “life” and “death” are eternal conditions within the spiritual realm. If you have life in Christ, you have “abundant” life (John 10:10) and God will show you “the exceeding riches of His grace” (Ephesians 2:7) toward you for all eternity. While those, in eternal death, suffer great torment for all eternity.

Therefore, your choice is not between eternal bliss or eternal non-existence, but it is between eternal bliss and eternal torment. Not only that, but there are also degrees of eternal bliss and torment. For the believer, we are told that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17). Therefore, we can have even more eternal bliss when we suffer for Christ’s sake in this life. For the unbeliever, we are told that those, who follow religion, end up being “twofold more the child of hell” (Matthew 23:15), and so they have even more eternal torment than your typical unbeliever. (Luke 12:47-48 shows degrees of punishment in hell, as well.)

20:15 20:12 says that the books of the Bible were opened, and the book of life was opened. The book of life contains the name of every person, who has ever lived. When the dead are judged according to the law contained in the Bible, they are found lacking. Therefore, their names are blotted out of the book of life (3:5). Because their names are not written in the book of life, they receive the second (and final) death, being cast into the lake of fire.

Note how this verse does not say that all people at the Great White Throne Judgment are cast into the lake of fire. It just says that those, who are not written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire. The reason I think God words it this way is that I think that there is one person at this judgment, who is not cast into the lake of fire. That person is Jesus.

Since Jesus, the man, had to obey the law perfectly in order to be the substitutionary sacrifice for all of mankind who have faith in Jesus, Jesus, the man, has to be judged by His works. Because He did have “patient continuance in well doing,” He receives eternal life (Romans 2:7). Now, He already received His glorified body at His resurrection 2,000 years ago.

Therefore, Jesus, the man, has already put on immortality, but He should still be judged at this judgment, showing the whole world that they must have had faith in Jesus in order to be saved.

Once all have been judged and only Jesus is found to receive eternal life based on His works, then, I believe, the scripture will be fulfilled that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11), because only the Lord could fulfill the law perfectly. After all, if 100 billion people are judged at this judgment and every single one of them is found to be lacking, both “small and great” (20:12), except Jesus, everyone would have to admit finally that Jesus Christ is Lord. The evidence of 100 billion people’s works would demand such to be the case. (Also, they do not have their vile flesh to keep them from bowing the knee, because it was destroyed when they died, and they have not received their hell-fire flesh yet.)

21 With the first heaven and the first earth passed away, God creates a new heaven and a new earth (v. 1). The dispensation of the fulness of times (10:6; Ephesians 1:10) begins. New Jerusalem, from which Jesus and the little flock will rule the world, is set on the new earth (v. 2). The curse of sin is lifted (vs. 3-6), and God indwells all of saved mankind (v. 7). Christ is married to new Jerusalem, which consists of “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) (vs. 9) (Jerusalem is finally “holy” (v. 10).), the description of which is given in verses 10-23. This is the main passage that Churchianity uses to describe heaven, but it is really talking about new Jerusalem on earth, showing that Churchianity does not believe their Bible. The saved Gentiles live outside of the city (v. 24) but are able to come into new Jerusalem whenever they want (vs. 25-26), because the gates of the city are always open so that Israel may “eat the riches of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 61:6). Although Jesus has an open-gate policy, no thing will defile, work an abomination, or make a lie there (v. 27), because Satan, his angels, and all those following him are in the lake of fire (v. 8). Therefore, life on this earth will be eternal joy.

21:1 With all unbelievers and all wickedness being thrown into the lake of fire forever, God can now set up His eternal kingdom on earth. Since the earth was polluted with the slain blood of righteous men, God brings about a new heaven and a new earth. No one will remember the old earth, because there is no sorrow in God’s kingdom (Isaiah 65:17). The new heaven and the new earth will last forever (Isaiah 66:22).

Note that “there was no more sea” (21:1). I mentioned, in 20:13, that the sea stands for Satan’s domain. God created the Seas on the third day of creation (Genesis 1:10) as a reminder of the Satanic rebellion that would take place on the earth. However, with Satan and his forces having been destroyed forever, he has no more influence whatsoever upon the earth. Therefore, God has no more sea on the new earth.

21:2 With the new heaven and the new earth being in place, Israel's paradise is moved to the earth. This paradise is called "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (21:2). It is "as a bride adorned for her husband" (21:2).

21:9-27 gives a description of "the bride, the Lamb's wife," showing that it is the New Jerusalem. Isaiah 62:4 says that Christ will marry the land. God waits until all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26) before He marries her, because, only then, is the "bride adorned for her husband" (21:2). Remember that 19:8 says that the bride was adorned in clean, white, fine linen, which is "the righteousness of saints." In 3:4, Jesus said that the saints in Sardis "shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." These verses tell us that Israel must believe God to give her His imputed righteousness in order to be worthy to be adorned in the white linen of righteousness. Once all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26), she receives this adornment for her husband, and it is only then that Christ will marry the land of Israel. Until then, Israel is not worthy of marrying Christ. Today, people talk about visiting "the holy land." However, Jerusalem is NOT holy today. It will not be holy until Jesus sets up God's kingdom on earth.

Note also that new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. Jesus told saved Israel in Matthew 6:20 to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Those, who do not rightly divide the Word of truth, will try to apply Matthew 6:20 to themselves today, saying that, since our home is in heaven, we need to lay up treasures there. However, Matthew is written to Israel, not to the body of Christ today. Israel's eternal dwelling place is the earth, not heaven. However, new Jerusalem is in heaven right now, since the earth is corrupt right now, due to Satan being the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). Therefore, their treasures are laid up in heaven before Jesus' second coming. Then, after the millennial reign, those treasures come down to the earth when new Jerusalem is brought to the earth for them to enjoy for all eternity. Therefore, Israel is to lay up treasures for themselves in heaven to be enjoyed on the earth later, just like someone may lay up treasures in a bank to be enjoyed by them later in their home.

21:3-4 God had Moses build a tabernacle, where God dwelt with Israel temporarily. Now, though, in the new Jerusalem, God dwells with man permanently. God had to take away His dwelling with Adam when Adam sinned, because a holy God cannot dwell with unholy man. However, in the new Jerusalem, Israel has received the atonement, and they will obey God's law, such that they will always be holy (Ezekiel 36:27). Since nothing but holiness is on the new earth, God can now dwell with man. Israel is now finally "His people."

God's dwelling with man is a huge accomplishment for God that is thousands of years in the making. God told Israel, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I

look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word” (Isaiah 66:1-2). In other words, man cannot build a house for God to dwell in. God has to build the house Himself, and that house consists of people with a poor and contrite spirit. In other words, God only uses those, who have faith in His Word to them, to build His house (Zechariah 6:12-13) as “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22), and it takes God thousands of years to find the quality of people with faith in God in order for God to build His Own house. “He hath made every thing beautiful in His time: also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

With sin being completely removed, the effects of sin are also completely removed. Therefore, “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (21:4). Today, people, who blame God for bad things or think of God as evil, have a complete lack of understanding of this verse. God does not cause bad things to happen. Rather, he REMOVES all sorrow when Satan, and those following him, are removed. Therefore, it is Satan, man, and sin that cause death, sorrow, crying, and pain—not God.

It is an absolutely wonderful thing that “the former things are passed away” (21:4). This means that all the sins of the flesh, and the consequences of those sins, will not be present in God’s kingdom. Israel will also be “full of the knowledge of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:9), which will keep them from sorrowing over things. For example, family and friends may be in hell, but the knowledge of the Lord will keep believers from sorrowing over this. Although they love their family members, they will have the understanding that they were fully responsible for their own decisions and received the consequences of their decisions, such that the thought of them being in hell will not bother saved individuals. This thought cannot bother them, because all sorrow, crying, and pain have fled away (21:4).

