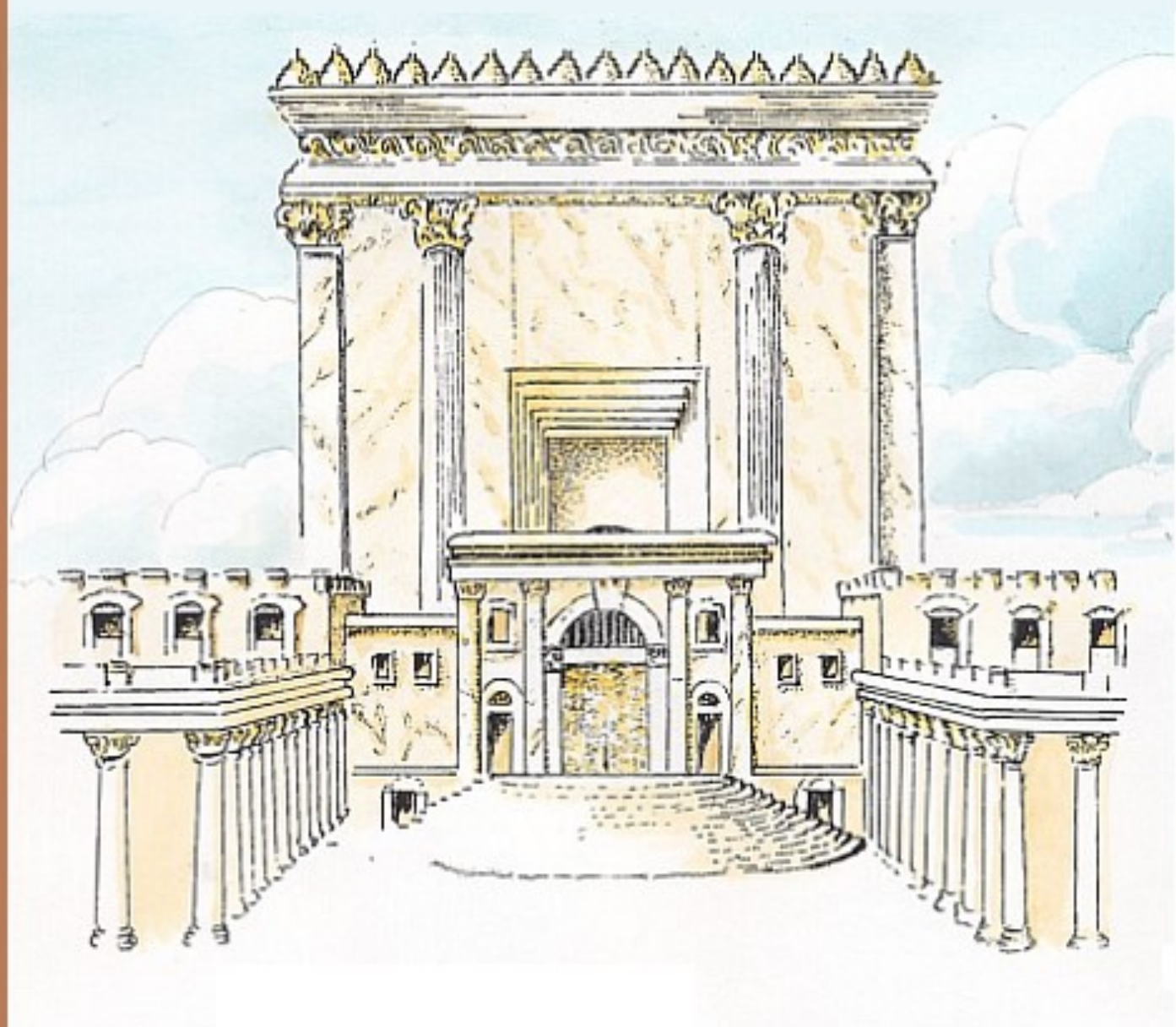


THE NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE STORY

VOLUME 5



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**THE EPISTLES OF PAUL (PART 2)
AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Keith Hunt

PREFACE

I would like to give much thanks and appreciation to Roger Waite for the work of reading, correcting spelling, grammar, and the final editing of this manuscript. I would also like to thank Muriel Crawford for her part in the illustrating this New Testament Bible Story.

Especially, of course, I give praise and thanks to the heavenly Father for answering my prayers for help and guidance. As a human being I realize this work may not be without errors. If errors can be proved, may they be found and corrected by those who come after me.

The main desire of this work is to lead people to Jesus as personal Savior, to make the Gospels a very readable story for children and youths as well as adults, and to bring out the fact that Jesus was BOTH human and divine, Immanuel, God in the flesh, and the sinless Savior, the perfect sacrifice to save all who will come to the Eternal God through Him.

Truly it is written: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16, KJV)

This work is dedicated to all the children and youths who may read this story, and all the children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ everywhere.

Keith Hunt

FROM THE EDITOR:

A favourite book series amongst young people in the Worldwide Church of God in my teen years was a 6 volume series called “The Bible Story” written and illustrated for children by the late Basil Wolverton. This Bible series for children brought the Bible alive for many children.

The 6 volume series covered the Old Testament except for the prophetic and wisdom books (http://www.herbert-w-armstrong.com/bible_story.html). A New Testament Bible Story series was begun around 1990 but did not get very far before the Good News magazine was cancelled.

Following that there was great turmoil as the new leadership of the Worldwide Church of God, following the death of Herbert Armstrong in 1986, rejected those key doctrines that clearly distinguished the church from mainstream Christianity.

This led to a breakup of the church with many new groups forming who still felt convicted that those key doctrines that differentiated the Church of God from mainstream Christianity were the true doctrines taught by the Bible. I was amongst those and currently attend the United Church of God in Brisbane, Australia.

Our author, Keith Hunt, attended an earlier split-off group during the 1970’s before Herbert Armstrong’s death until circumstances led him away from that group and he currently pastors as an independent minister in western Canada.

This New Testament Bible Story has its genesis in my lamenting the fact that the old Bible Story series never got as far as the New Testament. I was discussing this with my late friend, Richard Nickels, who used to publish a newsletter entitled “Giving and Sharing”. As I was backed up with a series of other projects and felt that trying to do it myself would be too time consuming, I ended up placing an ad in Richard’s newsletter calling for a volunteer writer and artist.

I was delighted with Keith Hunt’s capability and eagerness to take on the project and that he has done such a magnificent job with what he has written. He has done a wonderful job following on from Basil Wolverton’s past legacy with this New Testament Bible Story which we hope will make the New Testament come alive for children as well as those young at heart!

I have added editorial notes where I have wanted to further expand on some key points as well as offer an alternate point of view where I occasionally have a differing point of view.

One of the projects that I created at the time that Keith was writing this New Testament Bible Story was a 12 lesson Young Adults Bible Study which covers the major doctrines of the Bible (www.rogerswebsite.com/CD.htm) and is available on my website. It can also be ordered on disc. Keith also has many informative articles available on his own website (www.keithhunt.com) which he makes reference to in many of his comments.

Currently another volunteer, also from Canada, Muriel Crawford, has done a number of the early illustrations. I have filled the rest of this series with other illustrations that

I have searched for on the internet. These illustrations will be phased out over time as Muriel and possibly other volunteers create others which will replace these.

Once we have replaced all the images in this online version with illustrations we have ownership to I have a couple of organisations in mind to approach to fund a hard copy print run of this series and make it more widely available not just within the greater Church of God but also to a much wider audience by offering it at cost price on amazon.com.

I asked Keith to give an overview of each of the New Testament epistles and slot them in chronologically (as when they were written) into the Book of Acts before covering the Book of Revelation. He has covered all the New Testament epistles in much detail.

I have since changed that order to the original order of the New Testament canon which differs from the order of the New Testament in most Bibles. In the original New Testament canon the general epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude follow the Book of Acts and then comes the epistles of Paul starting with those written to whole churches and finishing with the pastoral epistles written to individuals such as Timothy and Titus. Following that, of course, is the Book of Revelation.

The writers of the general epistles had seniority over Paul within the early church and that was one reason for their epistles being included first. The second reason that motivated my change of order with this New Testament Bible Story was that the general epistles cover fundamental themes such as faith (James), hope (Peter), love (John) and truth (Jude) before Paul covers more complex subjects finishing with how ministers are to run the church in his pastoral epistles such as those to Timothy and Titus.

Putting this New Testament Bible Story in that same order with its gradual rise from the simpler to more complex subjects made perfect sense for this series aimed at teaching children the wonderful truths of God's Holy Bible.

Volume 1 covers the story of Jesus ministry in the Gospels up till His last Feast of Tabernacles.

Volume 2 covers Jesus ministry in the Gospels in His last 6 months and after His resurrection.

Volume 3 covers the Book of Acts and the general epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude covering the fundamental themes such as faith (James), hope (Peter), love (John) and truth (Jude).

Volume 4 covers the epistles of Paul written to whole churches.

Volume 5 covers the pastoral epistles of Paul and the Book of Revelation.

We truly hope that this New Testament Bible Story makes the Bible come alive to you and that you enjoy it and learn much about the wonderful truths of the Bible through it!

Roger Waite

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - The 1st Epistle to Timothy (Part 1).....	6
CHAPTER 2 - The 1st Epistle to Timothy (Part 2).....	17
CHAPTER 3 - The 1st Epistle to Timothy (Part 3).....	25
CHAPTER 4 – The 2nd Epistle to Timothy.....	33
CHAPTER 5 – The Epistle to Titus	44
CHAPTER 6 - The Epistle To Philemon (Part 1).....	53
CHAPTER 7 - The Epistle To Philemon (Part 2).....	63
CHAPTER 8 - The Epistle To Philemon (Part 3).....	67
CHAPTER 9 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 1)	71
CHAPTER 10 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 2)	75
CHAPTER 11 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 3)	79
CHAPTER 12 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 4)	87
CHAPTER 13 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 5)	91
CHAPTER 14 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 6)	97
CHAPTER 15 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 7)	107
CHAPTER 16 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 8)	114
CHAPTER 17 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 9)	123
CHAPTER 18 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 10)	130
CHAPTER 19 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 11)	135
CHAPTER 20 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 12)	142
CHAPTER 21 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 13)	150
CHAPTER 22 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Part 14)	158

CHAPTER 1

Paul writes 1 Timothy (Part 1)

Introduction

The following INTRODUCTION is taken from the New KJV Personal Study Bible: Thomas Nelson Publishing: 1990, 1995.

The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus constitute a subgroup among the letters of Paul. They are addressed not to churches, but to pastors. Paul's younger colleagues in ministry. Therefore, since the eighteenth century, they have been called the Pastoral Epistles. These three letters share similar characteristics and contents...

AUTHOR AND DATE

The first verse of each letter identifies Paul as the author. Some scholars dispute this claim, but there is strong external and internal evidence under girding the authenticity of these letters. Paul was released from his imprisonment, recorded at the end of Acts, in late A.D.62 or early A.D.63. First Timothy was probably written about A.D.65. The only specific historical reference (1 Tim.1:3) hints at a period of further travel and ministry. Titus was probably written shortly after 1 Timothy but before the apostle's re-arrest and imprisonment in A.D.66. In 2 Timothy, probably written in A.D.67, Paul had been rearrested and was expecting execution (2 Tim. 4:6).

BACKGROUND

Timothy, a native of Lystra in Asia Minor, was the son of a Jewish mother and Gentile father (Acts 16:1-3). He was a convert of the apostle Paul, who had evangelized Lystra on his first missionary journey. Timothy joined Paul and Silas on the second missionary journey and travelled with them to Greece. Paul sent him to visit the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches (see 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 3:2). His close association with the apostle is shown by Timothy's name being joined with Paul's at the opening of six epistles (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; and Philem. Timothy is also mentioned in 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2, 6).

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

The books of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus form the section of the New Testament referred to as the Pastoral Epistles. For author, date, and additional background see Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles.

BACKGROUND

At the time of writing 1 Timothy, Paul had stationed his associate at Ephesus (1:3) to oversee the work there and possibly throughout Asia Minor. Comparatively young (4:12), Timothy needed instruction in supervising the affairs of the church and counsel in matters of personal ministerial conduct. In 1 Timothy Paul is particularly concerned that the false teachers in Ephesus be refuted.

CONTENTS

Paul warns Timothy against false teaching and gives him guidance on how to handle it. He lists qualifications for bishops, deacons, and widows; gives instructions on prayer and ministry; and compares earthly wealth with spiritual riches. Paul also offers Timothy directives for his personal life.

PURPOSE

This letter was written to provide pastoral care and guidance to a young church leader. Its words are intended to encourage him and to help him refute false teaching.

OUTLINE of 1 Timothy

1. Salutations from Paul to Timothy 1:1,2
2. Sound doctrine contrasted with false 1:3-11
3. Paul's testimony and charge to Timothy 1:12-20
4. Prayer in the Christian life 2:1-8
5. Women in the Christian community 2:9-15
6. Qualifications for church leaders 3:1-13
 - A. Bishops 3:1-7
 - B. Deacons 3:8-13
7. The character of the church 3:14-16
8. False teaching in the last days 4:1-5
9. Timothy's task 4:6-5:2
 - A. Instructing others 4:6-11
 - B. Nurturing himself 4:12-16
 - C. Rebuking others 5:1,2
10. The widow's role and ministry 5:3-16
11. Selecting and nurturing leaders 5:17-25
12. Spiritual riches versus wealth 6:1-10
 - A. Exhortation to bondservants 6:1,2
 - B. Dangers of carnal teachers 6:3-5
 - C. Exhortation on godliness 6:6-8
 - D. Warning against greed 6:9,10
13. Final commands to Timothy 6:11-21
 - A. Pursue godliness 6:11-16
 - B. Command the rich 6:17-19
 - C. Guard the truth 6:20,21

1 Timothy 1

Paul immediately claims he is an APOSTLE (one sent forth), and was appointed not by men but by the command of God and Christ. We have seen in the book of Acts how Jesus appeared to Saul or Paul on the road to Damascus. He addresses Timothy as a true child in the faith. We can gather from all of his writings that he had a special spiritual bond with Timothy, and was no doubt very instrumental in leading and teaching Timothy the true way of the work of the Lord.

He asks that God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give Timothy grace, mercy, and peace. We notice once more no such greeting is from the person of the Holy Spirit, which would amount to a snub of sorts IF the Holy Spirit was a person separate from the Father and Jesus. As we have stated before, it was not a snub on Paul's part because the Holy Spirit is NOT a separate person of the Godhead (verses 1-2).

Warning Against False Teachers

When Paul was in Macedonia he urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus and stop those who were teaching false doctrines. We are not told HOW Timothy was to do this, we can only surmise it was by boldly teaching and possibly writing about the errors of the false teachers. Timothy was to guide people away from endless speculations over myths and genealogies, which can cause so many arguments, which in turn distract away from living a life of faith and godliness. Paul desired to see all people filled with love, from a good pure heart, a clear conscience, and sincere faith. Many he says have turned away from the foundation of Christianity, and have turned to this arguing over myths and endless pedigrees, as if your ancestral genealogy was crucial to your salvation.

Paul gets pretty blunt here, as he tells us that those false teachers were wanting to be teachers of the law (found in the books of Moses) but in reality he says they did not have a clue what they were talking about, though they came across in speech as if they were experts on the law (as one funny explanation says about the word "expert" - "ex" is an unknown quantity; and "spert" is a drip under pressure).