The “their” of 21:4 has in view all those who suffer for living godly (II Timothy 3:12), especially the believing remnant of Israel, who endured unto the end of the tribulation period. Once the tribulation period is over, God takes on the motherly characteristic of wiping the tears from the eyes of His children, who have been hurt by sin.

21:5 For saved Israel, God makes “all things new” after the millennial reign and the casting of Satan and his forces into the lake of fire. For the saved body of Christ, “all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17) at the moment we are saved. Satan is still “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), and the world is still following his course (Ephesians 2:2). However, everything becomes new for us, once we are in Christ. All things are not actually made new on earth, until the new heaven and the new earth are brought forth.

The words John writes down “are true and faithful” (21:5). This should not surprise us, since Jesus Christ’s “name is called The Word of God” (19:13), and He is “called Faithful and True” (19:11). Therefore, God’s Word is distinguished by it being true and faithful, while Satan’s words are lies and full of unbelief regarding God doing what He said He will do (John 8:44). That is why, when anyone tells you something that is contrary to God’s Word rightly divided, he is, consciously or not, Satan’s minister (II Corinthians 11:13-15). This shows that the only thing we can rely upon is the Word of God, which makes it so important that we read and believe it every single day.

21:6 “Alpha” and “Omega” are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, respectively. Therefore, this verse is saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is “the beginning and the end” (21:6). For all unbelievers, He is their end, as He judges them to the lake of fire. He is the beginning and the end of many things, such that He defines the beginning and the end.

Ultimately, the beginning and the end refer to the time it takes God to bring about His glory plan. God is “the Father of glory” (Ephesians 1:17). In eternity past, God designed a plan by which He would bring glory to Himself and to all those who believe Him. He would do this by creating and glorifying man. The first man was the Lord Jesus Christ, since Colossians 1:15 says that He is “the firstborn of every creature.” Then, “by Him were all things created....And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17). This means that there is one man by which God would bring glory to Himself and all believers, and this is by “the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

Therefore, all men were made by Christ in “the beginning.” He made man in His own image (Genesis 1:27), and He made a “very good” creation (Genesis 1:31). However, man was made innocent, not good. Then, man chose to sin, resulting in no one being good (Matthew 19:17; Romans 3:12). The Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth, lived a perfect life, and died for our sins to redeem us. This was the beginning of His work in man to make us “beautiful in His time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Now, He works with saved individuals to sanctify and cleanse them by the Word so that they will be “a glorious church” (Ephesians 5:26-27). Once this work is completed (Philippians 1:6), in both Israel and the body of Christ, the end will be here. Therefore, the “it”, in Jesus’ statement of “it is done” (21:6), refers to completing His work in making man the eternal vessel through which God will be glorified.

Therefore, when Jesus Christ says that He is “the beginning and the end” (21:6), it means that He began the work of creating men, who would bring glory to God forever by living in Christ, and He will end the work with man complete in Christ for God’s glory. With New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, He has now ended the work, which is why He declares here that He is the beginning and the end. This is also why He says, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (21:6). In other

words, it is not too late to be part of the Father's glorification plan. Those, reading these words, can come to the Lord Jesus Christ to be cleansed from their sin and be part of the work that Jesus Christ completes in the end.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning when He created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1), and He is the end when all things are gathered into Christ, when He destroys the heaven and the earth and brings about a new heaven and a new earth (Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 10:6).

Note that there is a "fountain of the water of life" (21:6), coming from God's throne in such an abundant fashion that it turns into "a pure river of water of life" (22:1). In the kingdom, people will drink of this water and never thirst again (John 4:14), because they are fully satisfied in Christ. This water ends up being the life of the Holy Ghost in believers, and the way it turns into such a large body of water is by the life of the Holy Ghost flowing from believers to God's world (John 7:37-39)! This helps explain why God created His glory plan, because God's glory abundantly flourishes in believing man, who is complete in Christ.

21:7 The way John's audience, i.e., Israel in the tribulation period, gets into the kingdom is by overcoming Satan's attack of unbelief via the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Every one of the seven churches, to whom John writes, is told that they must overcome in order to make it into the kingdom (2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12, and 3:21). Therefore, near this epistle's conclusion, God gives Israel the reminder that they must overcome.

If they overcome, not only will they receive eternal life in the kingdom, but they will also receive ALL of the blessings God has promised them in the law covenant, because Jesus Christ's perfect obedience of the law covenant is counted for them, since they had faith in God to do the works of the law for them. At that time, Israel becomes adult sons of God (21:7). Under the law covenant, they are always called "the children" of Israel. Under the new covenant, they are full-grown sons.

We should note that, although the new heaven and the new earth do not come until after the millennial reign, Israel receives their inheritance and are adopted as God's sons at Jesus' second coming. 21:3 references when God comes down from heaven and dwells with His people, but Jesus came down from heaven 1,000 years prior to this and married believing Israel. Israel then had their tears wiped away with the former things being passed away (21:4). You can think of the millennial reign as a honeymoon period for Jesus and His bride. All of this is done by the time we get to the new heaven and new earth in 21:1. However, since Revelation is written to Israel in the tribulation period, 21:7-8 serves as a reminder to Israel, before all of this, that they must overcome the Antichrist in order to be part of the Lamb's bride at His second coming. It is at that time that believing Israel receives their adoption as sons, not when new Jerusalem comes down from heaven 1,000 years later.

21:7 is a great verse to use to show the dispensational difference, between the Body of Christ and Israel, that is present while saved people still have their vile flesh. This difference is that the Body of Christ is already saved before we die, while believing Israel does not receive salvation until Jesus' second coming.

God told Israel under Moses to enter the Promised Land with no strings attached (Exodus 6:4-8). However, Israel would not enter in because of their unbelief (Hebrews 3:17-19). Therefore, God put them under the Mosaic law to teach them to believe God so that they may be saved (Galatians 3:23-25). Since the old covenant is not done away (Hebrews 8:13) and they are not put under the new covenant until Jesus' second coming (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:25-28), they continue to be under the law until then. Therefore, they must wait until Jesus' second coming before they receive their inheritance and their adoption as God's sons (Acts 3:19-21; I Peter 1:7-9).

Today, in the dispensation of grace, God never put us under the Mosaic law. We only have the law of the conscience on our hearts (Romans 2:14-15; 3:102). Once we believe the gospel, we have learned the lesson of the conscious, such that, we "are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Therefore, we immediately receive the atonement (Romans 5:9-11) and are adopted as full-grown sons (Galatians 4:5). This means that the body of Christ is already seated together in heavenly places in Christ right NOW (Ephesians 2:5-6), and we can operate as such today (Philippians 3:20). Israel, on the other hand, must wait until Jesus' second coming to receive their inheritance, which means they are still under the old covenant and the Mosaic law until then.

This difference is readily seen in a simple verse comparison. Galatians 4:6-7 says that members of the Body of Christ "ARE sons....Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son." By contrast, saved Israel are called Jesus' "SERVANTS" (1:1), who, "SHALL be My son" (21:7).

21:8 In 21:7-8, God gives Israel their two choices. They can either believe the gospel of the kingdom, be water baptized, and endure unto the end in order to receive the kingdom and inherit all things (21:7), or they can live in unbelief and burn forever in the lake of fire (21:8). The choice is theirs.

"The fearful" (21:8) "fear...them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). The "unbelieving" follow the lusts of their flesh because they do not believe what God has shown them. "The abominable" are those who do abominable things, which are the worst sins under the law. A lot of these are sexual in nature. "Murderers" kill others, including delivering people over to the Antichrist to be killed (Matthew 10:21). "Whoremongers" are the common folks, who take the mark of the beast or worship the image, because they follow Babylon, "the great WHORE" (17:1).

“Sorcerers” are the religious folks, who “bewitch” (Galatians 3:1) people into following good deeds, rather than believing the gospel. “Idolaters” are those who serve other gods, including those bowing down to the image of the beast. “Liars” follow the lies of Satan, making them children of the devil (John 8:44). (5 of the 8 things listed are given again in 22:15. The three, not in 22:15, are the fearful, unbelieving, and abominable. Perhaps these three are summarized by the term “dogs” in 22:15.)

This list, then, gives the most heinous sins, except most will say that lying does not belong because it is not as bad as the others. However, lying is the worst sin in this list, because it means not abiding in the truth of God’s Word. Many may think they will be okay with God, yet, because they did not believe the truth, they will burn in the lake of fire forever, along with those who did the first 7 things found in this list. In fact, the first 7 things all stem from following Satan’s lies (the 8th thing on this list).

Again, “the second death” is mentioned so that it is clear that, when you die the first time, your life is not over. You will be resurrected to be with God for all eternity, or to burn forever in the lake of fire. All unbelievers will suffer the second death.

21:9 Remember, from 21:2, that the bride is new Jerusalem. Granted, all individuals part of saved Israel are part of it, but Christ marries the city itself. Therefore, when the angel shows “the Lamb’s wife” to John, he shows him “that great city, the holy Jerusalem” (21:10).

21:10 Note that the New Jerusalem is on “a great and high mountain” (21:10). This is Mount Zion, as prophecy foretold. Psalm 48:2 says that Mount Zion is on “the sides of the north.” Satan said he would exalt his throne and “sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isaiah 14:13). Isaiah 2:2 says “that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above all hills.” Since the Lamb’s wife is a city, it is the best and highest city on the new earth. This also tells us that the topography of the new earth is different from the earth today, since the highest mountain on the earth today is not in Jerusalem.

Since all of the new earth’s inhabitants will have glorified bodies and the curse of sin will be lifted, people can climb up the mountain without any physical exertion. New Jerusalem does not need to be handicap accessible, because no one will be handicapped. Thus, new Jerusalem can be on this high hill for all the world to see the glory of it and go to it “from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another” (Isaiah 66:23). As Jesus said in Matthew 5:14, “a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” Thus, new Jerusalem descends out of heaven and sits on a hill for the whole world to see Christ’s beautiful bride. Since it descends “out of heaven from God” (21:10), the bride is God’s wedding present to His Son. The Lord has made saved Israel pure through the refining fire of the tribulation period. Now,

God puts them in a pretty package and sends it to His Son for Him to enjoy for all eternity.

21:11 New Jerusalem had been refined by God during the tribulation period. They are now “as gold and silver” (Malachi 3:3). All of the impurities of sin have been melted away by the fiery furnace of the tribulation period. Therefore, “her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (21:11). In 4:3, the Lord Jesus Christ is “to look upon like a jasper.” Therefore, the tribulation period has refined Israel so that they are holy just like Christ is (I Peter 1:16), which makes her the perfect bride for Christ for all eternity. Since she is holy, saved Israel finally has “the glory of God” (21:11).

21:12-14 The wall is “great and high” to show it is a fortified city that will never be penetrated. Satan’s fortified city of Jericho fell, when God destroyed it at the hands of Israel (Joshua 6:20-21). But, since God is omnipotent, “the blessed and only Potentate” (I Timothy 6:15), new Jerusalem will never fall. According to Ezekiel 48:31-34, there are 12 gates, because there is one for each tribe of Israel. This is confirmed here, with each gate having “the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” (21:12) written on the gates. There are twelve angels there, showing that each tribe of Israel has a gate, protecting their section of the holy city.

Deuteronomy 32:8 says that, when God divided the earth at the Tower of Babel, He divided it into sections, according to the number of the children of Israel. Matthew 19:28 says that, in the new Jerusalem, the twelve apostles will “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Therefore, the governmental structure that God set up for the new earth is that the Gentiles will be divided into 12 sections, with each section being ruled over by a tribe of Israel. Then, the 12 tribes will report back to the 12 apostles, who rule over them from Jerusalem. All Gentiles will be required to appear before God for feasts and to worship Him (Isaiah 66:23; Zechariah 14:16-19). Therefore, when they come to the new Jerusalem, they will just look for the gate with the name of the tribe of Israel over it that is over their section of the earth, and they will go through that gate to check in.

When an Israelite goes to Jerusalem, he just needs to look for the name of the apostle, who is over his section, to check in. Note that these are the twelve apostles “of the Lamb” (21:14), which means they are the 12 that Jesus chose when He was on the earth, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. Because the twelfth throne had to be filled, the Lord chose Matthias to replace him (Acts 1:24-26). Note that Acts 1:24-26 specifically says that the Lord chose Matthias. Therefore, Paul is not the 12th apostle, as most Christians claim. Paul is not an apostle “of the Lamb” (21:14) for the prophecy dispensation. Rather, he is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13) for the mystery dispensation.

These verses should also remind us of the Garden of Eden, since that garden is similar to the new Jerusalem (2:7). The big difference, of course, is the lack of sin in new Jerusalem. Due to man's sin, God had to put "Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep" people from eating the tree of life in their sinful state. By contrast, in new Jerusalem, the tree of life is free for anyone to eat, and it actually heals the nations (22:2).

21:15 According to 21:9, "he that talked with me" (21:15) is one of the seven angels, who had the seven, vial judgments (21:9).

21:16-17 The facts, that the wall is 144 cubits (216 feet) tall and the city is 12,000 furlongs (1,500 miles) high, show that man, in his glorified flesh, can fly. The city, in length and breadth, covers about two-thirds the length of the United States. A huge city today does not even close to being this massive. You also have to consider the height, which makes the city exponentially bigger. The wall makes the Great Wall of China look like a toothpick, and the city makes Los Angeles look like an art farm.

The city needs to be massive because it lasts forever, and there will be no end to the increase of God's government (Isaiah 9:7), which will apparently grow in eternity to 1,500 miles in length, breadth, and height! Amos 9:6 says, "It is He that buildeth His stories in the heaven, and hath founded His troop in the earth." How many stories can be built when a city is 1,500 miles high? The answer is, "More than we can imagine." Thus, when we think about the height of the walls and of the city, we start to understand just how massive the new Jerusalem is.

12 is the number of governmental perfection. That is why everything here is 12 or evenly divisible by 12. There are 12 gates, 12 angels, 12 tribes (21:12), 12 apostles, 12 foundations (21:14), 12,000 furlongs (21:16), and 144 cubits (12 times 12) (21:17). That is 7 things of 12, showing that governmental perfection (the number 12) has reached spiritual perfection (the number 7). Since numbers mean something, it is important that the original measurements, **as found in the King James Version**, are mentioned, because, when furlongs are converted to miles and cubits are converted to feet, the significance of the number "12" is literally lost in the translation. It is funny how today's Christians want to look to the original Hebrew and Greek languages to change the meaning of God's Word, yet, when the originals are necessary, as in the case of measurements, those are abandoned for modern measurements. This shows that the true motive of modern translations is to propagate Satan's lie program, rather than helping you garner truth from God's Word.

Also, from 21:17, we learn that an angel does not have wings, since he looks like a man. This comes from the angel being equated to a man. However, we also must note that angels are not men, but are a different type of God's creation. Man was made "a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:7) and

will end up judging angels in God's kingdom (I Corinthians 6:3). I have made the point of looking at the bodily form of an angel, here, since Churchianity would have you believe that angels are female with wings and long hair. They are wrong on all 3 counts. What they think an angel looks like is actually more like what a cherub looks like. Since Satan was "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14), Churchianity's pictures of angels are more Satanic than they are angelic, which, again, propagates Satan's lie program.