Paul declares that God's laws are GOOD, when used for the purpose they were created for. And the bottom line is that the laws were brought into being by God, not for the righteous but for the sinner. He proceeds to name some of the common sins. Probably many of those sins he lists were common practices in his day, and as we read them, many are common practices even to this very day. The law's design was mainly towards those who were disobedient and rebellious, ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred, and trample on what is holy, who hate and despise their fathers and mothers. The laws are for the sexually immoral, for homosexuals, lesbians, slave traders, for liars and breakers of oaths, and for just anything that is contrary to right teaching, that he says came to him through the glorious GOOD NEWS of the Gospel, entrusted to him by our blessed God (verses 3-11).

Paul gives thanks to Jesus Christ for putting him into His ministry. Paul remembers he was a blasphemer and a persecutor of the Church of God, yet he obtained mercy as he did the former through ignorance and unbelief in the Gospel of Christ. He is reminded of the great mercy of Jesus, and the fact that He came into the world to save sinners, whom Paul says he was up at the head of the class as being. Yet Paul obtaining mercy was a figure or pattern for other sinners who would also obtain mercy long after Paul was not on this earth (verses 12-16).

In verse 17 we have these words: "And unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The CONTEXT is the thought of Jesus Christ, note verses 12, 14, 15, 16. So from the context, the "King eternal" - "immortal" - "invisible" - "the only wise God" IS REFERRING TO Jesus Christ. Jesus is then GOD!!

Yes, God the Father is God, and the Son of the Father is God, BOTH have the name of God. Often in the New Testament the word "God" is used as a last name, just as Hunt is my last name and all in my family have the name "Hunt" attached to their first name. So it is with the "Godhead" - all in that family are God. The Father is God, and Jesus His Son is God. One God, or Godhead, but two personal individual Beings make up that ONE God, using the word "God" here as a surname.

It would seem that there were certain prophetic utterances made about Timothy at an earlier point in his life and ministry, and those utterances were of a positive nature, by which he could wage a good spiritual warfare. We are not told what those specific prophecies were in the life of Timothy, but we can be sure Timothy knew what Paul was referring to.

Such applications by Timothy would make sure he held the faith with a good conscience, which some Paul says, concerning the faith, have made shipwreck. He names two individuals who have broken the faith and have turned away from the narrow pathway that leads to life eternal. Those two individuals were men by the names of Hymeneus and Alexander. We know nothing more of them from the New Testament than what is said about them here in verses 18-20.

Paul had been willing to let them go, to have them delivered over to Satan and his world, hoping that in so doing they would learn to be disciplined back to the straight and narrow way of righteousness and salvation, and to stop living a blasphemous life (verse 20).

1 Timothy 2

Prayers and the One Mediator

Paul teaches in verses 1-3 that prayers should be made for "all men" - for kings and all that be in authority. Does this mean that we should pray for "dictators" and people in authority like Hitler was in authority over Germany before and during the great Second World War? Well, we may include them in our prayers that they would REPENT of their horrific SINS and madness against other humans made in the image of God. It is hardly a Christian thought to be "giving in thanks" for such people.

The answer to such verses (there are a few more in the New Testament; such as 1 Peter 2:13,14) is twofold. First, the second half of verse two shows we are praying that we should lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness - under all men. It is like Daniel leading such a life in captivity to the Babylon armies and king Nebuchadnezzar, as well as his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They served God FIRST, under all situations, and of course prayed they would be granted to live in godliness even if those in authority were evil. If there was a conflict between serving God and the dictates and commandments of men, they obeyed God first, even if it meant dying for their faith.

As Paul says in verse 3, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

Second, the Bible uses many times "general statements" - the example of "all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1) is one of dozens of "general statements" in the Bible. Obviously the people in South America or Australia, did not come up to Palestine to be taxed. We then obviously do not "give thanks" to all men. It is not a

thankful situation to have people like Hitler walking this earth and bringing all the evil they may bring upon other people and nations.

Paul continues to tell us in verse 4 that God would desire that all people be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. That is God's desire, but it does not mean ALL WILL repent and be saved. God cannot force anyone against their will to repent and acknowledge Him as Savior. Yet we are to remember that even such evil men as Hitler, God wishes would repent and be saved. So we could certainly pray that all people would come to acknowledge God, repent of sins, accept Jesus as their Savior, and so find salvation.

Verse 5 gives an important truth. There is ONLY ONE mediator between God the Father and mankind, and that is the man Christ Jesus. There can be NO OTHER, not the mother of Jesus, Mary, not any "apostle" or religious leader. Only Christ Jesus is the mediator. As the book of Hebrews shows over and over again, only Jesus is our High Priest in heaven pleading our case before the heavenly Father.

Some take the word "man" in this verse for Jesus as proof that Christ was not God in the flesh, not divine, but merely a human man with "more of the Spirit" than any other man ever born on earth. But again such ideas come from not reading the entire Bible. We see in Daniel 9:21 that the angel Gabriel is called a "man." An angelic being called a "man" - Gabriel is hardly a "man" as we think of a human person.

The Bible uses many "figures of speech" - words and phrases that put things into more human language for us to "get the picture" so to speak. When we then read of Gabriel being a "man" it is showing us that this mighty angelic being can be, in form and shape, like a human person. But it is not trying to prove to us that this spirit angelic being IS LITERALLY a man. So Jesus in heaven, as our mediator, is not a literal flesh and blood human man somehow able to exist on the right hand of the Father. But it is showing us that Jesus does have the form and shape of human kind. His form and shape in His glorious resurrection is described in Revelation chapter one, and human like shape is given, but it can hardly be said that He is literally a physical man.

Paul's mind is again on Jesus the Christ, and he cannot pass up the opportunity to mention that the Messiah gave Himself in death to buy back (a ransom) and free all mankind. This was foretold in the Old Testament, and in due time it all came to pass within the time frame which God the Father had desired upon (verse 6).

Paul then ties in with Jesus the fact that he Paul was called by Him to be a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher to the Gentiles. He claims this is very truth and part of the faith (verse 7).

Verse 8 is an interesting verse. The phrase "I will therefore" is in the Greek more specific, being, "It is my direction." The Greek word used for "men" is "aner" and means the male sex only. It is never used for the female sex. "Lifting up holy hands" - many times in the Old Testament we see men literally lifting up their arms and hands to pray. It is certainly not wrong to follow such examples. Some men in various "churches" of Christianity, at the end of the service, giving what some call the "benediction" - raise their arms up while blessing the congregation as they finish their worship service.

Paul wants the "men" everywhere to pray. What and when can this be? Paul must have something specific in mind, as he chose the Greek word "aner" which means ONLY the male sex, and never the female sex. As the next verses (9-15) have to do with "official" worship service context, I believe Paul is addressing the same context, and is directing Timothy as a church leader to only have the "men" pray aloud in the official teaching / worship service. This was the understanding and practice in most "churches" for the last number of centuries, until the last decades of the 20th century. Many churches today have adopted an "anything goes" mentality, and so would also completely ignore the next number of verse to do with "women" learning in silence during the worship service.

The Function and Dress of Women and the Church Worship Service

Verses 9 and 10 are often given by some religious organizations as a proof text that God wants Christian women NOT to have elaborate hair styles, or wear jewelry, or clothes that are costly (and how do we determine "cost" for what is costly to one person is inexpensive to another). Are churches to have an "apparel committee" to decide what the cost of buying clothes should be for its members?

Again, as we read the entire Bible, we soon come to the realization that some of God's people (men and women) did wear costly clothes and did adorn themselves with jewelry. Jesus had a cloak that was seamless (you might remember some cast lots over it at Jesus' crucifixion). Such a garment was looked upon as "rare" and indeed "costly."

So, with ALL the Bible in view, we understand these verses not as saying God's women should not have pretty hair styles, jewelry, and expensive clothes, from time to time, but that the MAIN attitude of mind is that women have INNER beauty, complimented with good works. You may want to read about the virtuous woman as found in Proverbs 31.

How these verses in 1 Timothy should be read is like this: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves NOT ONLY in modest apparel, with humility and decorum; NOT ONLY with elaborate hair at times, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; BUT MORE IMPORTANT (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works.

Verses 11-14 and the subject of women learning in silence, must have only one context, and that is the subject of "official church worship service." It can hardly have anything to do with women teaching their children, or being a teacher in a school system. Paul was writing to Timothy concerning things within "the church" (see chapter 3:14,15). Paul was not writing about public school systems or the role of women in their families as wife and mother. These verses here must be of the same nature and context as that found in 1 Cor. 14:34-35.

It is not the purpose of this Bible Story to go into an in-depth study on the role of women in the official church worship service. Yet, it should be very clear from the two passages above referred to, that Paul taught that in the Church of God worship service, women were not to take a "teaching" role, as found be expected from a male minister such as Timothy. They were to be in "silence with all subjection" - the word "subjection" in the Greek is a military term, which means "to rank under." Paul appeals to the very beginning of human creation in the book of Genesis. He does not

go into all the details of HOW he understood that creation of man and women, just that it was God's design for a woman to NOT take a "teaching" role in an official way within the "church of God."

We must remember that Paul was very plain in telling us in the book of Galatians, he was NOT taught the mysteries and Gospel of God by any human man but by the Lord Himself.

In these verses Paul is quite up front in telling Timothy that this IS the WAY it should be. He was at times in his letters to people and churches, very bold with "authority" - and I guess if you or I were taught directly from the Lord, we would also at times be bold with authority in some of our statements, especially concerning how things should be conducted within the church congregation, if we had been personally instructed by the Lord on how it was to be conducted.

This does NOT mean women are inferior to men, or lack something in the brain which men have and women do not have. This is not the case at all, just as children are not less perfect in the brain than their mother. It all simply has to do with "roles" or "functions" that certain ones are to fulfill within a certain context of life and relation to others.

And Paul would clearly argue that God had certain "roles" for men and women to function within, when it came to the church congregation.

It all has to do with "role function" and has nothing to do with personal salvation, or in private (such as we find in the example of Acts 18:24-28 with a man and his wife giving better instruction to Apollos in the way of God and the Gospel) teaching and instructing people in Scriptural matters.

The woman is on equal footing with men for salvation. Paul finishes his thoughts by saying the woman shall be saved "in THE childbearing" - the Greek containing the definite article "the" - which would be a reference to Jesus Christ (verse 15). It was after all through a woman that the Son of God became flesh and blood, to die for the sins of both men and women. Women shall indeed be saved as men are, through Jesus, IF they continue in faith and love and holiness and modesty (self-control). And is not this the heart of salvation, be it for women and for men? Yes, it is. There may be different roles that men and women function in at times, but the bottom line for salvation is exactly the same for both sexes.

1 Timothy 3

Qualifications for Church Leaders

Paul opens with a true saying, in saying, that if a man desires the function of an Elder or Bishop (Greek is "episkopos" and means "overlooker") he does indeed desire a noble work. But desiring such a work does not automatically mean he is qualified for such a work. For the apostle goes on to tell us what are the basic requirements for a man holding the function of a church leader or shepherd of the flock of God.

He must be living a basically blameless Christian life. This does not mean he may not make certain mistakes or errors at times (Peter obviously did as the apostle Paul

had to correct him as we read in Galatians chapter two). Yet his overall life will be one that can be held up for others to follow and be inspired by.

He must be the husband of one wife. This phrase may seem hard to understand today, but when we note that polygamy, or have more than one wife at the same time, was ALLOWED by God under the Old Covenant, we see here that Paul was inspired to set a new standard. Having a number of wives at the same time was no more allowed under the New Covenant or Testament, especially for an Elder or shepherd of the church.

He needed to be of a sober or sound mind, not one that would think and act like a man who had too much alcohol to drink. And so it would follow that he would also be a man of good common behaviour, knowing how to act in many different situations and circumstances that life can put us in. Hence he would have good respectable manners and language when dealing with people (and children) of all ages.

A spiritual leader would have an outgoing hospitable disposition. He would enjoy being hospitable to people, sharing his time, his home, his life, with others. He would not be someone who was a loner, preferring to be by himself and away from other individuals.

Jesus was not a loner, except when He needed time to be with the heavenly Father in prayer. Otherwise Christ was a people person, wanting to serve them, teach them, be with them. So a leader in the congregation was to be also, for Paul instructed he was to be a "teacher" - not necessarily a great "preacher" but he was to be a "skillful teacher" as the original Greek reads. Teaching the truth of God's word is a large part of the work of any man who is chosen to be a spiritual leader in the Church of God.

He is also a person who is not to be hot tempered, or quick tempered, not to be a quarrelsome person, saying and doing wrong, as one that is drunk with wine. Or "not given to wine" could mean, he is not given to drinking too much wine or alcohol as one who becomes an alcoholic. He is to always have self-control over alcoholic drinks.

He is not to be a "striker" - not someone who is ready to get into hot arguments over "religion" and even get so worked up that he loses physical control of himself. It is a sad commentary to learn that many physical wars in history have been waged among people who thought they were doing the will of God, by literally battling it out with others.

A leader in the church must not be doing the work of a spiritual guide for the sake of a pay-check, or to try and get more and more physical goods or money, thinking that he is rightly entitled to living a high and splendid material life. That kind of mental thought and ambition is not for the man who desires the work of the ministry.

Paul again goes back to give emphasis on the fundamental nature that must be evident in a spiritual leader - a nature that is NOT of the "brawler" type personality. A brawler person is anything but patient, they tend to be loud, abrasive, crude, ready to fight with words and/or actions, at the drop of a hat. A church leader must be patient, longsuffering, and certainly not having the brawler type personality.

Because he is not to desire the work of spiritual leader for the end result of obtaining material wealth, such a leader must then not be a covetous person, according to Paul.

CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS - ELDER

1 Tim 3	Meaning	Titus 1	Meaning
v. 2	one who cannot be validly accused	v. 6	cannot be validly called to account
v. 2	completely devoted to his wife	v. 6	children believe in Jesus
v. 2	avoids extremes and excesses	v. 6	children are not in rebellion
v. 2	wisely establishes priorities	v. 7	not self-serving
v. 2	respected	v. 7	long suffering
v. 2	loves strangers	v. 7	does not seek dishonest gain
v. 2	skillful teacher	v. 8	a lover of goodness
v. 3	not addicted to wine	v. 8	one who is a believer & consistently fair
v. 3	not given to physical violence	v. 8	one who is holy
v. 3	forbearing - yields his rights	v. 8	restrained in mind & over fleshly desires
v. 3	not an arguer	v. 9	faithful to the Word
v. 3	does not love money	v. 9	able to defend the truth
v. 4	manages his family well		
v. 4	children obey him with respect		
v. 6	not a new believer		
v. 7	good testimony with the world		

He is to rule his own household well, his children being in good subjection with a sensible mindset that makes them serious in knowing the rightness of listening to their father, and being in subjection to his guidance in the way they should conduct themselves in school and out of school. This was important a qualification to Paul because if a man could not guide and rule his own family, the apostle could not see it possible for him to guide and take care of the church of God.

I personally have only known one man in my personal dealings with other ministers, who willfully stepped down from the ministry because he had lost control of his teenage sons. His sons were indeed into big time bad things that no sons of a minister should ever be in. I had great respect for that minister for being humble enough to admit this qualification, to see somewhere along the way he had lost control of his children, and for then resigning from the ministry. He did not wait for other spiritual leaders to ask him to step down from active service in the ministry, he himself withdrew and stepped down.

I suppose the apostle Paul would have no arguments with such a leader being reinstated into the Eldership after his children were of adult age and out from under their father's domain. All adults are on their own before God and other people. What the apostle here is saying is that when a spiritual leader's children are still children, and under their father's domain, then that leader must have normal respectable control over them, where the children are in control and not out-of-control with the society or the laws of the land. If they are in trouble with the police and courts of the land, and cannot be ruled well, then that church leader is to step away from the ministry, during that time when his children are still children under his care.

And of course no man should be brought into the spiritual leadership who is not having good rule over his household and family.

A church leader is not to be a novice, or one "newly planted" as the Greek reads. As Paul says, such a one coming into leadership when a relatively new Christian, will often be lifted up with pride and vanity, which will give Satan an opportunity to enter and lead that man into paths of unrighteousness, that vanity and pride have often led men in the ministry who were not novices. I have seen long time church men who became leaders fall under pride and vanity, how much more so for those that would be novices in Christianity and godliness, if given such a high responsibility as spiritual leader way before their time to mature in righteousness and the skill of understanding the word of God.

Finally the church leader must have a "good report of them which are without" - those outside the Christian community and/or those outside the local church that he is to help lead. He must have lived and be living a life of conduct in word and deed and reputation, that is respected by those who know him and have social and business dealings with him. Those people may not know what church he belongs to, they may not go to the same church, they may not know he is being chosen as a church leader by the church he attends. But they sure will know about how he conducts himself in business and in community social events. He must be respected as being kind, patient, fair, honest, trustworthy, skilled in his work or trade, a "nice person to know" as we say, and a moral upright person.

It is true that few can ever win all people, some will just not like a certain person, and it may simply be because of "personality clashes" and nothing else. Some people are hard to win no matter how nice and "good" you are to them and others, but by and large, in the main, the spiritual leader must have the love and confidence of those outside his church congregation, and with whom he must meet and "rub shoulders with" in the day to day world.

As Paul says, appointing any man to church leadership who does not qualify on this point, is bound to give room for the Devil to work his snares, and to also bring reproach on himself, his church, and the name of Christianity (verses 1-7).

Qualifications for Deacons

In many respects the qualifications for those serving as deacons or servants - working on the more physical things within a local congregation, as those chosen for such work recorded in Acts chapter 6 - are very similar for those chosen as spiritual leaders of the congregation. They must be of a serious mind-set for things concerning Christianity, be not double-tongued or have a mind that goes two different ways, so none can expect which way they will follow or which path they will take in any same situation. In other words being very unpredictable in words or actions. They also must not be given to "much wine" or the abuse of alcohol and the wrong mind-set and actions that result from such abuse. They must not be ruled by the greed of ambition to be materially wealthy. They must hold the faith of God with a pure conscience - have the correct motive for wanting to be a part of the family of God.

Those serving in mainly the physical matters of the church must be proved, or approved (again see Acts 6). They must have a basic good behaviour of living, with

no serious or large weaknesses that would bring reproach from non-Christians or Christians.

The servant of the church must have a wife that is also well respected for their serious Christianity, who do not slander or give out false tales and reports on other people, and are true and faithful in all that they do.

The servant of the church must also have only one wife, the idea of polygamy or having more than one wife at any one time, is not to be practiced. They must rule their children and all in their household in a good and well manner. Their family is to be balanced and live in such a way as to be respected by all

Those that function as a servant or deacon of the church, Paul says, have acquired or gained for themselves a good "degree" or as the Greek is, a good "step" (such as in a staircase). They will gain more influence, and respectability, as if climbing a stairway. They will also gain more confidence, assurance, in the faith or work which is in Christ Jesus (verses 8-13).

Paul tells Timothy that he was writing to him, with the hope of coming to be with him in the very near future. But He says, if he was delayed, he was writing to him so he could know how to manage and behave himself in certain matters that are the day to day workings of the Church of God, which was the pillar and ground of the truth. He reminds Timothy that great is the mystery of godliness, and which basics were that God did come in the flesh (a member of the Godhead did come to earth as a human flesh and blood person), lived a righteous and holy life through the power of the Spirit, angels saw and gave testimony to this truth, and witnessed that He, Christ Jesus, did preach to the people, was believed by many, and after His death and resurrection, did ascend to heaven with glory and into the glory of heaven (verses 14-16). Paul wrote in other letters that Jesus ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father, in the heavenly throne room of the heavenly Jerusalem city, which will all come to this earth in God's time plan (read the wonderful 20, 21, and 22 chapters of the book of Revelation).

CHAPTER 2

PAUL WRITES 1 TIMOTHY (PART 2)

1 Timothy 4

End Time Doctrines of Demons

Paul relates that the Spirit of God had foretold that in the latter days (which by the definitions of how the words "latter days" or "last days" are used in the New Testament, it means from the start of the Christian age to the return of Jesus) some would depart from the truth or faith, the correct body of teachings from God, and would give heed to spirits of seduction, and to teachings that were not only "bad" theology but were derived from the false ideas of demons. Pretty hard and straight talk indeed from the apostle Paul.

These demons speak lies while play acting (coming as if angels of light - see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15), and have their very minds branded with evil, as a permanent scar.

What are TWO of these end time false doctrines? One is the teaching that "forbids to marry." And sure enough we see that in the largest "Christian" church on earth (with over one BILLION members) there is a teaching that forbids its "priests" to marry, saying to remain single while leading the flock of God gives more time to devote to serving the flock. While that church organization admits there is no Scriptural ground for holding such a view, it nevertheless forces its spiritual leaders to remain single (as of the writing of this in 2005).

It may be true, as most Bible scholars agree, Paul was probably a single man when serving in the Christian ministry, which we can gather from certain verses in his epistles. The fact also remains that Paul said he and Barnabas did have the authority to "lead around a wife" as the apostle Peter did and others also. Leading around a wife simply meant, having a wife who travelled with her husband while he preached and taught the word of God to people in towns and villages, here and there, near and far.

We have seen that those who serve in leadership roles in the church are to have one wife. They are to rule their children wisely and correctly, and have a good responsible family that others can look to as an example of what a fine Christian family should be.

True, at times, and for various different reasons (the example of Paul himself) some of the servants of God would be single. You may remember in the Gospels Jesus once answered the twelve concerning not being married, and He said, not all can accept this, only to those to whom it is given, in other words, having the power over mind and body to be single and not fall into sexual sins. We have sadly seen in the last few decades the revealed facts of many sexual sins by priests who were commanded by their church to remain un-married. Few indeed can accept being single all their lives while serving in the ministry, and not fall into immoral sins, often done in secret, sometimes for decades, before such sins become open before all.

The second great end time doctrine of demons is the forbidding to eat certain foods, which God created to be eaten, and to be received with thanksgiving. Some church organizations forbid the drinking or eating of tea or coffee or alcoholic wine or other fermented beverages. Some church groups teach that eating meat, even of the "clean" animals as specified in Deut. 14 and Lev. 11, is "sin" or not quite as "holy" as eating only fruits, vegetables, and nuts, as they claim that was God's original diet for mankind.

All the above ideas are incorrect. There is not time, nor is it the intent of this Bible Story to detail the theological errors of those teachings.

I do though want to explain what these verses are saying, because some have the false theology that Paul is here "doing away with" the Old Testament laws of God given to Israel concerning "clean" and "unclean" meats. Clean and unclean animals existed in the time of Noah, when he brought them into the Ark (see the first chapters of Genesis). So clean and unclean animals did not begin with Moses and the Israelites.

You will notice the foods some will forbid to eat are foods that God created to be eaten and are received with thanksgiving by those who believe and KNOW THE TRUTH. Every creature of God is good, nothing to be refused but we must read on! IF those foods are received by being SANCTIFIED by the WORD of God! Being "set apart" by God's word.

Yes, the bottom line is STILL the WORD of God, and the Lord does sanctify, or set apart, clean and unclean meats or foods, in His word. We logically realize that not ALL vegetation is good food to eat, why some "greens" if eaten will KILL you!

Deuteronomy 14 and Leviticus 11 are still in the Bible. Nowhere in the New Testament have those clean and unclean laws been abolished.

But SOME have in the latter days come along and now teach that even the clean meats are not to be eaten, and you are kind of more "righteous" if you follow the "original" diet God intended for mankind, which is being a vegetarian. The truth is that Paul made it very clear in Romans 14 that it was the vegetarian who was "weak" in the faith - theologically weak - theologically not are "learned" in the word of God, as those who know certain creatures were created and sanctified by God, from the very first week of creation (Genesis chapter one) to be eaten with thanksgiving by those who know the truth.

We have certainly seen in the last days the emergence of these two false doctrines, which are then not of God, and so can only be of the fallen angelic word, we now call "demons."

Then we must remember that Paul only gave two examples of false teachings that would arise in the latter times. There are MANY others besides the two Paul mentioned. You will discover the many other doctrines of demons as you read and read and read more of the word of God, reading from Genesis to Revelation. Only by being familiar with ALL God's word will you be able to avoid the seductions of demonic spirits (verses 1-5).

Paul told Timothy to put the brethren in remembrance of the things he had just mentioned, so doing Timothy would be a good minister of Jesus Christ, he would so be nourished up in the words of faith and of good sound doctrine, where unto he had already attained. Timothy was to refuse to have anything to do with old profane fables and myths floating around all over the place. He was to exercise himself to godliness. Physical exercise was not bad, it did have some benefit for a little time, towards the physical body, but godliness was profitable for eternity, for today and for ever more in the life which was yet to come. This thought of mind was indeed the worthy thing, and because of it Paul said we labour for the Lord and even suffer reproach from the world, because we live a life that puts trust in the Eternal God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who now believe in Him (verses 6-10).

Paul then goes on to tell Timothy that he was to command and teach the things he was writing to him. His relative youth of age (probably compared to the apostle Paul) he should not hold as a disadvantage, but he should be a fine example to the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in mental attitude, in faith, and in leading a pure life.

Yes, that which is right and proper before God no man should pull back from. No minister of the Lord should fail to teach, preach, and obey.

Timothy was to give attention to reading, to encouragement, and to sound doctrine, as he worked in leading those in the Church of God. This is the three pillars upon which every church congregation should be built, of course Jesus is the foundation for those pillars. The church is to constantly be reading the word of God, it is a place for its members to uplift and encourage each other, and it is place where sound doctrine is to be searched for and held on to.

Timothy was to meditate on all these things Paul was writing to him about, he was to take hold of them, and so let all see the profitable results in his life.

Paul reminds him to "take heed unto yourself" - a way of saying he was to watch his steps in how he thought, spoke, and lived. He was to continue on the right pathway to eternal life, and in so doing he would not only save himself but also those that would hear him and follow his example (verse 11-16).

1 Timothy 5

Various Instruction on Dealing With People Within The Church

Older men in the church should be corrected with love and as if they were your father, and the younger men corrected and taught remembering they are your brothers in the body of Christ, and so the same principle applies to teaching and correcting older women and younger women in the church (verses 1-2)

Widows should be given honour, and those widows that have relatives in the church, those relatives should help support them in any physical way needed, so the church as a whole can take care of other people, while not having to worry about the widows that have family members in the church.

Widows in the church who really do have very little in the way of physical comforts, will indeed be having to trust on the Lord to have those physical necessities provided. It will be an important part of her prayers to God. The people in the church should then make sure that helping widows with physical needs is high on their priority list. On the other hand Paul says that the widow who only lives and prays for more and more material things, is actually in a state of being spiritually dead. Obviously anyone who has a large part of their prayer life devoted to asking for physical things, has a wrong attitude. It is then a **BALANCED** approach Paul is teaching here in regards to the needs of widows and the help that relatives and the church as a whole can give.

Paul finishes this part of his instruction on helping widows by saying that those in the church who do not care for their relatives, and especially for those within their own household, have denied the basic faith of Christianity, and in some ways such people are worse than unbelievers, for in most cases the unbelievers in the world do show compassion and do help close relatives and those in their household. If the world can do such hospitable things then surely those professing Christianity should be doing them also (verses 3-8).

Widows in the Number

Verses 9-16 have somewhat of a question. The question being in verse 9. What did Paul mean by "Let not a widow be taken into the number...." or as the Greek can be understood to mean, "Let not a widow be chosen...."

One thing we can know is as Albert Barnes in his Bible Commentary says, whatever Paul was specifically talking about, it was clearly understood by Timothy, and probably also by the rest of the NT church at that time.

It is a section of Scripture we do need to look at and try to understand some important truths **BEING** taught and **NOT** being taught. Albert Barnes has some very fine comments on these verses, which I will quote at some length. Quotes from Barnes' Notes on the New Testament:

.....In the Acts of the apostles (chap.6:1) we have this account: 'And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, **BECAUSE** their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.' It appears that from the first formation of the Christian church, provision was made out of public funds of the society for the indigent **WIDOWS** who belonged to it. To this, as to a well-known practice, Paul here evidently refers.....Under threescore years old. For such reasons as those mentioned in verses 11-14. Having been the wife of one man.

On this point Barnes gives 5 reasons as to why we should understand this phrase to mean the widow had only been married to one man, and had since becoming a widow who remained unmarried.

The 5 points are briefly:

(1) This is the natural meaning of such a phrase.

(2) "Widows indeed" would naturally have more force of meaning in understanding that she had remained un-married and had only ever been married to one husband.

(3) While it was not wrong for a widow to marry again, the context proving so, there would be given a certain "honour" to such widows who had remained un-married. See Luke 2:36,37.

(4) Among the heathen it was regarded as especially honourable to have been married but to one man, and such widows wore the Pudicite Coronam, or a crown of chastity.

(5) As these persons were not only to be maintained by the church, but appear also to have been entrusted with an office of guardianship over the younger females, it was of importance that they should have such character that no occasion of offence should be given, even among the heathen; and in order to that, Paul gave direction that only those should be thus enrolled who were in all respects widows, and who would be regarded, on account of their age and their whole deportment, as "widows indeed."

Barnes ends these 5 points with, "I cannot doubt, therefore, that he meant to exclude those from the number here referred to who had been married the second time."

These select widows had to have a history of a life of good works. Obviously this would be known within the church and the local society in which the widow lived and conversed. They were to have brought up children. Paul not being specific, this could refer to her own children or the children of others, as a "nanny" type lady. The main thought is that she had a good knowledge of correct child-rearing. She had to be a person who had been hospitable to people, even "strangers" that needed a helping hand, or fellow Christians passing through the locality where she lived and needed some lodging or meals. Certainly such Christians would have been "strangers" as such to the local area.

Washing the saints feet? It is not certain if this should be taken literally or metaphorically. It was the custom of the times and the land to wash the sand from off people's feet who came within your house. It may have been a figure of speech that denoted someone who served others. There is no evidence that he refers to it as a "religious rite" or a "religious ordinance," any more than he refers to the act of bringing up children as a "religious rite."

This numbered widow had also to be one noted for the work of relief for those in various types of afflictions, but Paul does not elaborate on the types of afflictions he may have had in mind.

She was to be a follower of that which is "every good work." As Albert Barnes notes:

A sincere Christian will, like God, be the friend of all that is good, and will be ready to promote every good object according to his ability. He will not merely be the friend of one good cause, to the neglect of others, but he will endeavour to promote every good object....