(I think the reason that "the measure of a man" (21:17) is mentioned is so we know that the cubits are mankind's cubits, which are 18 inches, as opposed to sacred cubits, which are about 21 inches long. This also tells us that God had to come down to man's level in order to dwell with him, which is exactly what Jesus did. He lived a perfect life and died on the cross to redeem us.)

Note that the city "lieth foursquare" (21:16). This fixes its size/shape as a square. This is important to note because most people say it is a pyramid. They say this because the pyramid is Satan's symbol, which is why it is seen in Egypt, on United States currency, and all over Satan's secret societies, such as Freemasonry and the Illuminati. The deception of Satan is to make his things look like God's things, so that people think he is God. Bible believers are not fooled by him. "For we are not ignorant of his [Satan's] devices" (II Corinthians 2:11).

21:18 New Jerusalem's wall is of jasper, which reflects a characteristic of both Christ (4:3) and His bride (21:11). The city is of pure gold to show the pure holiness and beauty of the Lamb's wife. Job 23:10 says that saved Israel will "come forth as gold" out of the tribulation period. We see this fulfilled in new Jerusalem.

Note that the pure gold of the city is "like unto clear glass" (21:18). 21:21 says that "the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." 4:6 says that "before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." It makes me wonder if the sea of glass before God's throne is of pure gold.

21:19-20 Before Lucifer's fall, he was adorned with 10, precious stones (Ezekiel 28:13). However, because new Jerusalem represents governmental perfection, it is adorned with 12, precious stones. No doubt there is significance behind each one of these 12 stones. I am guessing that the strengths of each of the stones correlates to the strengths of each of the tribes of Israel, as mentioned in Genesis 49.

Below is my pathetic attempt to correlate the 12 stones with the 12 tribes. I do not know anything about stones, and so I got information about each stone from a New Age website at <https://www.charmsoflight.com>. I got information on each tribe from Genesis 49. The correlation is as follows (feel free to disagree):

Jasper = protection; Benjamin = devour the prey and divide to others
Sapphire = wisdom; Gad = overcomer
Chalcedony = nurturing; Zebulun = haven
Emerald = love; Joseph = fruitful (fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22))
Sardonyx = strength; Issachar = strength
Sardius (ruby) = passion; Levi = cruelty in protecting Israel
Chrysolite = cleanser; Judah = ruler (rules with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9))
Beryl (aquamarine) = courage; Simeon = cruelty in protecting Israel
Topaz = soothes and stimulates; Asher = royal dainties
Chrysoprasus = communication; Dan = judge
Jacinth (diamond) = purity; Naphtali = a free deer
Amethyst = power; Reuben = strength and power

21:21 “Several gate” just means that each gate by itself is “of one pearl.” So, there are 12 gates, and each gate is made of one pearl. When you consider that each gate is over 200 feet high (21:17), those are humungous pearls!

When the Wizard of Oz movie says to follow the yellow-brick road to the wizard’s house, it must have gotten that idea from this passage, as “the street of the city” is made of pure gold, stretches 1,500 miles, and leads right to God and His throne.

Most every Christian will tell you that the Bible says that heaven has walls of jasper (21:18), gates of pearl (21:21), and streets of gold (21:21). However, these are descriptions of new Jerusalem, NOT of heaven. Granted, heaven probably looks similar to new Jerusalem, which is probably why the Bible does not give a physical description of heaven. However, it is worth noting that heaven looks different than new Jerusalem, especially when you consider that we are the body of Christ and Israel is the bride of Christ. Just like a man’s body is similar but different from a woman’s body, heaven must be similar but different from new Jerusalem. I am sure that heaven is just as beautiful as new Jerusalem, just in a different way.

21:22-23 These are significant verses that we dare not miss. God had Israel build a temple for God to dwell in, and God put a sun in the sky to light the earth. Both the temple and the sun are just types of two of the aspects of God. God shines so brightly that the sun is no longer needed. God is so all encompassing that there is no need for a temple, because He IS the temple!

When Solomon built God a temple, he said “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!” (II Chronicles 6:18). The Lord Himself said, “The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?” (Isaiah 66:1).

God is so big that He does not dwell in a temple. Rather, He IS the temple in which saved Israel dwells. A temple is a holy place, and God is holy. Therefore, He is the perfect place for His people to dwell in. The body of Christ is “an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:21) in heavenly places. Therefore, it makes sense that God would be the temple forever on the earth, consisting of saved Israel dwelling in Him.

All people are either in Adam or in Christ, regardless of dispensation. For the mystery dispensation, saved people dwell in His body. For the prophecy dispensation, saved people dwell in His bride, which makes them part of Christ, when He marries them. He is the Temple, and they dwell in Him. Note that 21:22 says that the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the temple. Jesus, as God, is the “Lord God Almighty.” Jesus, as man, is “the Lamb.” Together, He is the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, making Him the temple in which saved Israel dwells.

John 1:9 says that Jesus is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Today, that is true spiritually. In the new Jerusalem, it will also be true physically. Saved Israel ends up being the new moon. They are referenced in this verse as “the glory of God did lighten it” (21:23). So, Israel is the moon, and Jesus is the sun that light new Jerusalem. Therefore, the sun and the moon, which are just inferior types of God’s light, are not needed, because they have the true Light—the Lord Jesus Christ, the “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2)—shining in their midst with Israel being a lesser light or manifestation of God’s glory.

21:24 In the millennial reign, there will be some, who sin, and that sin will be punished (Isaiah 65:20). Then, all those, who want to live by the lusts of their flesh, will join Satan in his rebellion against God at the end of the millennial reign (20:7-9). God will destroy them and throw them into the lake of fire (20:9-15). Therefore, by the time we get to the new Jerusalem, all sin, rebellion, and unbelief have been done away with.

The Gentiles, in God’s kingdom on earth, are all saved Gentiles under the prophecy program. They received eternal life in the kingdom for blessing Israel (Matthew 25:31-46). Therefore, 21:24 says, “the nations of them which are saved.” Since they are all saved, they will live forever in God’s eternal kingdom on earth without sinning. They will do this by walking in the light of new Jerusalem, which is the light of the Lord Jesus Christ (21:23).

Just like the heavenly places have principalities, powers, mights, and dominions (Ephesians 1:21), the earth will have a similar governmental structure. Those, with a greater understanding of the prophecy program, due to a greater faith that they have in God’s Word, will be appointed kings. Those kings, because of their faith in God, will properly bring the glory and honour of their nations to the Lord Jesus Christ (21:24).

21:25 Night is a type of Satan's realm. John 3:19-20 says, "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." Thus, we see that night and darkness are where Satan and sin lurk! With Satan and all sin gone in God's kingdom, night and darkness cease to exist, and there is no need to close the gate to new Jerusalem since nothing bad can enter it.

Sleep is a sign of spiritual inactivity (Matthew 25:5). With everyone being spiritually alive in the kingdom, there is no need for sleep, which makes darkness unnecessary. Also, Genesis 1:2 associates darkness with the earth being "without form, and void." The earth is far from this with God Himself dwelling with all saved people from Israel's dispensation!

21:26 Both verses 24 and 26 talk about the Gentile nations bringing their glory and honour into new Jerusalem. There will be natural resources and natural talents that each Gentile nation will have, and they will bring those things into the new Jerusalem for all to enjoy. An example of this is when the Queen of Sheba brought spices to Jerusalem (I Kings 10:10), almu trees came from Ophir (I Kings 10:11), and cedar trees came in from Lebanon (I Kings 7:2). In other words, God has spread resources all over the earth, and those resources will all come together in the new Jerusalem. That is what is meant by the Gentiles bringing the glory and honour of their nations into Jerusalem.