Younger Widows Refuse

Not refuse in the church, but refuse as to the matter under discussion, the widows who are admitted into the "number." Of course all respect and love are to be shown to them as to any Christian.

Now, what about the hard saying "to wax wanted against Christ"? As Barnes notes, the thought conveyed to the mind by these words are NOT what the original means, and does injustice both to the apostle and to the "younger widows." In the Greek there is no idea of lewdness or sin. The word means "wandering or roving in sport" - the idea is playing in the wind, or roving in frivolity. Tracing the word back we can also see it portrays revelry or luxury, just not a full controlled life that would be required for a widow who is chosen to be in the "number" for the positions and function that the "numbered" widows were to be a part of.

It is obvious by now that the numbered widows were not just chosen to be recipients of the church's physical goods. There was a group of numbered widows over the age of 60 for some function that entailed a service to the church that was beyond them just receiving physical goods from the funds of the church. Exactly what was that function is difficult to say, as we are 2,000 years from the fact of it, but Timothy and the church knew what Paul was referring to.

The context makes it clear that Paul had experience with knowing that younger widows would have a hard time functioning in this role of widows (that Paul thought it best they be 60 years old at least and widows indeed, quite content to not marry), as they would want to re-marry and could hardly be expected to be able to devote themselves to this special service for Christ within the church.

Paul hence said that it would be the best for younger widows to indeed re-marry (verse 14) and possibly raise children, guide their household. This shows he was speaking about younger widows in the context of them being child-bearing age, and still having a large interest in being mothers.

There is no thought here that Paul had in mind widows taking vows to remain single or to enter such practices as taking the veil in Nunneries.

Having Damnation

Once more words that could carry to the mind, the act of sin and evil. Barnes in his notes I believe gives the true sense of what Paul was meaning here.

The meaning is, that they would contract guilt, if they had been admitted among this class of persons, and then married again. The apostle does not say that that would be wrong in itself (v.14) or that they would be absolutely prohibited from it, but that injury would be done if they were admitted among those who were 'widows indeed' - who were supported by the church, and who were entrusted with a certain degree of care over the more younger females - and would then leave that situation. It might give occasion for scandal..... (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament).

It was a special function that the widows indeed were chosen for, and that function to Paul would be best served by widows who needed to have no mind in wanting to re-

marry. If that class of widows, chosen for that particular function of Paul's time, found itself rife with widows wanting to leave that function and re-marry and raise families, then for Paul that would bring disrespect and dishonour on the whole function of what those widows were called to work at within the church. So Paul's conclusion was that younger widows should think about re-marriage and raising a family (v.14), which is also a very respected function in the church. A lot of church growth is through the families within the church.

Cast Off Their First Faith

Again, words that could carry to the mind the wrong idea of individuals casting away their Christian faith and loss of salvation. Paul did not have this situation in mind here. Albert Barnes once more I believe gives the sense of what the apostle had in mind:

This does not mean they would lose all their religion, or wholly fall away, but that this would show they had not the strong faith....When they became widows, all their earthly hopes seemed to be blasted. They were then dead to the world, and felt their sole dependence on God. But if, under the influence of these strong emotions, they were admitted to the 'class of widows' in the church, there was no certainty that they would continue in this state of mind. Time would do much to modify their grief....They would be disposed to enter into the marriage relation, and thus show that they had not the strong and simple faith which they had when the blow which made them widows fell heavily upon them.

In other words it can be difficult for younger widows to MAINTAIN an attitude of mind that is not interested in re-marriage and raising children, especially if they had no previous children from the marriage they once had.

Such younger widows can feel certain emotions at one time (when they find themselves as widows) and then different emotions about life and marriage, at a later time.

In Paul's mind, this special class and function of "widows indeed" for service in the church, needed a mind-set which could be constant regarding "no marriage or family plans." Widows over the age of 60, were in Paul's mind, the best candidates for the church widows "taken into the number."

Other Distractions For Younger Widows

We would hope that in the Christian community the not so nice things Paul spoke about in verse 13, would not be a problem with younger widows. We would hope that such is not the case in our own local congregation. Yet, we must face the fact that human nature is well and healthy in far too many local congregations of the Church of Christ. It is obvious from Paul's words that in his time, a good portion of the younger widows were guilty of the things the apostle mentions.

Younger widows supported by the church were too often in a mind-set that fostered more and more idleness, and with idleness comes too much talk in the wrong direction, towards gossip, and speaking things that are not appropriate or that which is not fitting for what a Christian woman should be doing and saying.

So it was better in the apostle's mind that younger widows marry again and raise a family and guide their household, putting their time and energy into a family that could be helping the church in a positive way, and so give no opportunity for the Christian adversary to disdain the Christian faith, or speak evil against it.

Some, Paul says, have been taken in the clutches of the enemy of the Christian faith and have been turned aside from the true ways of God back to the ways of Satan.

The apostle finishes this part of his instructions to Timothy by once again stating that believing Christians who have widows in the church should support them, if they need physical support, so the church does not have to be concerned with those widows, but can then help the widows in the congregation that have no relatives to help them (verses 9-16).

What potent teaching the apostle Paul here gives on some aspects of the Christian church. He will yet give Timothy and all leaders in the Christian community, much more instruction on some basic situations that most churches will face as time marches on.

CHAPTER 3

PAUL WRITES 1 TIMOTHY (PART 3)

1 Timothy 5

Rewards For Elders

We have come to verses 17-25. Paul says that the Elders or those in functions of spiritual leadership and guidance in the church, are to be given double respect. He has already outlined to Timothy the basic qualifications for a man to be chosen as an elder or overseer, and that we discussed when we studied chapter three of this first epistle to Timothy.

It could also well be that Paul here refers more than to just "respect" as the Greek word can be understood, to physical substance as well. It was not uncommon as we read the New Testament to see that some elders were supported by the members of the church in the daily needs of this physical life. Most of those full-time ministers probably did not get all that much in the way of money and food to live on, hence Paul could say they really should have double the amount.

Today, very few full-time ministers are in that situation. Most churches who do pay for spiritual leaders to be employed full time, give them a fair living for their service, in the way of money, food, and lodging. The too often reality today is that many of those full time men in the ministry, get paid WAY MORE than they probably should, as some live a physical life style far beyond the average working man or family.

Paul no doubt is, within the context, including the physical pay for elders as we see in verse 18 he gives the example of the ox when it works, it was not to be muzzled so it could eat of the physical crop, as it performed its work on the farm. He also quotes from Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:14 (which Jesus also taught was correct - see Matthew 10:10) that those who work (in any trade or job) are worthy of a physical reward. The laborer is indeed worthy of his reward (verses 17,18), or his hire.¹

Elders That Are To Blame

Elders or spiritual leaders who may have fallen into a SERIOUS sin, are to have MORE than just one person bringing the accusation. Such serious sins will no doubt be recognized by more than one person, so Paul gives instruction that there be at

¹ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18 says that scripture says and quotes two verses, the second of which comes from the Gospel of Luke. Even at this early stage the books of the New Testament were considered part of the God-inspired scriptures. In Isaiah 8:16 we read: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." The prophecy implies that the testimony and law of the Word of God would be sealed up and completed by the disciples of the Lord. It is evident that the apostles were very aware of the fact that God was using them as instruments through divine inspiration to add more books to the existing canon of scriptures that the Jewish community had at the time.

least two or three people bringing the accusation of the serious sins of an Elder to other Elders. Paul also gives the overall general position he takes, that such Elders correctly accused of serious sins, be corrected and rebuked before ALL, the whole congregation.

Such is the importance of the function of an Elder in the church. The seriousness of the sin committed and rebuke before all, would uphold the importance of those in the spiritual oversight of a church, and also be a sobering reminder to other Elders that they cannot practice serious sins, as if they are beyond and above being openly corrected. Paul himself had to openly rebuke Peter before all for a serious sin, as we have seen when we went through the epistle to the Galatians.

It is also a sad fact that some in the 20th century have thought themselves above the law, and thought they were divinely given the freedom to practice serious sins, while they held the function of spiritual leader in their church organization.

By ministers being rebuked before all for serious sins, there would be a certain correct, and godly "fear" brought upon all members of the church.

Could there be a situation where an elder is dismissed from the ministry while his serious sins are not made public? Yes, I suppose there could be that situation. Yet, as we know, human nature is such that the sins of a man dismissed from the ministry, can hardly ever be kept secret. They have a way of being revealed to most if not all. I suppose the fact of not being rebuked before all, would save the elder some public embarrassment.

It is also true that some sins of an elder, while serious enough to have given open rebuke before all, would not automatically dismiss him from the function of church minister. When Paul needed to rebuke Peter before all (as we read in Galatians) it is obvious Peter repented of his sin and error, and was able to continue in the ministry of Jesus Christ. There is often many factors taken into the whole situation and context in dismissing an elder from the ministry, which must take into account the very nature of the sin. Peter's sin was a "judgment" sin - a sin of partiality - agreeing with the "theology" of an issue then not carrying through with it in practice. Peter's sin was not a sin of "morality" per se. Hence after being openly corrected and Peter seeing his error and repenting, the church did not see his sin as one that warranted his dismissal from the church ministry.

Paul ends his thought and teaching reminding Timothy that there was not to be any favoritism given to this or that man in the ministry. Nothing was to be done with partiality. Just because a man had been used mightily by God, such as Peter indeed was, did not make that man above the overall and general just practices of the church towards elders who sin in one form or another. The guidelines of correcting elders were to apply to men who had served for a long time or a short time. That was the correct way of it all as far as Paul saw it, and we must remember Paul was indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit. His writings have become part of the God breathed inspired text of the New Testament (verses 19-21).

Elders Chosen

Within the previous context, verse 22 and the laying on of hands, would be in connection with choosing or ordaining elders.

Elders have to meet demanding qualifications as outlined by Paul in the third chapter of this epistle to Timothy. Men who are married and with children, have to prove through time they are able to wisely and righteously lead and guide their family. They cannot be new converts to the Christian faith. They have to prove they can teach correctly God's word to others. They have to be well respected in their local community in their work and interaction with their community. All this takes time to prove a man is above a bad report.

In the Jewish society of Paul's time a man could not be in the Priesthood until at least the age of 30. And we must remember the Jewish society of that first century A.D. was in many ways not at all like our modern society. Jewish boys were considered adults at age 12, yes that is age 12. For young men and women NOT to be married by the age of 18 was considered a family disgrace.

So in that context the age of 30 was pretty old in Paul's time. The word "elder" back then carried not only a spiritual maturity with it, but also literal age.

Paul did not believe in spiritual leaders of a congregation being young by the standards of his age. Timothy may well have been much younger than Paul, but he was probably over the age of 30, which was somewhat old in their society when young men and women were commonly married before age 18.

The words "neither be partakers of other men's sins" could be connected with the previous instruction of not having young men leading churches. If time is given for men to prove themselves worthy of spiritual Eldership, it is likely they will not fall into serious sins. Looking for spiritual leaders to lay hands upon and have enter the ministry of Jesus Christ, is very serious work, and surely no man or men want to make a mistake and have great sinners turn up in the ministry. We all have sins but the thought here of Paul is sins that bring scandal and shame of the Church of Christ. Men brought into the ministry who have been proved and tested over time, will go a long way in preventing shameful scandal. It may not prevent it completely, but having young men in the ministry who have not been given time to mature in many different parts of their lives, will give Satan the adversary much more ammunition to work his dark and deceivable ways.

If we are to take this last half of verse 22, by itself and separate from the first half, then Paul was instructing Timothy to be careful as he worked with and communicated with people. He was not to allow himself to be taken in and end up being a part of the sins of others. He was to keep himself pure in this respect. Anything that gives the hint of being wrong that others are doing we should stay clear away from. It is very important that a minister of God be careful, watchful, circumspect, in all his doings as he works with other people. He should give all diligence to be NOT found tainted with the sins of other people, and certainly not the scandalous sins of other ministers. Some scandalous immoral sins of famous TV evangelists in the 20th century, have brought shame on the church. It ruined the lives of those TV personalities, and other ministers could have also been disgraced if they were in some way connected with those sins of others.

Wine NOT Grape Juice

Verse 23 is interesting in a few ways. First, Timothy had a stomach problem of some kind (which is not detailed), which obviously Paul could not heal. The great apostle

could do at times many mighty miracles, but not all the time. Paul could not heal in some miraculous way the problem with Timothy's stomach. So, being able to do some miraculous miracles at some times, does not guarantee you can do them all the time, or all kinds of miracles. Paul could not, for whatever reason, heal Timothy of his stomach sickness. He could though tell him that some wine would help the problem. I guess we could say this knowledge was a kind of miracle, God inspiring Paul to know that wine was the answer for Timothy. Then again Paul knowing the specific problem, he may have had experience with it all, from his past years of life, and just knew the answer to the stomach problem was a little wine.

I cannot see that "grape juice" would have done anything for Timothy, as those opposed to wine or alcohol drinking would have us understand it.

The truth of the matter is that the Jews in the first century drank wine and other fermented beverages. It was a part of their natural diet, as it was for many peoples from the lands of the East.

It could be that Paul knew Timothy was not a wine drinker, for whatever reasons, which we are not told, and that he had to give him specific instructions to drink some wine for his often stomach problem and infirmities.

Sins - Good Works - Open Or Covered

Paul in verses 24 and 25, is probably reminding Timothy, of things that are pretty common knowledge to anyone who has lived for any length of time, and it is rubbing shoulders with other people in their daily lives. Some sins from some people are just plain open for all to see and view, they seem to be not bothered by showing them in an open way. Then there are some people who "put on a front" a very pretty picture to show to the world, and so others just do not see any sin in them, small all large. Yet, they may have sins hidden away so to speak, large sins, but well covered over with the lovely picture they paint on themselves to present to others. Often those sins do eventually come to the surface, and people begin to find they were not the pretty picture they presented to the world. If they do not come to light in this life time, they certainly will in the day of judgment, when the rewards are handed out. They may well be saved and be given eternal life, their hidden sins not being unto eternal death, but their reward from the Lord may not be as great as most would have expected. Our sins will not be plastered all over the universe, but our reward will tell somewhat of a story.

Likewise, the good work of some are very evident, open, for all to behold. They are serving in this or that charity, helping here and there, always doing some kind deed for those less fortunate. You have no doubt met many of those kinds of individuals, perhaps you are one of them. Nothing wrong with all that good work stuff, not at all wrong. We need more people with "good works" that are open for all to see, maybe then it would help start a fire in many other people to do the same. Paul is not against "open good works" - not at all, he often commended people in his epistles for their good works. He is just stating a fact and then contrasting it for us to remember that some have good works, but done in more private a way, yet, eventually even this comes to surface. If not during the life of such people with "hidden good works" then probably at their death or shortly after. And if not then, at the judgment it will be evident, when the Lord gives them a BIG reward, for all their good works, that were mainly hidden from the eye of mankind, but not from the eyes of God.

1 Timothy 6

Servants

Those who are hired servants in one form or another are to respect those they work for, showing no respect would in Paul's mind bring discredit on the very name of God, that the servants were claiming as being their Father, and their God, in their religious faith.

Those servants who had believing employers, they were certainly not to hold in any disrespect, for they were then all brethren in the Lord, all partakers of God. Servants with believing masters should then have an even deeper respect for them, and give them more service if and when the opportunity would warrant (verses 1-2).

Paul told Timothy to teach and even exhort the instructions he was giving him. Did Paul know that what he was instructing Timothy was the oracles of God, the words of Christ? Yes, he did! I suppose that being taught directly from Christ Himself (as we have seen Paul said he was - see Galatians 1), would give you full confidence that your instructions on the matters Paul presented to Timothy, was the word of the Lord. So, Paul said that if any man taught otherwise, and not to wholesome words and the doctrines of Christ which was according to godliness, then such a person was PROUD, KNOWING NOTHING. Such would be those who would be arguing the semantics of words, always questioning this and that, and such an attitude would yield only envy, strife, arguing, and evil surmising, speculations and conclusions (verses 3-4).

Paul pulled no punches here, he finishes his thoughts about those who would argue that he was not inspired to bring these instructions on how the Church of God should be governed, with these words, "Perverse disputings of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw yourself" (verse 5).

Men who are only out to seek a following and perhaps physical material gain, would be those with the mind-set that Paul lays out in these verses. They will be willing to go with the flow of what the people desire, even of what other ministers (who would be like themselves) want and are willing to compromise the truth of God, for the gain and favor of men.

On the other hand Paul thinking about what is true gain, says that godliness with CONTENTMENT is great gain. If you are doing and teaching the truth of the word of God, you will be content, the appraise of men will mean nothing, what people can give you in the way of physical goods, will not entice you to compromise with the truth of God.

The apostle reminds us that we entered this world with nothing, and we shall carry nothing out of this world with us, when we die. So he admonishes us to be content with food and raiment, the basic needs of physical life. If we are living and teaching the true word of the Lord, we can know God is on our side, we are living this physical life the way the Father in heaven wants His children to live, and that is indeed contentment. The end result, when glorified into the very family of God, will be riches beyond our imagination (verses 6-8).

Paul also reminds us that those who have a mind-set to acquire the riches of this world, will fall into a snare and temptations, into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which only drown people into destruction, certainly spiritual destruction, and in some cases physical ill-health.

I once talked to a man who was caught up in "get rich" schemes. He went off to a seminar and there they worked at how to get rich for three full days, day and night, no sleep, just worked through the whole three days without sleep, at how to "get rich." He told me that that was nothing, as he once went on a seminar for SEVEN DAYS, no sleep, just continuous seminar meetings, day and night, on how to build a business to "get rich." He looked at me quite seriously and said, "I want to be a millionaire."

Such a mind-set as the man above is NOT what the child of God is to have. Such a goal and attitude of mind will destroy you spiritually and can harm you physically as well. Think about going for a whole seven days without sleep, and what it would do to your body, which as Paul said in another epistle of his, is the very Temple of God.

Money is not evil of itself. Some of God's people down through the centuries have been wealthy individuals, like Abraham and Job, David and Solomon, but physical goods and money did not consume their minds but a mind having the wrong kind of love for money is ONE (as the Greek reads) of the roots of all that is evil. Some in Paul's day had become consumed with the love of money and had erred from the faith, had fallen from the faith and from the grace of God. They had pierced themselves through with many arrows of sorrow. Many a materially rich person have found that if they do not have God in their lives, with a correct perspective on physical wealth, they end up with many sorrows.

Wealth is not wrong or evil per se. It can be a great blessing to use to serve and help others. If we find ourselves physically wealthy, and we are God's child, and we can keep the correct attitude towards material wealth, then praise the Lord. What a wonderful opportunity and gift we have been given, to use our wealth to give and to serve others with it, to help proclaim the Gospel of grace, salvation, and the Kingdom of God (verses 9-10).

Pastoral Aims

Looking at all the wrong attitudes of mind, Paul admonishes Timothy to, "...flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses" (verses 11-12).

Paul said he gave charge for him on all the matters discussed, before the sight of God and Christ Jesus, who did witness before Pontius Pilate that He had a good profession of doing what was righteous. Timothy was to keep the directions Paul had instructed him on, without spot of corruption, unrebukeable in conduct, right up to the very end, to the coming of Christ, if He should come in Timothy's life time. God the Father would show Him, Christ Jesus to the world once more, in His time plan, the one who is Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only had immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach.

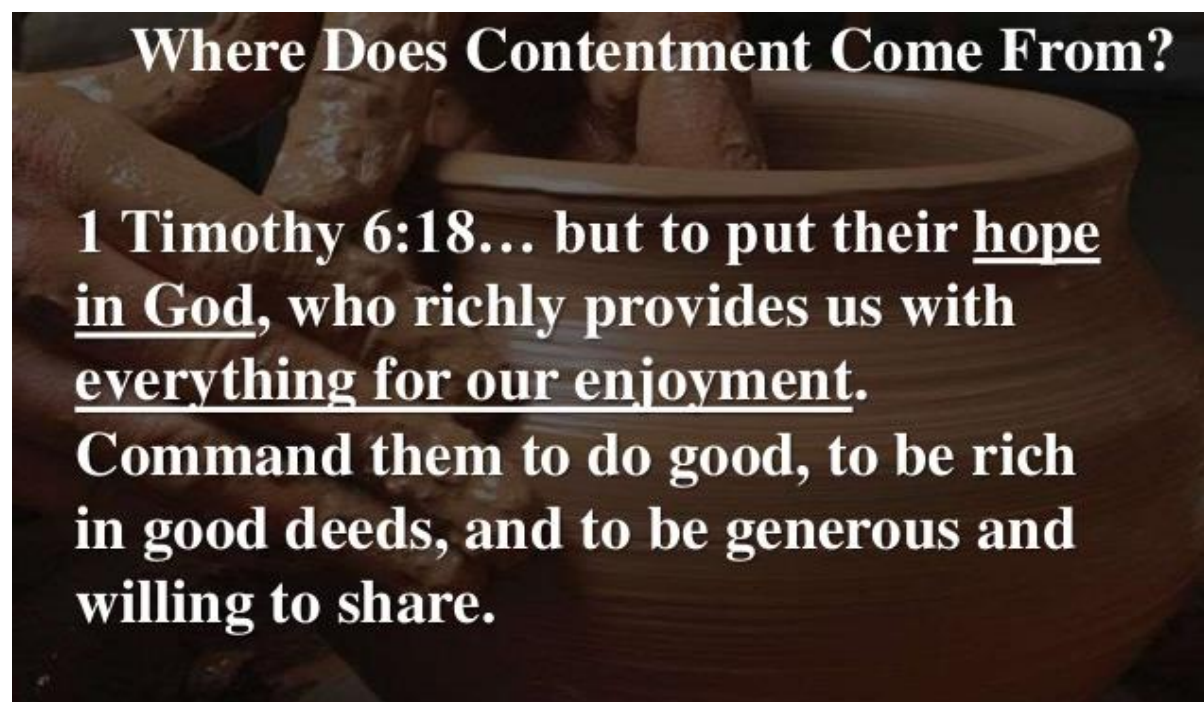
It makes little or no difference as to whether you think the phrase "who only has immortality" refers to God the Father or to Jesus Christ. The fact is as Jesus stated in the Gospels, He and the Father are ONE!! There is ONE God but that one God, or Godhead, is made up of TWO Spirit Individual Beings, both with immortality, dwelling in the light no man can approach. Both God the Father and Jesus His Son, have immortality. No man has immortality, only God. People are not born with an immortal soul.

The light the Godhead dwells in no man can approach, no man has seen, nor can see (verses 13-16).

No man can approach the light of God's face and live (so God Himself told Moses - Exodus 33:20), and this is probably what Paul is referring to. Because as we continue to see in Exodus 33, God did allow Moses to see His back parts, to see the glory of His back parts, the light of glory as God is in the "spirit" dimension. It was the glory of God's back parts that Moses was allowed to see and NOT the glory of His face, for God had indeed told him that no man can see the glory of His face and live.

Instructions for the Materially Wealthy People

Paul once more returns to admonish those in the church who are materially wealthy. They were not to be high-minded, proud and vain in their wealth. They were not to TRUST in uncertain riches (that can be here today and disappear tomorrow for various economic reasons, as those in the 1929 Stock Market Crash found out). They were to TRUST in the Living God, who gives us so many riches to enjoy, that are better than material wealth. Think about the riches of being able to see and hear, walk and talk, smell and taste and touch. To have good health is worth more than all physical riches, as people with wealth but no health have often found out.



The wealthy in this world's goods were to do good, be rich in good works, ready to give and distribute their wealth, willing to be sociable and not snobbish or aloof with those not in their wealth class. Certainly the rich in material goods have a wonderful

opportunity to use their wealth in helping others less fortunate than themselves. There are so many good "charities" of work out there to give to, the wealthy can help so many in true need.

By so giving they would lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, when love and good works would be the bottom line, the main accountability as to what a person has done with what they were given. Using wealth correctly by those who have it, would also more importantly, be a good way to lay hold on eternal life.

As children of God we are all expected to use what we have been given to work with to serve others. Our talents, abilities, wealth of any kind, God expects us to use. If we do not, we may end up like the "unprofitable servant" of Matthew 25:30 and not even obtain eternal life, but be cast out into outer darkness, which is another way of saying, cast away from the light of God, His presence, and eternal life (verses 17-19).

Final Charge

Timothy was to KEEP that which he had been entrusted with. He was to avoid profane and vain babblings, and the false oppositions of a science, which was falsely called "science." Some had already fallen victim to the false science of Paul's day and had erred concerning THE faith (verses 20-21).

There can be many types of vain babblings that the child of God needs to avoid, as they walk through this unconverted world. Some talk and discussions we need to walk if not run away from, as they are not worthy to be entertained by the mind of the Christian.

There is a false science out there. The world puts forth the teaching of evolution, the science behind it, being a false so-called "science." And so it goes, with some other types of that which is called "science" by those who ignore God and His Word the Bible.

We have the false science of the false ideas on how to rear children, which one famous man (now dead) had a whole generation of parents following. After 20 years he did have the courage to tell the world he was wrong, and that his teachings had helped rear a generation of rebellious, dysfunctional, disrespectful, ill-mannered, young people. There have been the false "science of foods and nutrition" over the past 30 years, which has led to a generation of over-weight children and adults, and many other physical health problems. Some have now openly condemned and proved that particular "science" was false in many ways. The science of cigarette smoking, once thought to be of no harm, has been fully blown to bits as a false science.

Yes, you need to be aware that a lot of science maybe and often is, a science falsely called so. Do not let that false science cause you to wander and stray from THE faith which is in God and His Word. The first epistle of Paul to Timothy - what a wealth of instruction it is for every Christian and every Christian minister and for all the Churches of God everywhere.

CHAPTER 4

PAUL WRITES 2 TIMOTHY

Introduction

This introduction is taken from the New KJV Personal Study Edition Bible, published by Thomas Nelson; 1909,1995.

BACKGROUND

At the time of writing 2 Timothy, Paul was a prisoner in Rome (see 1:8, 16, 17). Companions who were recently with him had departed (4:10), leaving him alone - "Only Luke is with me" (4:11). Presumably, Timothy was still in Ephesus (4:19), where Paul had stationed him earlier to oversee the work in Asia Minor (see 1 Tim.1:3). Paul urges Timothy to come to him "quickly" (4:19) "before winter" (4:21).

Moreover, he asks that Timothy bring with him "the cloak that I had left" and "the books, especially the parchments" (4:13). Paul also requests, "Get Mark and bring him with you" (4:11). The apostle had already endured a "first defense" (4:16) and "was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (4:17). Presumably that was a preliminary hearing; he now faced formal trial. Paul expected a negative verdict and the death sentence. He had reached the end of his course in this life; death was imminent (4:6).

CONTENTS

Second Timothy includes exhortation to perseverance; instructions for handling false teachers; a depiction of moral and spiritual degradation in the last days; affirmations concerning the Christian ministry; statements about Scripture; and Paul's final words.

PURPOSE

The primary object of this letter was to strengthen Timothy so that he would endure in the face of opposition from false teachers. Paul encouraged him to carry on the gospel ministry and to train others who will take up the ministry after he is gone.

OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

1. Salutations from Paul to Timothy (1:1,2)
2. Reflections on the Christian ministry (1:3-12)
 - A. Timothy's call (1:3-7)
 - B. Paul's experience (1:8-12)
3. Exhortations to endurance (1:13-2:13)
 - A. Hold fast (1:13-18)
 - B. Be strong (2:1-13)
4. Instructions for dealing with false teachers (2:14-26)
5. Segregation of the last days (3:1-9)
6. Exhortations to steadfastness (3:10-17)
 - A. You have followed my doctrine (3:10-13)
 - B. You must continue in the Scriptures (3:14-17)

- 7. The challenge of Christian ministry (4:1-8)
 - A. A charge to Timothy (4:1-5)
 - B. The testimony of Paul (4:6-8)
- 8. Final words and greetings (4:9-22)

2 Timothy 1

Paul restates his calling by God to be an apostle - one sent forth to proclaim the Gospel. He addresses Timothy as his "son" - a figurative term of love and endearment. We notice again the grace, mercy, and peace passed on to Timothy is from God the Father, and Christ Jesus. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit as a literal third person of a triune Godhead. As mentioned before in this Bible Story, the Holy Spirit is NOT a third person individual of a "three in one" God, hence Paul had no problem and no disrespect towards a Holy Spirit "third person."

The Holy Spirit is the very nature and power that comes from the glorious body of both the Father and the Son. It is their invisible, shall we say, electrical power, that comes from their very being and so can transverse the entire universe, doing their will, and also entering each Christian believer, so making that believer a very part of their family. God the Father is then the real Father of each Christian, and Jesus is the very real elder brother of each child of God the Father (verses 1-2).

Paul had a clear and pure conscience in serving the Lord. He remembered Timothy in his prayers both day and night, greatly desiring to see him. He was mindful of the tears Timothy had for him, and was filled with joy at recalling his genuine faith, which also was in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

It is obvious Timothy had two sincere faithful women in his life and upbringing. The importance of women in child-raising cannot be given too much emphasis. It is more important than most realize.

Paul wanted Timothy to stir up the gift of God which was in him and was given to him by the laying on of hands. When this was done is not exactly mentioned by Paul. It could have been at Timothy's baptism, or at his ordination to the ministry, or at some other laying on of hands ceremony such as a special time when men were sent out to the mission field. The main point is that Timothy was to stir the gift up, use it, and Paul noted that the Spirit of God given to us is NOT a spirit of fear, but of POWER and of LOVE and of a SOUND MIND.



From a child Timothy had been taught the scriptures by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois

Far too many who are "into religion" or Christianity do not exhibit true LOVE, which is defined by many verses in the New Testament, especially in the books of the apostle John. Nor do they have a "sound mind" but rather are often "strange" and a little koo-koo to put it in modern terms. Many "religions" of the world, including the

Christian religion, have off-beat sects and cults, with people who idolize the "organization" or "men." They are often led away into false doctrines by charismatic men or men of "words" or "theological degrees" of learning from some "theological school" of the establishment. Some of these men do show power, but usually a man made power of "show-business preaching" or power of control (verses 3-7). If it is still in print you need to read the book "Churches that Abuse" by Ronald Enroth.

Paul told Timothy not to be ASHAMED of the testimony of the Lord nor of the fact that he, Paul, was in prison for the sake of the gospel. He reminds Timothy how they were called, not according to works, but according to God's own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus. This purpose was given before time began but is now being revealed by the appearing of Jesus Christ, who has brought to light life and immortality through the good news of the gospel. Paul reaffirms that he was called to be a preachers of the gospel, a teacher of the gospel, and to be an apostle, one that is sent out, in his specific case mainly to the Gentiles. Paul was then willing to suffer all that came his way, and he was not ashamed, for he KNEW whom "I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that Day" (verses 8-12).