21:27 When God created the heaven and the earth, God saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). The same will happen with His creation of the new heaven and the new earth. Unlike the first time, man will not be corrupted by Satan, and the sin nature will no longer be around. Therefore, nothing "that defileth ..., worketh abomination or maketh a lie" (21:27) will enter new Jerusalem. That way, it remains holy for all eternity. The people entering new Jerusalem "are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:27), meaning that they had faith in what God told them, such that they are free from sin for ever. Primarily, this would be saved Israel and saved Gentiles, all from Israel's dispensation, although I am sure that the body of Christ will be able to enter new Jerusalem, as well, even if it is not their normal realm.

Note how the focus of this verse is not on people, but it is upon things that would bring sin into new Jerusalem. That is because, when God made the Garden of Eden, the serpent came in and deceived Eve. He was the "thing that defileth,...worketh abomination, [and] maketh a lie" (21:27). Chapter 21 describes the paradise on earth of new Jerusalem, and this verse concludes the chapter by giving Israel the assurance that their paradise will never be ruined by things that could cause the fall of man, i.e., Satan and his forces.

22 While chapter 21 describes the Lamb's wife (new Jerusalem) in relation to Israel dwelling there, chapter 22 begins with more of a focus on the Gentiles coming to that kingdom. They come in to eat and drink of life, being

healed from whatever sins they have committed (vs. 1-2). They do not die, as Adam did, because there is no more curse of sin (v. 3), since everyone, Jew and Gentile, in God's kingdom has made the choice to have faith in what God told them. As a result, all are holy, which means they will see God's face and live (v. 4). The purpose of the book of Revelation is given in verse 6, i.e., "to shew unto [God's] servants the things which must shortly be done." They are then told to believe what God has shown them in Revelation (v. 7). The little flock is not to execute judgment on apostate Israel during the tribulation period (v. 11). Instead, they should let both the wheat (believing Israel) and the tares (apostate Israel) grow until the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 13:30). Then, Jesus will come and execute judgment (v. 12). God gives a warning that the religious crowd will be thrown into the lake of fire (v. 15), because they add to and delete God's Word, making it of none effect (vs. 18-19). But, "whosoever will" may have eternal life in the kingdom (vs. 14 & 17), and they are the ones, who cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (v. 20), so that Satan's kingdom is utterly destroyed and God's kingdom lasts forever on earth (Daniel 2:44). This is the ultimate goal of the prophecy dispensation.

22:1 Zechariah 14:8 describes this "pure river of water of life" as "living waters." The water comes directly from God's throne (22:1). It goes out from the temple and turns into a river (Ezekiel 47:1-5).

22:2-3 In talking of this river of life, Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). In other words, the Gentiles will continue to drink from it, in order to have everlasting life. Ezekiel 47:9 says, "Every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live." Saved Israel will be under the new covenant, in which God will write His law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33) and cause them to obey it (Ezekiel 36:27). Therefore, Israel will live in sinless perfection in new Jerusalem. This is also true of saved Gentiles, who have blessed Israel, since Jesus specifically tells them: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

So, why do people have to come to the river of life in order to live and eat of the leaves off the tree in order to be healed, when they have eternal life and no ailments? The answer is that children will continue to be born in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Isaiah 9:7 says there will be no end to the increase of Jesus' government, which means that new people have to be born. Also, Ezekiel 47:22 says that Gentiles will be born in the kingdom. According to Isaiah 65:20, each newborn will go through a 100-year trial period. They will not have the sin nature, they will not have Satan to deceive them, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14). Therefore, their propensity to sin is far less than what we have today, but they still have the capacity to sin. When they do sin, they can eat of the leaves of the tree of life

in order to be healed. Note that 21:27 says that, “any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie” can enter new Jerusalem. This means that, among the newborns, the only ones allowed to enter new Jerusalem, are those who regret sinning. If they sinned and plan to do it again, they will not be allowed to enter the city, because they could defile it. After their 100-year trial period is over, they choose life or death and enter that state for all eternity.

This is in contrast to Adam and Eve. They had the tempter there, and once they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were under the curse, having the sin nature within them. Therefore, God removed the tree of life from them so that they would not live forever in their fallen state (Genesis 3:22). In the new Jerusalem, however, “there shall be no more curse” (22:3). Therefore, the Gentiles are healed from the leaves of the tree of life and can live forever in the kingdom if they choose life after their 100-year trial period is over. Adam failed to keep the garden free from sin, as he allowed Eve to eat of the forbidden grapes.

By contrast, the second Adam will be in new Jerusalem, and He will faithfully keep paradise from having sin enter it (21:27). Eve, of course, failed to obey God, but the second Adam’s wife (saved Israel) will not fail, as they will submit themselves to their husband and serve Him, as they are commanded to (Ephesians 5:22). This is what 3:4 means when it says, “they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” In other words, the faithfulness of the little flock to believe the gospel of the kingdom will translate into their faithful obedience of their husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, such that they will not defile paradise. Without believing the gospel, they would not be worthy to be the Lamb’s wife.

Thus, in Adam and Eve, we see failure by both parties, resulting in a fallen world and humanity, but in Jesus Christ and saved Israel, we see both parties doing what they should, resulting in a perfect, holy world and humanity.

Nevertheless, even in the dispensation of the fulness of times, some Gentile children (under 100 years old) will choose to rebel against God, and these will be cast into the lake of fire. This choice may seem unlikely without Satan to tempt man, with full knowledge of the Lord available, with the sin nature not being present, and with being able to see people burning in hell (Isaiah 66:24), but man’s will is strong.

“The throne of God and of the Lamb” is a phrase found only in 22:1,3. It does not say “thrones,” but “throne.” To me, this means that the Lord Jesus Christ as God and as the Lamb (man) is sitting on the throne in God’s kingdom on earth. It shows that the way that God dwells with His people (21:3) is through the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, God’s plan was to make man, man would fall, God would send God the Son to earth as a man, He would succeed, God would indwell Him since He is perfect, then God

would set the God-man on the throne in His kingdom, place believers into Christ, and indwell all believers because they are all in Christ and God is in Christ. (“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Corinthians 5:19).)

22:4 Matthew 5:8 says that the pure in heart shall see God. Thus, faithful Israel sees God’s face in the kingdom. In Revelation 7, God sealed the 144,000 by having His name written on their foreheads (14:1). Satan copied this by having his mark on people’s foreheads (13:16). Now, we see that all of saved Israel, not just the 144,000, have God’s name on their foreheads. This name may be “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Exodus 28:36-38), since that is the name that was to be on a gold plate on the forehead of the high priest, and Israel is to be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles (Exodus 19:5-6). Regardless of what it is, Revelation shows that all people belong to someone, either to God or to Satan. This flies in the face of New Age thinking that I am my own god.

22:5 As we saw in 21:23, night and the sun are not needed in new Jerusalem. The Lord God is “the true Light” (John 1:9). Therefore, “the Lord God giveth them light” in the new Jerusalem (22:5).

Saved Israel’s reign over the Gentiles on earth lasts “forever and ever” (22:5), because God’s kingdom will last forever (Daniel 2:44). Contrast this with the beast, who reigned for only 3 ½ years (13:5). These facts should encourage Israel to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to rule forever (Matthew 10:22). As Paul says, “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and ETERNAL weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17). Although this promise is for the body of Christ, the principle also applies to saved Israel in Israel’s program, since “they shall reign for ever and ever” (22:5).

22:6 “His angel” is the one referred to in 1:1, who showed John all of the things written in Revelation, so that he may, in turn, show them to Israel, so that they may endure unto the end of the tribulation period and enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth. The Lord God calls Himself “The Lord God of the holy prophets” (22:6), here, to signify that this message is for the prophecy dispensation. The information, in Israel’s program, is what “God HATH SPOKEN by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). By contrast, the information for us today is “the mystery, which was KEPT SECRET since the world began, but now is made manifest” (Romans 16:25-26). Therefore, the information, found in Revelation, does not apply to us today, in the dispensation of grace. Rather, it is part of Israel’s prophecy program.