Jesus is able to take us, care for us, be with us, through all things, even unto our death, and then as He Himself told us, "I will raise him up at the last day." He IS the RESURRECTION and the LIFE. Death has no power over us. Satan, the accuser of the brethren is made weak and totally useless in power, when Jesus the Christ is with us. Death, eternal death is abolished in Christ, immortality and glory, life everlasting is ours. Yes, no need to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ at all.

We have heard the gospel words, we are to HOLD FAST to their soundness, in faith and in love, which is in Christ Jesus. That which God has committed unto us we are to KEEP by and through the Holy Spirit.

Many had turned away from Paul which lived in Asia, he mentions two by name. I suppose they were well known by Timothy, and would have had a personal message to him, that message in specifics we are not told. Paul does go on to relate the love of one called Onesiphorus, who often gave help to Paul and was not ashamed of the chains of imprisonment which Paul at times suffered for the sake of the gospel.

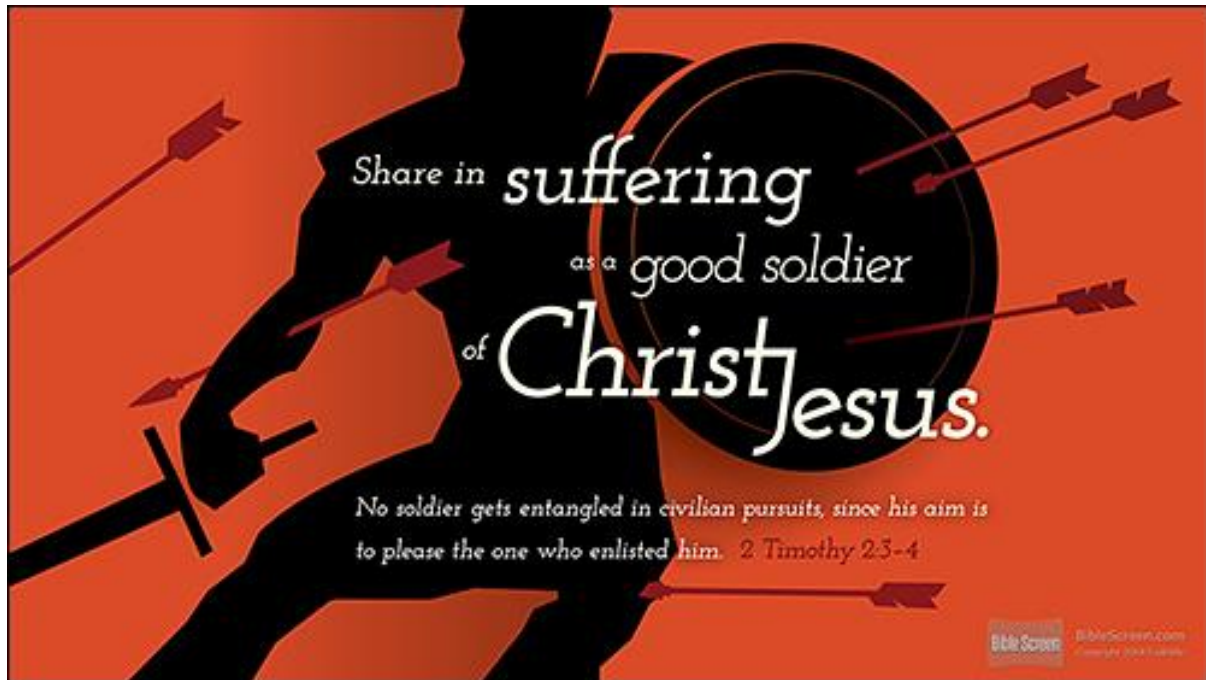
Once when this man arrived in Rome he sort out, very zealously sort out, the apostle Paul, to serve and help him in any way he could. This man we are told, also helped Paul when he was in the city of Ephesus. Paul wished him great mercy from the Lord, especially on the Day when we must all give account of ourselves to the Lord, in what we have done with what we were given to do (verses 13-18).

2 Timothy 2

Paul wanted Timothy to make sure that the things he had heard from many witnesses, were committed and handed on to faithful men who would continue to teach the truths of the gospel, to others, and so the circle would not be broken. Jesus had said that He would build His church and the gates of death would never extinguish it. Part of that continuation of the church and the truths of God would be by those taught, teaching it to other faithful people, who in turn would teach it to others, and so the link in the chain of the gospel would be never ending.

Paul admonished Timothy to be a good soldier, to endure hardship, if and when it came, just as a soldier in the world must do. Just as an athlete must be focused and compete according to the rules of the sport, so must a true minister of God be towards his calling in the work of Christ.

Paul told him to remember that Jesus was raised from the dead, and doing God's work would sometimes lead to be called an evil-doer, and may also put you in prison chains.



Yes, in some countries even today this is still true, but we in the Western world are pretty soft so to speak when it comes to "Christian persecution" for we experience little or none of it. But one important fact to keep in mind is that even if in physical chains for Christ, His word and truths cannot be chained. Hence as Paul said of himself, we must endure all things for the sake of the elect and for those who will obtain salvation and glory in Christ Jesus (verses 1-10), for, in the words as Paul put it:

"This is a faithful saying; For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, He cannot deny Himself" (verses 11-13).

Dealing With False Teachers and Being a Good Minister of God

The following, verses 14-26, are filled with such potent information on the character of false ministers and many points of life and theology to avoid for the true minister of Christ, that it is pertinent to quote it all here, from a modern translation. There are some doctrinal points in the gospel so important to salvation, that the apostle Paul found it quite correct to mention the teaching and even the names of some people who had departed from the true foundation. This is not "name-calling" or slander, it is laying the cards on the table and saying it like it is. There is a time when speaking up on some issues and naming names of those who have departed from the truth, is

right and proper. The minister of God must be, in humility, able to correct those who are in opposition to God, for the Lord may grant them repentance, to know and acknowledge the truth, and come to their senses and escape the snare of the Devil.

"Remind (the people) of these facts and (solemnly) charge them in the presence of the Lord to avoid petty controversy over words, which does no good but upsets and undermines the faith of the hearers. Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing (rightly handling and skillfully teaching) the Word of Truth.

**" Study to show yourself
approved unto God, a
workman that needs not
to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the word of
truth."**

2 Timothy 2:15



"But avoid all empty (vain, useless, idle) talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness. And their teaching (will devour; it) will eat its way like cancer or spread like gangrene. So it is with Hymenaeus and Philetus who have missed the mark and served from the truth by urging that the resurrection has already taken place. They are undermining the faith of some. But the firm foundation (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows who are His, and, let everyone who names (himself by) the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it. Num.16:5; Isa.26:13).

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also (utensils) of wood and earthenware, and some for honorable and noble (use) and some for menial and ignoble (use). So whoever cleanses himself (from what is ignoble and unclean, who separates himself from contact with contaminating and corrupting influences) will (then himself) be a vessel set apart and useful for honorable and noble purposes, consecrated and profitable to the Master, fit and ready for any good work.

"Shun youthful lusts and flee from them, and aim at and pursue righteousness (all that is virtuous and good, right living, conformity to the will of God in thought, word, and deed); (and aim at and pursue) faith, love, (and) peace (harmony and concord with others) in fellowship with all (Christians), who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. But refuse (shut your mind against, have nothing to do with) trifling (ill-informed, unedifying, stupid) controversies over ignorant questionings, for you know that they foster strife and breed quarrels.

"And the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome (fighting and contending). Instead, he must be kindly to everyone and mild-tempered (preserving the bond of peace); he must be skilled and suitable teacher, patient and forbearing and willing to suffer wrong. He must correct his opponents with courtesy and gentleness, in the

hope that God may grant that they will repent and come to know the Truth (that they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge it). And that they may come to their senses (and) escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, (henceforth) to do His (God's) will" (The Amplified Bible).

Truly it is plain to see from the writings of Paul and Peter and John, there were MANY false teachers in the first century, who needed to be declared for what they were and their wrong teaching to be exposed. At times no punches were to be pulled in dealing with them. Paul will yet speak about such men to Titus. Now, if the Christianity of the first century was so filled with corruptible people who had forsaken the truths of God, how much more do you suppose Christianity is corrupted and false teachings abounding, TODAY, two thousand years later?

To be sure, from my experience of being raised from the age of 6 with the Bible, in a "Christian" school and from, at times, months and months of night and day study years later in my older teens through into my 30s, searching the Scriptures as I went, I say, quite openly to you, that probably 99.5 per cent of modern 21st century Christianity, is FALSE and DECEIVED in many respects to the true word of God, and in some fundamental areas those deceptions and false teachings ARE SERIOUS!! Serious enough to call into question the salvation of hundreds of millions of people who call themselves "Christian."

A restoration back to the faith once delivered to the saints, is most assuredly needed in our modern space age world.

Overall, the apostle Paul gives the HOW, of a true servant of the Lord dealing with false theology and the people who are responsible for it. He is to spend no time with entertaining some crazy ideas, from vessels of dishonor, who do not know right from wrong, who have no sense of what is sin and what is righteousness. The man of God is to strive at being in harmony with God and with others, as Paul elsewhere stated, "...as much as lies within you, be at peace with all people." He must have a basic nature of being kind, not hard-nosed and an ill-tempered, quarrelsome person. He must be kind and patient and willing to suffer wrong if so be the situation. He must be skilled in teaching the correctness of the Word of God. And he must give correction, in the main, with courtesy and gentleness.

2 Timothy 3

The phrase "last days" could be a whole lot more than what some people say. In the fundamental world of Christianity the phrase is mainly associated with the last 2 or 3 years of the age before Jesus returns, maybe in some quarters it is thought to mean the last 7 years before Christ comes in glory. But as we carefully read the whole New Testament writings we find some verses where this phrase, or similar ones (e.g. end times) is clearly meaning the WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT period from the foundation of the first century Church of God right up to the coming of Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God on earth for 1,000 years.

I will refer the reader to two verses showing the latter fact of New Testament theology - see Hebrews 1: 2 and 1 John 2:18.



Has the world always had people who are "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boaster, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers" and all the other named evils Paul mentions in verses one to eight? Yes, indeed, the world has been full of such evils from the beginning.

I'm sure that as we approach nearer and nearer to the day of Christ's coming, these evils will multiply, for Jesus did predict that before His coming again, "iniquity will abound" (see Matt.24:12).

And we certainly do see a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" in today's Christianity, and the power Paul refers to is not some "charismatic religious outward showmanship" - it is the power to live and obey and serve God by a person living by every word of God as Jesus in the Gospels said we should still do (see Matt.4:4).

This false Christianity often captures, with emotion, many young ladies and older women, who are led away by smooth talking men, who can today, via TV creep into their homes very easily. Paul says such a religious scene is "ever trying to learn, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They are in nature and attitude resistant to the truth, men of "corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the truth."

One day they will proceed no further in their folly - it will be made manifest unto everyone. Certainly when the two witnesses of the book of Revelation come on the world scene, all false teachers of Christian religion will be made manifest to all the world. Those with discerning ears will know who the false teachers of religion are, but even at that time, the mass population will still be deceived as we read in Revelation 12:9. Yet, it is still true that the false teachers will one day proceed no further, for when Jesus does return the blindness covering the face of most people today, will be removed, and the clear light of the truth will shine forth (1-9).

Paul reminds Timothy of his, Paul's life, that he knew his teachings, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, and patience (verse 10). As you read through the book of Acts and all the epistles of Paul, you will gather that he was a diverse man in personality, so much so, that some have contended Paul did not write certain letters that have his name attached to them, because they are different in many respects from his other letters. All this can be answered quite simply by "getting to know" the man called Paul. He had a wide personality character. He could be kind, loving, gentle, patient, and he could be blunt, cutting, even sarcastic, at times. He could correct at times in no uncertain manner, and then also be very humbly thankful towards people, who had helped him in some way, and towards those who had served faithfully in the work of the Lord. There was with Paul no partiality towards anyone regardless of their sex or nationality.

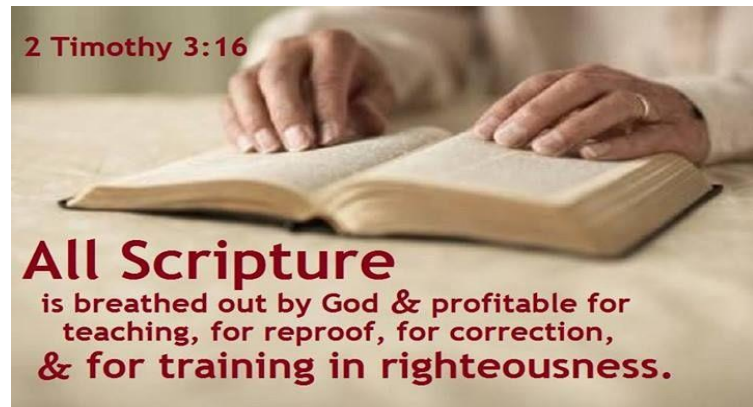
Paul had endured afflictions that few have ever experienced, but through it all God delivered him and was till now, spared from death.

He tells us that evil men and seducers (probably meaning religious seducers) would wax worse and worse, deceiving and themselves being deceived. If Paul thought it was bad in his day, which he did, then how much more evil and worse is it today? I have said before and will say again before we have finished going over the New Testament books, that the vast majority of Christianity in the world today is deceived, not knowing the true way to salvation and the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that MANY, not the few, would say to Him, "Lord, Lord, have we not done this great work in your name, have we not preached you in our churches and on the street corners" but Jesus will answer them, "I do not know you. Depart from me, you who work lawlessness." They will not have lived or taught the lawful way of God.

Paul admonished Timothy to continue in the right and correct way of God. Timothy had known that way from reading the Scriptures as a young boy, and which were able to make you wise unto salvation through Christ Jesus. It was Jesus Himself who said that unless you were to become like a little child you would not inherit the Kingdom of God. The way to salvation is not hard to understand if you read the Bible as a child would read it, and read it from cover to cover. I know this is true, for I was blessed by having an education of reading the Bible from the age of six. As a teenager I would read some portion of the Bible before I fell asleep. This became a regular habit of mind. The way of salvation was clear to me even as a young teenager. So Paul said it was for Timothy.

He ends this part of his admonition to Timothy, by saying that ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God. It is not man made ideas, or cultural quaint stories made up from the imaginations of men or a nation of people like the Jews.

Scripture is divinely inspired by God, and it was so given that people could find the teachings of God, for reproof and correction in living the wrong way of life, and for the instruction into the righteous way of life, so the "man of God may be perfect, thoroughly perfected unto all good works" (verses 10-17).



2 Timothy 4

There is a misconception among some that a minister of the Gospel, must be a "nicety nice guy all the time." An observant reading of the New Testament will show you that that idea is just not true at all. Jesus was not always a mild nice fellow. You may remember He cleared the Temple TWICE during His ministry, in no uncertain a manner. He spoke with powerful sharp words to many of the religious leaders of His day in Matthew 23. There are situations and circumstances in life, when dealing with some people, that strong rebuke, correction, and laying it down on the line, is needed by the true minister of God. some people, sad to say, just do not "get it" any other way. Look what Paul told Timothy in verses 2-5.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; REPROVE, REBUKE, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." There are things that need to be revisited time and again in certain seasons of the religious year. There are times to REBUKE, REPROVE, and times to do it longsuffering, time and again, keeping at it, with the truth and doctrines of God, that which is according to Scripture. Paul knew what it was going to be like in the future, so he went on to say, "For the time WILL come when they will not endure SOUND doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall TURN AWAY their ears from the TRUTH, and shall be turned unto FABLES."