We are told that these events “must shortly be done” (22:6). This is in terms of the prophecy program’s timeline, as 2,000 years have passed since these words were written, and they have not been fulfilled yet. Daniel 9:24 says “seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city.”

These are 70 weeks of years, or 490 years total. After the Messiah is crucified, the Antichrist comes and does some things, and then there is the seven-year tribulation period (Daniel 9:26-27). In terms of this timeline, at the time the book of Revelation is written, only the events of the Antichrist in Daniel 9:26 remain before the tribulation-period events detailed in Revelation come to pass. Therefore, in terms of THIS timeline, the things mentioned in Revelation “must shortly be done” (22:6).

Also, remember that we mentioned in the notes on 1:3 that Revelation was written during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, which means that it was written before the mystery was revealed to Paul in Acts 9. Therefore, the 2,000 year or more interlude of the mystery was not yet revealed, which is why Revelation can only be spoken in terms of the Daniel timeline. As such, these events “must shortly be done.”

Finally, note that the sayings in Revelation “are faithful and true” (22:6). 19:11 says that Jesus is “Faithful and True.” 19:13 says that “His name is called The Word of God.” Therefore, by declaring that the sayings in Revelation “are faithful and true,” the angel is saying that what has been revealed to John is the Word of God without error. Therefore, Israel can hold fast to its truth so that they are not “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14) during the greatest time of deception this world will ever see (Matthew 24:21-24).

22:7 Jesus Christ’s second coming occurs at the end of the tribulation period. Note from 22:7,12,20 and 3:11 that Jesus Christ says, “I come quickly.” He does not say, “I come soon,” as most Christians believe He says here. The difference is that He is not saying that it will not be long until He comes (although that is true in terms of the timeline in Daniel). Rather, He says that, when He DOES come, He will come quickly, meaning that He will come fast. You can think of this like a right fielder in baseball. The fielder may stand out there for 15 minutes and not move, but when a ball comes his way, he acts quickly to get it. So, too, Jesus Christ has not come back nearly 2,000 years after this promise was made, but, when it is time, He will come back quickly.

“I come quickly” is a warning to Israel that they had better have faith in God’s law covenant and be serving Him before His coming, because, when they hear of His coming, they will not have time to get ready, because His coming is quick.

This is clearly explained to Israel in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. Five of the virgins do not make it into the kingdom, because they did not have time to prepare themselves for the bridegroom, because they waited until He was about to come before they tried to get themselves ready. Therefore, Israel, in the tribulation period, needs to keep “the sayings of the prophecy of this book” in order to be blessed by being part of God’s eternal kingdom on earth (22:7). “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor

the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13). Therefore, the blessing, pronounced in both 1:3 and 22:7, is for Israel going through the tribulation period. By keeping what is written in Revelation, they endure unto the end of the tribulation period and enter the kingdom. They then receive the blessings of the kingdom, as pronounced in Matthew 5:3-12. Since these blessings are already detailed in Matthew 5, Revelation 22:7 does not go into detail about them. It merely mentions a blessing for those, who keep “the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (22:7), as a reminder to Israel to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to enter the kingdom, because there will not be time to repent when Jesus returns, since He comes QUICKLY.

22:8 Under the law, a matter is established as fact in the mouth of two or three witnesses (Matthew 18:16). Therefore, we are told that Revelation was given by God to Jesus Christ (1:1), and “John saw these things and heard them” (22:8), establishing Revelation as fact by the witness of Jesus Christ, the angel, and John.

22:9 The fact, that the angel tells John not to worship him, tells us that the angel is not the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus never refused worship of Himself, since “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Philippians 2:10).

When the angel says that he is “of thy brethren the prophets” (22:9), he does not mean that he was Isaiah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets, and God transformed him into being an angel. That cannot be the case, because men remain men. They do not become angels in the afterlife. Rather, the angel’s being “thy fellowservant...of...the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book” links him, in three ways, with the nation of Israel. In other words, this angel is a servant of the believers in Israel’s program. This makes sense in light of Hebrews 1:14 saying that angels are ministering spirits for believers. This is yet another clue that Revelation is written to believing Israel, and not to us today. Since Michael “standeth for the children of thy people” (Daniel 12:1), this angel is probably Michael.

22:10 When Daniel was given prophecies of end-time events, Israel had 490 years left in their prophetic history until God would bring in the kingdom. Since the end-time events were so far into the future, God told Daniel to “seal the book, even to the time of the end” when “knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). When John receives the information found in the book of Revelation “the time [of the tribulation events] is at hand” (22:10 and 1:3). Therefore, knowledge IS increased with the writing of this book.

This means that Revelation must have been written during the “at-hand” phase of the kingdom which means it had to have been written, timewise, before the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. This flies in the face of almost every commentary ever written, which usually say that Revelation was the last book of the Bible written. However, to take the majority view, in this case,

would be to deny the truth of the tribulation being “at hand,” as stated in 22:10 and 1:3. (Of course, if you have gotten this far into these notes, you know that the majority view is rarely taken by this author.)

22:11-12 In 22:12, we, again, are told that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming quickly. We learned, from 22:7, that this is a warning to Israel to believe the gospel of the kingdom, because it will be too late to repent, once Jesus comes back. What 22:11-12 are saying, then, is that, since Jesus is coming, He will judge Israel. It is not John’s job, or anyone else’s job in Israel to judge Israel. Therefore, when it comes to JUDGMENT, Israel is to let the unjust be unjust, the filthy be filthy, the righteous be righteous, and the holy be holy (22:11). Jesus will come and reward Israel, according to their work.

This is like what Jesus said in Matthew 7:3-5. He said, rather than judging others, they should judge themselves, which would result in recognizing their sin and believing the gospel. It is only then that they will have the ability to judge others correctly. Similarly, in 22:11, God says not to worry about others’ spiritual condition. Look at your own spiritual condition. “But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (II Corinthians 10:12).

22:11 is NOT saying that the little flock should not reach Israel with the gospel of the kingdom. In fact, their work is to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8). If they do not do this, their reward in the kingdom will not be as great. Therefore, the “hands-off” approach of 22:11 relates only to judgment, not to evangelizing.

Note the four categories of people in Israel during the tribulation period, as identified in 22:11. The “unjust” are the unsaved people doing evil. In the parable of the sower, these are the people of the wayside ground (Matthew 13:19). The “filthy” are the unsaved people doing “good,” since religious Israel’s righteousness is as “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). In the parable of the sower, these are the people of the stony ground (Matthew 13:20-21). The “righteous” are saved Israel not working for the Lord. In the parable of the sower, these are the people of the thorny ground (Matthew 13:22). The “holy” are saved Israel, fulfilling their commission to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom. In the parable of the sower, these are the people of the good ground (Matthew 13:23).

The reward, that Jesus Christ brings with Him (22:12), is in reference to the position each member of the little flock will receive in the kingdom as a result of their work during the tribulation period. Thus, their reward is linked to their work, just like, today, our work is linked to our reward in heavenly places in the body of Christ (see I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Also, note that the little flock’s reward is given, “according as his work SHALL BE” (22:12). Each member of the little flock is refined by the fire of

the tribulation period. If their work, at the end, ends up being wood, hay, or stubble, they will lose their reward. However, if they have some gold, silver, or precious stones, they will rule and reign with Christ as priests (20:6). This trying of their work by fire is mentioned in I Corinthians 3:12-15. Although the Corinthian passage refers specifically to the rewards for the body of Christ and heavenly places, there will be a similar judgment of works for reward for the little flock of Israel in God's eternal kingdom on earth. But, first, their work must be refined by the fire of the tribulation period in order to determine what sort their work "SHALL BE" (22:12) in the end.