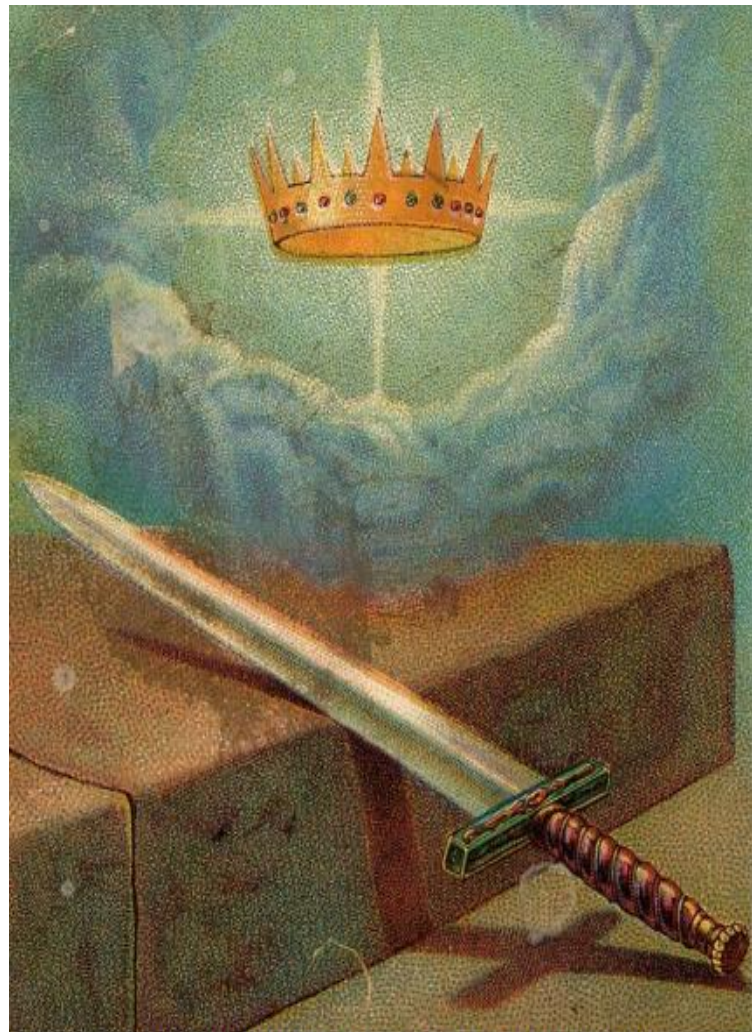
That day has surely come in the last 3 or 4 hundred years, and especially in the last century. People want a "comfortable pew" - a place in church where right from wrong is not preached, sin and righteousness are not expounded upon, real repentance is hardly ever mentioned, the commandments of God are not amplified, where the teaching to live by every word of God is an old forgotten phrase of the old forgotten Old Testament. People today want to hear they are saved and God loves them. Of course God loves them just as He loves every person on earth, but that does not abolish the commandments of the Lord, nor does it "do away with" the law of the Lord, or abrogate Jesus repeating the Old Testament phrase that we should still live by every word of God.

Christianity today is filled with FABLES, teachings that are just NOT according to Scripture. On my website where this Bible Story is located, you can learn about the FABLES that churches embrace today, and you can find the true teachings and doctrines of the Lord. You will see I'm not a minister having itching ears or teaching the smooth things people desire to hear. I'm not out to try to build up some great following, and to be "esteemed" by the popular world of "religion." In fact Jesus said that when men shall speak well of you, it will be a sign you ain't well with the Lord, for so they spoke well of the FALSE prophets of old.

Yes, there are times, most of the time, that a true servant of the Almighty, is to be kind, patient, loving, humble in words and mind, and gentle with people. This Paul has mentioned before in his writings. So it all goes to show how we are to read the entire Bible, not just picking out sections that we choose, and so get a lop-sided view of just about everything that is the theology of God. Balance, balance, and more balance, is the way of God, and to find that balance, you must read the ENTIRE Bible.

Timothy was to be WATCHFUL, TO ENDURE, to do the work of an EVANGELIST, to reach people outside the church, and to bring them to Christ. He was to make FULL PROOF of his ministry. I trust that my ministry and this work of God on my website will also do the work that Timothy was admonished to do (verses 1-5).

Paul now knew, probably from the Spirit of God in him, that his time in this life was soon to come to an end. He was soon to depart from this physical life. He could look back and with full confidence say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto those that love His appearing" (verses 6-8).



"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

You will notice, Paul was to receive his crown of righteousness, NOT at physical death, but at the APPEARING of the Lord. In other words, at the coming of Jesus back to this earth in glory. Paul would die and wait till the RESURRECTION, just as all God's children will wait to live again at the coming of the Lord. The teaching of the immortal soul and going to either heaven or hell at death is one of the false doctrines people with itching ears have been teaching for centuries, and millions upon millions of people have been turned unto fables, that just being one of them.

Paul desired Timothy to come to him as soon as possible. He lamented the fact that Demas had forsaken him, loving the present world and departed to Thessalonica. The details of what Paul may have meant by "present world" we are not given. But you get the impression his departure did not please the apostle Paul. Crescents had

gone to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia. The reasons for their move are not given by Paul, but the only one left he states was Luke. He asks Timothy to bring Mark with him for he was profitable in the ministry. It is good to see Paul stating such about Mark, for at one time Paul and Barnabas had a serious falling out over Mark, so serious that both apostles decided to go their own way (see Acts 16:36-41). At this time in Paul's life it is obvious he had come to see that Mark was now a good faithful servant of the Lord.

Paul had sent Tychius to Ephesus. We are not told the reason for it. Paul wanted Timothy to bring the cloak he had left at Troas with Carpus, and some books, especially some parchments. It is possible as some have thought, that these parchments were scrolls of writings that now make up the New Testament.

Once more Paul is not a wimp to mention by name a person or persons that have done evil to him or the Gospel. He here mentions one called Alexander the coppersmith, who had done him much evil and so also against his words. He actually asks the Lord to reward him according to his evil. Some may think that was not very nice of Paul, but the Bible is a surprise at times, when we read it for what it says. I am reminded of the many verses of David in the Psalms and how he talked about his evil enemies, and asked the Lord to deal with them. His words and requests were quite open and shocking at times well shocking to those who think God's people are to be nicety nice wimps all the time.

Paul warns Timothy to also be aware of this evil Alexander the coppersmith.

When Paul was interrogated the first time and gave his answer, all men fled the scene, and none stood with him. Their faith and boldness it seems was blown away. Paul prayed the Lord would not hold it against them. He understood there may be times in people's lives when their faith is weak, it was so at that time for his fellow ministers of the Gospel. But, the Lord was with Paul, he was strengthened, his preaching made strong, and the Gentiles did hear the words of truth. Paul was delivered at that time from the lion, a way of saying, delivered from death. He knew the Lord would preserve him in one way or the other from every evil work. We have seen from verses 6-8 that Paul understood being preserved from evil this time would be by the way of physical death. Yet, preserved unto God's heavenly Kingdom it would be, and for that he gives glory and praise.

The last verses are greetings and thankfulness to some of whom we can read about in the book of Acts, such as Prisca and Aquila. He asks Timothy to come to him before winter.

Paul's last words to Timothy are: "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen" (verses 9-22).

We have gone through TWO very important books for the minister of God to digest and meditate upon. We have one more book, that of Titus, which is addressed specifically to a minister of the Gospel. It also contains surprising information and attitudes towards that information by the apostle who was inspired to write more of the New Testament than any other man.

CHAPTER 5

PAUL WRITES TITUS

Introduction

The following is taken from the Personal Bible Edition NKJV, by Nelson Publishers, 1990, 1995.

BACKGROUND

We know relatively little about the background of this letter, which was written between the writings of 1 and 2 Timothy. Paul, while (travelling after release from his first imprisonment, had left Titus in Crete to oversee the work on that island (1:5). It was a hard assignment; the Cretans were a people of ignoble reputation (1:12,13). Moreover, false teachings were threatening the welfare and unity of the church (1:10,11,16; 3:9-11).

CONTENTS

Paul touches on matters affecting the Christian congregations of Crete. A listing of qualifications for church leaders is provided because of Titus' assignment to appoint "elders in every city" (1:5). There are strong warnings about false teachers; instructions for exhorting older men and women, younger people, and servants; and personal guidance for Titus in his role as a leader. Paul included several superb statements on Christian salvation (1:1-3; 2:11-14; 3:4-7).

PURPOSE

The letter was written to encourage Titus in his task of organizing, instructing, and appointing leaders for the churches of Crete (1:5). It was also intended to help him stop the false teachers who threatened church authority, unity, and morality (1:10-16; 3:9-11). In closing, Paul tells Titus of his desire to meet him in the coming winter (3:12).

OUTLINE OF TITUS

1. Salutation from Paul to Titus 1:1-4
2. Qualifications for church leaders 1:5-9
3. False teachers in Crete 1:10-16
4. Instructions for Christian believers 2:1-10
 - A. Older people 2:1-3
 - B. Younger people 2:4-8
 - C. Bondservants 2:9,10
5. Grace as a basis for Christian living 2:11-3:11
 - A. We should live godly 2:11-15
 - B. Justified by God's grace 3:1-8
 - C. Avoid controversy about trivia 3:9-11
6. Personal messages and greetings 3:12-15

Paul opens with declaring himself a bond-servant to God, an apostle (one sent forth of Jesus Christ), according to the faith of the elect, and the acknowledgement of the truth, which is according to godliness.

Jesus said, "Thy word is Truth." God is godly and so truth is godliness. It is right and correct. Jesus also said that when the Spirit was to come it would guide us into all truth. That truth is not always given to us all in one swoop, but often over time, sometimes many years of time. It is up to us to have an open mind (but not so open our brains fall out), and be willing to be guided and corrected, so we can come to more and more truth. I have found this mind-set of loving righteousness and truth, to be sadly lacking in many parts of the Church of God today. There seems to be little growing in grace and knowledge. My website, on which is the New Testament Bible Story, I hope will be growing in light and in truth. Remember also that truth is not always welcome or easily accepted, the human heart is often slow to accept error and correction (verse 1).

Paul was in "hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (verse 2). The hope which he speaks about is not some guess-work hope, a fleeting hope, of "well maybe." It is a hope that is SURE, based upon the promise of God who he says cannot lie. And this hope of eternal life, was promised, planned, for us (who will accept the way to that hope) BEFORE the world began. God the Father had planned salvation before the world was started for the humans He would create on the world. We have seen in Paul's writings to Timothy, that Jesus was before-ordained to come to this earth and be the Savior of mankind, even before the world was.

God's word and promises and salvation had been committed to Paul to preach, for the Lord had commanded the calling of Paul to do this, in God's own time and purpose (verse 3).

Paul gives greetings to Titus his son in the faith, "Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our savior" (verse 4).

Once more you will notice nothing mentioned of the so-called "third person of a Trinity" - the Holy Spirit. No, need, for Paul knew the Holy Spirit was NOT a third bodily person of some triune God. He knew from once being taken to heaven (either in vision or in very body, as he told the Corinthians) and seeing the throne room of God, there was God the Father and Jesus Christ on His right hand, two bodily persons, not three. The book of Revelation gives us a vision of the throne room of God, and it also has no third bodily person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the very nature and power that emanates from the very bodies of BOTH the Father and the Son, hence it can be in the whole universe at the same time, and within every true child of God on earth. The nature and bodily form of the Godhead is fully expounded in studies on my website.

Ordaining Elders

Let's read verse 5 as a child would read it, "For this cause left I you in Crete, that YOU should set in order the things that are left undone (margin reading), and ORDAIN elders in every city, as I had appointed YOU."

I put emphasis on "you" because it should be obvious that Paul was meaning TITUS, the one individual man. Nothing is mentioned about any other person or persons having to take the two tasks Paul gave Titus to do. There were certain things that Titus needed to make sure were done, the things left undone (whatever they were, we are not told), and he Titus was to "ordain" elders in every city.

I bring all this up because in the last decades of the 20th century, some in the Churches of God have been teaching there is no such thing as "ordained elders" and whatever "church leaders" there are in their eyes must be voted upon by the congregation. This idea of theology is completely opposite to the teachings of the New Testament. This new theology came about because of "church organizational" and "church elder" ABUSE, in some parts of the body of Christ. The truth of the matter is that ABUSE by "elders" and church organizations HAS always been there down through the centuries, it is nothing new. And from time to time it will always be there in the Church of God. As wise King Solomon wrote, there is nothing new under the sun.

Just because ministers abuse, or groups of ministers will abuse people in a church organization, does not mean Jesus Christ has no "elders" in the church He built. And church abuse does not do away with the clear teaching of the New Testament that men like Paul, Timothy, Titus, and others did not have the INDIVIDUAL right to personally and individually appoint other individuals to the ministry of the Gospel of Christ. And I mean appoint to the ministry WITHOUT the consent of ANY OTHER person, or group of persons, or the blessing of some established "theological school."

It is clear in Acts 14, verses 19 to 23, by the way Luke wrote the words, that it was Paul and Barnabas who "ordained" (Greek meaning to divide, separate, decide) who the "elders" were to be, through prayer and fasting, and then commending them to the Lord. It states there nothing about acquiring the consent of the church members in some kind of vote.

Now, I'm not saying it is wrong to get the consent of local church members, as to the right for certain men to be appointed to the ministry of the church. Certainly in Acts 6, we have church members being a PART of the choosing of 7 men to the function of "deacon" or serving in such physical matters of "tables" - but even then the seven were set before the apostles for final prayer and the laying on of hands.

But, what I'm saying is that it was NOT ALWAYS done that way, having the congregations consent per se.

Titus was clearly given the personal responsibility to ordain or appoint "elders" in every city.

Some elders no matter if appointed by another individual elder, or by a group of elders, or even with the blessing of an entire organization, will NOT remain faithful, but will turn into FALSE ministers. This is plainly revealed to us on Acts 20:17-31.

How can we know who is a true minister of the Lord? Well, Jesus gave us one answer, "By their FRUITS you shall know them." And in Isaiah 8:20 it is written, if they speak not according to this word (the law and the testimony - God's word) there is no light in them. Every individual member of the body of Christ is responsible to

search the Scriptures, to determine WHO at all times is remaining a faithful minister of God.

For the record and for the enquiring mind, I was ordained a minister of Jesus Christ, by the consent of two congregations I was leading, and by 10 ministers of an organization, in the year of 1982.

Paul reiterates to Titus the main qualifications of an Elder. Those we looked at in some detail in the first epistle to Timothy, and are further expounded upon in various studies on my website (verses 5-9).

False Ministers

One of the qualifying signs of a true minister of God is that he is able with skill, and sound doctrine, to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For, Paul once more repeats, there are MANY, not few, but many unruly and VAIN talkers out there, men who are DECEIVERS!! In Paul's day it was among the "circumcision" party where many deceivers came from. Today it could be from a myriad of religious theologies and denominations.