22:13 The little flock of Israel can trust in the words found in the book of Revelation and continue to have faith in them, knowing that God will deliver them from the Antichrist's kingdom because the Lord Jesus Christ IS the end (22:13). He was there in the beginning and created the world. Therefore, they can trust in Him to bring the end to Satan's takeover of the world and bring in a new earth for His saints in Israel to dwell in (21:1). Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ is "the beginning and the end" of this world (22:13). He is also "the first and the last" (22:13). He is "the firstborn of every creature" (Colossians 1:15), meaning that there is life only for those who are placed in Christ through faith in what God has told them, since Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:23). He is also "the last Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45), since He was the last man born without a sin nature.

Therefore, as God, Jesus began the world (John 1:1-3) and will end the world (Revelation 20:11). As man, Jesus is the first to be raised in a glorified body to everlasting life, and He is the last man born, able to save all those with faith in what God has told them, due to His lack of a sin nature, His life lived free from sin, and His propitiatory death on the cross. Because of this, Christ is all things to all men, which is why Israel should place their faith in Him in the tribulation period, rather than having faith in the Antichrist and his kingdom.

22:14 This is one of the verses that conditional-salvation advocates like to throw in your face to say that you must work in order to maintain your salvation. Even putting aside that this verse is written to Israel and not to us today, it is still not saying that Israel must work in order to maintain their salvation, because Israel would have the same problem that we have, i.e., they could not do it. Man sins just by thinking about committing adultery (Matthew 5:28) or by hating someone in his heart (Matthew 5:22). Further, if he breaks the law in just one point, he is guilty of breaking the entire law (James 2:10). Therefore, even after believing the gospel of the kingdom and being water baptized, it is impossible for Israel to refrain from sinning until they are placed under the new covenant in the kingdom. As such, "do[ing] His commandments" (22:14) cannot possibly mean obeying the Mosaic law.

The meaning of doing His commandments is found in Romans 10:16, which says, "But they have not all OBEYED the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath BELIEVED our report?" This shows that you obey the gospel by believing, not by doing works under the law. During the at-hand phase of the kingdom, God commands Israel to "repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Therefore, "doing His commandments" simply means to believe the gospel.

When they do this, God gives them the "right to the tree of life" (22:14), because they will live forever in a glorified body. Contrast this with Adam and Eve, who failed to abide in God because they disobeyed His commandments. Therefore, they lost their clothing of light as God has (Psalm 104:2), subjecting them to the curse of sin. Living forever in a fallen state is torture; therefore, God removed the tree of life from them (Genesis 3:22-23). Therefore, in Revelation, we see paradise restored, and it is only for glorified man to enjoy, since he alone can live forever without the curse of sin, being holy like God, due to his faith in God's provision to bring him up to His level. This gives them "right to the tree of life." And, because glorified man is holy, he can be in the presence of a holy God. Therefore, he "may enter in through the gates into the city" (22:14).

However, having said that, this verse is really geared more toward the Gentiles in the kingdom, who are not under the new covenant yet, as opposed to saved Jews in the kingdom. Up to age 100, these Gentiles make the free-will decision to do the commandments of God (Isaiah 65:20). When they sin, they have the right to enter into the gates of new Jerusalem and partake of the tree of life for their healing (22:2), so that they may live forever. Therefore, in 22:14, we see the blessing of Gentiles in the kingdom to enter new Jerusalem and live forever, as a result of believing the gospel presented unto them for 100 years, while, in 22:7&12, we see saved Jews blessed with positions in the kingdom for obeying God's instructions to them found in Revelation.

22:15 "Without" is a reference to not being able to live within God's kingdom. Therefore, those "without" are the unsaved in the lake of fire. They are judged by their works (20:13) and are found to be wicked because they did not have faith in what God told them.

The list of people, in the lake of fire, begins and ends with the religious crowd. Israel called Gentiles "dogs" because they were not part of God's nation, Israel (Matthew 15:26-27). The problem is that Israel forsook God's law covenant with them and replaced it with their own traditions (Mark 7:9). The result is that the true "dogs" are unbelievers. As such, Paul calls the Jewish religious people "dogs" in Philippians 3:2. Thus, the "dogs," of 22:15, refers to apostate Israel, who chose to align themselves with the Antichrist, rather than believing God's law covenant with them. Also included would be all believers in religion to save them, rather than believers in God to save them. Then, the religious leaders are those "whosoever loveth and maketh a

lie” (22:15). Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that “ye are of your father the devil,” because “he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Thus, those, who love and make a lie, are Satan’s leaders, masquerading as God’s leaders by using scripture that they twist for their own justification (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

The “sorcerers,” of 22:15, are those, who take scripture out of its dispensational context to “cast a spell” on their listeners, making them think they are obeying God, when they are not. (This is the “bewitching” that Paul mentions in Galatians 3:1 that people were doing by trying to put grace believers in Galatia under the Mosaic law.) No doubt, Paul’s epistles will be very popular during the tribulation period, as Matthew – John are popular today.

We see this from Peter’s comment that his epistle is “the TRUE grace of God wherein ye stand” (I Peter 5:12). In other words, doctrine from today’s grace dispensation will be taught during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, when the TRUE grace that God is giving them is found in Israel’s epistles of Hebrews – Revelation, not Paul’s epistles. Thus, people will be “under the spell” of Pauline doctrine, when they should be following the doctrine found in the part of the Bible written to Israel.

The “whoremongers” are the religious crowd again, who have committed adultery with Babylon, rather than believing the gospel of the kingdom. The “murderers” are those who convince Jews to abandon faith in God and believe the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel. The idolaters are those who worship the image of the beast. Granted, the sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and liars of 22:15 can refer to the flesh, as well, but the primary reason they are in the lake of fire is because they have manifested these characteristics in their spiritual lives. “There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man” (Mark 7:15).

Thus, every member of apostate Israel will exhibit these things spiritually, and those, with the ears to hear (2:7), will recognize this, such that they will believe the gospel of the kingdom and refuse to believe the lies of Satan to try to get them to follow apostate Israel into the lake of fire.

Finally, we should note that 22:15 lists 6 categories of people, and 6 is the number of man. We should also note a similar list in 21:8. By comparing verse with verse, this proves that those who are “without,” in 22:15, do wind up in the lake of fire (21:8).

22:16 1:1 told us that Jesus Christ sent the revelation to John via His angel. This is mentioned again at the end of the book. “The churches,” then, to whom Revelation is sent, would be the 7 churches mentioned in chapters

2-3. Revelation is NOT written to Christian churches today, because we are in the mystery dispensation, not the prophecy dispensation.

Identifying Jesus as “the root ... of David” (22:16) shows that He is the Branch, prophesied in the Old Testament, who would be Israel’s king (Jeremiah 23:5), perfect servant (Zechariah 3:8), perfect man (Zechariah 6:12), and God (Isaiah 40:9) to deliver them from being Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25) so that they may rule over the Gentiles in God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Identifying Jesus as “the offspring of David” shows that Jesus is the one, who will sit on David’s throne and rule over the world forever, as God promised in II Samuel 7:12-16.

Regarding Jesus being “the bright and morning star” (22:16), Israel will dwell in God’s light forever because Jesus is “the daystar” (II Peter 1:19). The day or morning star is the sun. 21:23 says that new Jerusalem does not need the sun, because “the Lamb is the light thereof.” “The nations ... shall walk in the light of it” (21:24). Therefore, the sun is not needed because “the true Light (John 1:9), the Lord Jesus Christ, will be shining as “the bright and morning star” (22:16) in the new Jerusalem.

The morning star is NOT to be confused with the “son of the morning,” which was Lucifer’s title (Isaiah 14:12). The NIV changes Lucifer’s title to “morning star.” The NKJV footnotes that Lucifer is the “Day Star.” Therefore, modern translations have made Lucifer equivalent to the Lord Jesus Christ! “Son of the morning” means that Lucifer was created to oversee that it is always morning. His problem is that he rebelled against God, becoming Satan, such that he brought about the night. The Lord Jesus Christ, by being the morning star, IS the morning. Night will never appear again, because the morning star, the Lord Jesus Christ, shines brightly in God’s kingdom forever more.

22:17 Here is the invitation for all to be part of God’s kingdom. His kingdom is light, because of “the bright and morning star” (22:16) being there. This is in contrast to the world in the tribulation period, which is ruled by Satan, the prince of darkness. “Whosoever will” (22:16) may come out of the darkness into light. The Holy Ghost indwells the little flock during the tribulation period, and so He invites all to come into the kingdom. The bride, out there in eternity future, looks back into the tribulation period, and invites all of Israel to join the bride to be married forever to the Lamb.

The phrases “the bride say, come” and “whosoever will” are all the theology that is needed to understand that the Calvinist’s view on predestination is incorrect. The bride, as a group, is predestinated to marry Christ, and every individual in Israel’s program makes the free-will decision to decide whether they will be part of that group or not.

A couple of verses that are good to understand predestination are I Peter 1:2 and Acts 2:23. I Peter 1:2 says that Israel is “elect according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father.” God elected Israel to be saved, based on His foreknowledge that Israel would make the freewill decision to believe the gospel.

Acts 2:23 says, “Him [Jesus], being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” God, in His sovereignty, determined that Jesus must die for the sins of the world, and He used His foreknowledge, of the freewill decisions of Israel to have Him crucified and slain, to have Him live where and when He did. Thus, God’s sovereignty and man’s freewill decisions go hand in hand.

Therefore, when “the Spirit and the bride say, come” (22:17), they are giving God’s sovereign invitation for all to believe the gospel and be saved, but it is only “whosoever will” (22:17) that will make the freewill decision to be saved. (In fact, we see both the group of believing Israel and the individual within believing Israel giving the invitation to come and receive eternal life. The group is the bride, and the individual is “him that heareth” (22:17).)

“Him that heareth” (22:17) is the person with the spiritual ears to hear that there is life through Jesus’ name (John 20:31). “Him that is athirst” is the one who realizes he is spiritually parched with the religion of apostate Israel (Jeremiah 2:13). He realizes that the water that the Lord gives him “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). Therefore, he abandons religion and his economic goods, and he believes that God will give him His imputed righteousness by changing his mind about his own righteousness (repenting) and being water baptized to identify himself with the believing remnant of Israel, who will be saved (Acts 2:38). He has faith that God will bring him into the kingdom so that he can drink from God’s “pure river of water of life” (22:1).

We should note that “whosoever will” also extends to the Gentiles, as they have the opportunity, at the end of the millennial reign, to side with the Lord Jesus Christ and be in His eternal kingdom on earth. In the tribulation period, it is the Spirit and the bride, speaking specifically to Israel, for them to believe God’s law covenant with them and enter the kingdom as kings and priests of God (1:6, 5:10). In the millennial reign, the invitation is extended to the Gentiles (“whosoever will”) to side with the Lord Jesus Christ, when Satan is loosed for a little season, as only the Lord can give them free access to the water of life.

“Whosoever will” be saved can also be saved today in the dispensation of grace. However, this is true because God said so through Paul, and not here through John, which is a different program than what is going on today.

22:18 In the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period, all Jews, who come to Jerusalem, will have heard the prophecy of this book, because the two witnesses will prophesy during that time (11:3). It is then up to the Jews to

have the spiritual ears to hear the Spirit and the bride say “Come.” If they do, they will repent about following the Antichrist and have faith in God to bring them into the kingdom, joining the believing remnant by being water baptized. If they make this choice, they will keep “the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (22:7). If they do not make this choice, they will be adding to the prophecies of this book by saying that they can make it into the kingdom by their own religion.

The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day had added all kinds of rules to God’s law. That way, they could get the focus onto the rules that they made up, so that they could get the focus off of God’s message of good news, that He had given to Israel. The result was that they were okay in murdering their Messiah, because they were not defiled because they did not go into Pilate’s judgment hall (John 18:28). Similarly, Eve added “neither shall ye touch it” (Genesis 3:3) to God’s law. When she broke HER law and she still had her clothing of light, she was then okay with breaking God’s law.

This is what will happen with apostate Israel in the tribulation period. They will take the words of prophecy, spoken by the two witnesses, and mix in a little religion by adding works of the flesh to get people to focus on those rules, rather than the truth of God’s Word. (This is what happens today with churches saying that you must make Jesus the Lord of your life and turn from your sins in order to be saved.) The result will be that they make “the Word of God of none effect through [their] tradition” (Mark 7:13). For adding works to God’s Word, God will “add unto [them] the plagues that are written in this book” (22:18), because they did not have faith to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

22:19 Eve also took away from the Word of God. God’s punishment for eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was “thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Eve changed this to: “lest ye die” (Genesis 3:3). In other words, God said you WILL die, and Eve said, I MIGHT die. Similarly, the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day took the law of Moses, where it said “let him die the death” and changed it to “he shall be free” (Mark 7:10-11). As a result, they “reject the commandment of God, that [they] may keep [their] own tradition” (Mark 7:9).

Similarly, in the tribulation period, men will “take away from the words of the book of this prophecy” (22:19) in an effort to take away their part in the lake of fire for not believing the gospel. (People do this today by saying that the lake of fire is a myth, or that you will have the opportunity to work your way to heaven through purgatory.) Instead of giving an unjust judgment to unbelievers, “God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (22:19), which means: 1) No eternal life, 2) No living in God’s kingdom, and 3) No reward in the kingdom, respectively, for those, who take away God’s judgment against them, as pronounced in the book of Revelation.

22:20 As we saw in 2:5, 3:11, 22:7, and 22:12, once it is time for Jesus' second coming, He will come quickly and execute the promised judgment of 22:7, 18, and 19. Therefore, it is of an eternal importance for Israel to believe and follow the things written in Revelation.

1:2 identifies the book of Revelation as "the testimony of Jesus Christ." Therefore, "He which testifieth these things" (22:20) is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ says, "Surely I come quickly" (22:20). Then, it is the response of the angel, John, and the little flock to say, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (22:20). In other words, they want Him to come, in the quick manner in which He has promised, so that Satan's kingdom will be overthrown and God's kingdom will be established forever.

Regarding this quickness, we should note Matthew 24:43, which says, "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." In the context of Jesus' second coming, the goodman of the house is Satan, while Jesus is the "thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10). What this means is that, when it comes to His second coming, Jesus is looking for the perfect time to come. If He comes too early, not all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). If He comes too late, the lost sheep will become apostate and not be saved (Matthew 24:22). Therefore, Jesus must come at the precise moment when, spiritually speaking, Satan, in his cockiness, is not watching for Him to come. Thus, Jesus must come quickly!

22:21 Although Revelation is not part of today's "grace dispensation," it is still by God's grace that Israel makes it through the tribulation period. Noah in the ark is a type of the little flock making it through the tribulation period. Genesis 6:8 says that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." So, too, the little flock will have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ with them so that they endure unto the end of the tribulation period so that they are saved (Matthew 24:13). They have the Holy Ghost with them, giving them God's Word, and they also have the instructions to the seven churches found in chapters 2-3. They also have God's grace in that "those days [of great tribulation] shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). Today, God gives us His grace to BEAR temptation (I Corinthians 10:13). So, too, God will give His grace to the little flock so that they will not be devoured by the "roaring lion," the devil (I Peter 5:8), during the tribulation period, but will continue to believe that God will save them, in spite of all of the things going on in the world to the contrary.