Paul again pulled no punches in talking about false ministers and prophets. He said their mouths needed to be STOPPED! They perverted whole houses, teaching things they ought not, because of money, a pay check. Too many live quite nicely, even more than nicely, from the Gospel, from the ability to smooth talk their way into the pocket books of "good people" - nice hearted but gullible people.

Paul, in thinking about some of these deceivers from the Cretans of his time, used one of their own prophets to disrobe them, who admitted they were often, liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. Yes, I mean Paul sometimes said it as it was, plain truth talk, just firing both barrels at the same time.

And because this is the way it is FAR too often in religion, he told Titus, "Wherefore REBUKE them SHARPLY, that they may be SOUND in the faith. Not giving heed to Jewish FABLES, and the commandments of MEN, that TURN (they really knew better at one time) from the TRUTH" (verses 9-14).

Wow!! Not at all the way that most think a minister of the Gospel should act towards people. You mean he must use SHARP REBUKE at times? Yes, indeed, such was the teaching of the apostle Paul.

He was not yet finished telling it straight about false ministers. He went on to say that their minds are defiled, impure, so everything would be impure and defiled that they taught and lived, the bottom line of it would be so. Oh, they may come to people looking like an angel of light, outward show and words can be real deceptive (many have lost their life savings to men who came to them looking good and speaking sweet words, making their work and their business deals look so clean and rosy and righteous), yet the inner side is dark and from the greatest deceiver of all - see 2 Cor.11:13-15).

Paul said that such, "Profess that they KNOW God, but in works they DENY him, being ABOMINABLE, and DISOBEDIENT, and unto every (real) good work REPROBATE" (verses 15-16).

As Jesus said, you shall know them by their fruits. If you have your nose in the Bible and you yourself are trying to live by every word of God, you will soon know who the false ministers are and who are the true servants of the Most High.

Titus 2

Paul gives so much good instruction in the first half of this chapter that we need to read it from the Amplified Bible:

"But (as for) you, teach what is fitting and becoming to sound (wholesome) doctrine (the character and right living that identify true Christians). urge the older men to be temperate, venerable (serious), sensible, self-controlled, and sound in the faith, in the love, and in the steadfastness and patience (of Christ). Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink.



"That they may teach the young women." — *Titus* ii. 4.

They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble. So that they will wisely train the young women to be sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined) and to love their husbands and their children. To be self-controlled, chaste, home-makers, good-natured (kind hearted) adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited).

"In a similar way, urge the younger men to be self-restrained and to behave prudently (taking life seriously). And show your own self in all respects to be a pattern and a model of good deeds and works, teaching what is unadulterated, showing gravity (having the strictest regard for truth and purity of motive), with dignity and seriousness. And let your instructions be sound and fit and wise and wholesome, vigorous and irrefutable and above censure, so that the opponent may be put to shame, finding nothing discrediting or evil to say about us.

"(Tell) bond servants to be submissive to their masters, to be pleasing and give satisfaction in every way. (Warn them) not to talk back or contradict. Nor to steal by taking things of small value, but to prove themselves truly loyal and entirely reliable and faithful throughout, so that in everything they may be an ornament and do credit to the teaching (which is) from and about God our Savior" (verses 1-10).

While most of the above instructions from Paul is self-evident, as to what is true Christianity in action, words, and attitude, I do want to give some emphasis to the section concerning women, the young and the old. Why? Not because they need some special help in living than men - no not at all. Men need just as much help in

living rightly. I want to give emphasis to the women because they so often get neglected in many of the Churches of God (which is a shame upon the church of Christ). Women have a VERY IMPORTANT part to play in the life of the Christian community and body of Christ. More important than many realize. They are usually the first teachers of the children.

They should be a main-stay and pillar of the family. And notice, Paul says the older women are to teach the younger women, and he lists some very crucial areas of life that need to be taught to the younger women. There is nothing here about the "ministry" doing all this kind of teaching to the younger women.

The minister is NOT to be the end-all, the know-all, the instructor of all, in the body of Christ. The older WOMEN have a mighty instructional role to play in the church. It is time that the ministry SHOUT this out to God's people the OLDER WOMEN ARE TO BE INSTRUCTORS OF RIGHTEOUS LIVING TO THE YOUNGER WOMEN.

The minister of God need to get some things clearly straight in his mind, and this is one of them, he is not to be the only instructor of certain areas of life to the younger women, the OLDER women are to do this!

And the minister of the Lord needs to remember the instructions of Paul as found in 1 Corinthians 14:35 (first half). If women have questions about anything raised in the theological world of church service, "when you come together"(1 Cor.14:26), they are to ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME. They are not to run off to the minister for answers, and the minister is not to think he is the all-in-all answering machine for every person in the congregation. Husbands then are to be up-on-things so to speak, they are to be theologically on-top-of-things.

How these two sides of the church have been abused and neglected by some parts of the body of Christ down through the ages, is a disgrace. I have lived through the workings of a religious organization that thought the elder or elders were the cat's-meow, the film-stars, the Encyclopedia par-excellence, for all members to come to for all knowledge, advice, and counsel, on all matters.

We have just seen where in two passages, Paul puts such a vain idea into the trash basket of theological hog-wash.

You older women have a VERY important ministry within the working of the body of Christ, and so do you husbands.

Paul proceeds from his above instructions of Christian living in different aspects for different persons, into the wonderful grace and salvation given to us from God the Father through Jesus Christ. That alone should make us want to live according to the will and holiness of the Father. The blessing of having forgiveness of sin by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, should turn us away from ungodliness, worldly passions, and want us to live temperate, self-controlled, upright, spiritually whole lives.

And all of that will automatically have us looking for the realization of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus the Messiah. He was the one who redeemed us, bought us back, purchased us, and gave us freedom from our sins, in order to purify for Himself a people who would be zealous and enthusiastic

about living a life filled with good deeds in service to others, and a holy life pleasing to God.

Titus was to remind the Christians he came in contact with about these things. He was to urge them, encourage them, even rebuke with authority at times. Paul told him to let no man despise or disregard or think little of him. Titus was to conduct himself in life and teachings as to deserve respect (verses 11- 15).

Titus 3

Titus was to tell the brethren to be good citizens, to respect in the main the societies we live in and to be ready to do good works. Christians should be "good works people" - helping and serving others, in various ways, that are within our means, budgets, natural abilities, and talents.

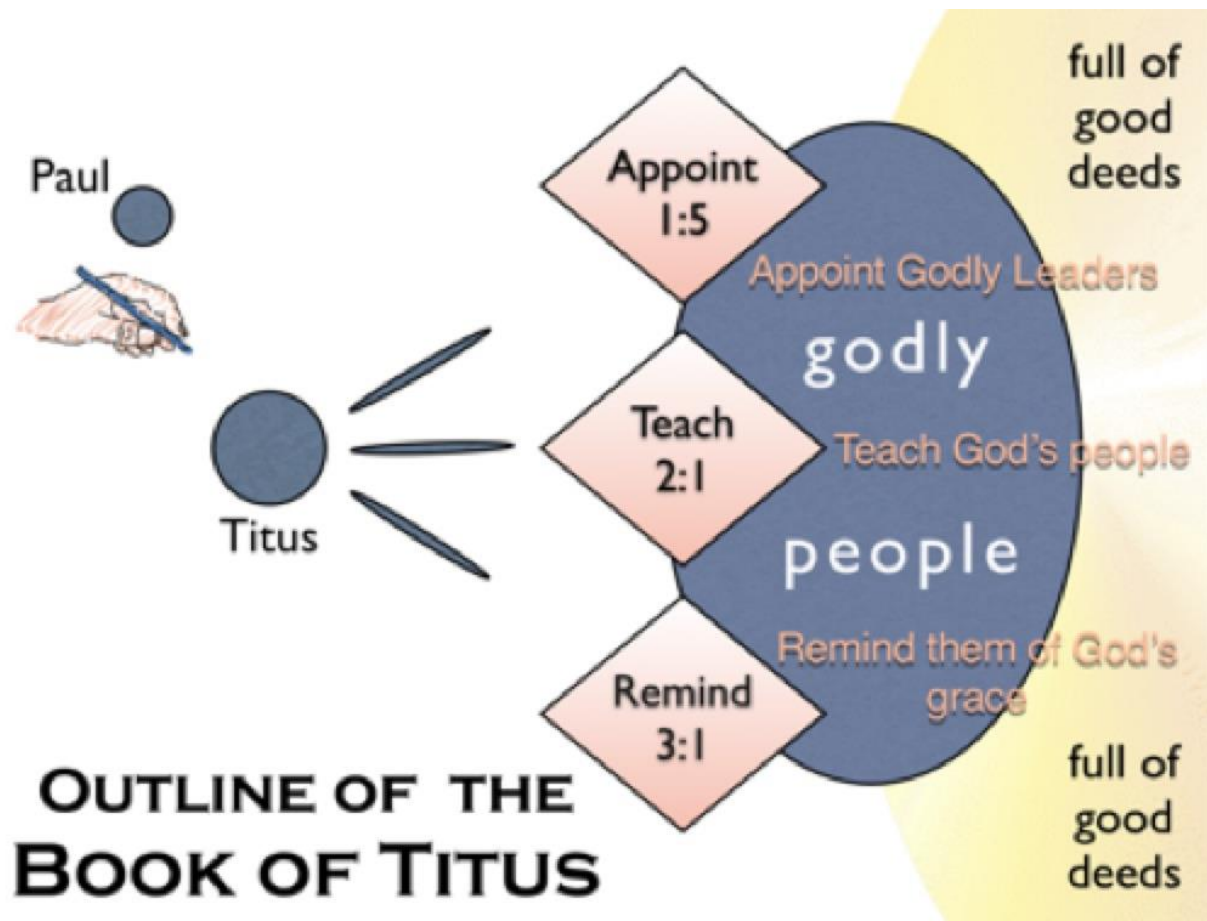
Again, these words by Paul about being "subject to principalities, and powers, to obey magistrates" must be taken in the light of the entire Bible and what is common logic of Godliness. Christians do not have to respect, obey, submit to the ways, dictates and rules of government powers such as the Nazi Government under Hitler and his thugs of Germany and World War II mentality. As Peter once said to those who wanted him and the apostles to live NOT according to God's will, "We ought to obey God than men" (Acts 5:29).

Verse two has been argued about by some. saying the truth of the matter about evil teachings or specifically evil persons, and their evil deeds, should not be done. This can hardly be what Paul is saying, for he has in his letters to Timothy and Titus given us NAMES of people and their evil teachings or attitudes and ways of life. The Greek word for "speak evil" gives us the answer - it means "slander" "to make false statements about" "to attribute evil for good."

There are times when the sins and evil of some do need to be exposed, in no uncertain a manner. We need to be sure we have the facts straight, and to not say anything that is a false statement about anyone. Paul puts it all within a context, for he goes on to say we should not be a contentious person, but to be forbearing, conciliatory, courteous. Our overall attitude and way of life is to be showing the attributes of what real love is, as Paul outlines in 1 Corinthians 13. It is only in rare situations and under circumstances where there is no other way, that sins and evil of people are to be openly shown for what they are, and then you had better be sure it is all correct, so no one is slandered.

For the apostle Paul says, in all your doings, remember that we ourselves "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving different lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (verses 1-3).

It was after we were sinners that the love of God our Savior was manifest towards us. It was not because we had done some good works to deserve His grace, and where He was then obliged to forgive us our sins, but it was purely through His mercy that He saved us, by renewing our minds, washing us clean by the Holy Spirit, which Holy Spirit was shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. We were made righteous, forgiven our sins, justified, by His grace, and so made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.



Titus was to affirm always that those who believed in God were to maintain good works, which would be profitable unto men.

Titus was to avoid foolish questions, endless debates on genealogies, contentious talk, silly striving about the law, for such was only unprofitable and vain.

But as is human nature, some people love to get into contentious debates that are useless in spiritual edification, and only produce some sort of human vanity in the mind of those so engaged in those types of conversations.

Such attitudes of mind and conversations usually lead to some getting way off beam, way out in left field, bringing in ideas and teachings that are from planet Pluto. It does happen in the Churches of God at times. Such people become "heretics" - so serious can it be that if not stopped it will rise to divisions and sects within the church. Paul instructed Titus to admonish a few times such individuals, but after the THIRD admonition, they were to be rejected. This was serious sin and subversity, open enough that the person was condemned of himself.

We are here speaking of "church disfellowshipment" and I have covered that subject in some detail on the same named subject on my website.

Paul desired Titus to come to him at Nicopolis, where Paul was going to stay for the winter. Titus was to help in some way to bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey, so they lacked nothing they needed for their travels. Others both Titus and Paul knew, were to maintain good works, so they would not be unfruitful.

All that were with Paul sent greetings to Titus. Those that loved Paul and those with him were to be greeted.

Paul finishes with, "Grace be with you all. Amen"(verses 4-15).

CHAPTER 6

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON (PART 1)

The Basic Outline

FROM THE NKJ PERSONAL STUDY BIBLE: Nelson Publications, 1990, 1995:

Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are called the Prison Epistles because Paul wrote them while in prison. Unlike the other prison letters which are addressed to churches, Philemon is addressed to an individual.

AUTHOR AND DATE

Philemon and Colossians were probably written by Paul at the same time, about A.D. 62, during his imprisonment at Rome recorded in Acts 28:16-31. References to being a prisoner (verses 1, 9, 23) and to being aged (v.9) support this conclusion. Many of the same people are mentioned in both letters: Archippus (Philem. 2; Col. 4:17), Onesimus (Philem. 10; Col. 4:9), Epaphras (Philem. 23; Col. 1:7; 4:12), Mark (Philem. 24; Col. 4:10), Aristarchus (Philem. 24; Col. 4:10), Demos (Philem. 24; Col. 4:14), and Luke (Philem. 24; Col. 4:14). Onesimus and Tychicus (Col. 4:7-9) were the bearers of these letters.

BACKGROUND

Philemon probably lived in the Lycus Valley where Colosse and Laodicea were located (see Col. 4:15). He was a close friend of Paul, indebted to him spiritually and a helper in his ministry (v.1, 19). A church met in Philemon's house (v.2). Onesimus had run away and been converted by Paul in Rome (v.10). Slavery was part of everyday life in the Roman Empire. Prior to Christ's birth, almost a third of Rome's one million people were slaves. Regarded only as possessions, they were bought and sold; their conditions varied depending on their skills and owners.

Christian teaching improved their lot by concentrating on inward moral transformation which naturally produced outward changes (see 2 Cor. 5:17). Masters and slaves were both exhorted to live worthy of Christ (see Col. 3:22-4:1). Moreover, by placing an emphasis on the common brotherhood of Christian believers (v. 16), Christ and His followers struck at the very foundation of slavery. As Paul says, "There is neither ... slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11). When captured, runaway slaves were treated cruelly, sometimes branded on the arm or forehead, and sometimes put to death....

CONTENT AND PURPOSE

Paul states two reasons for the letter: (1) an appeal for Onesimus to be received as a brother in Christ by Philemon (v. 8-21), and (2) a request for Philemon to prepare a guest room for Paul's coming visit (v.22). Paul supports the principle of restitution for past wrongs....

However, he bases the appeal to Philemon on their relationship (v.17-19), and on the common Christian fellowship of Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul (v.10,16). What happened to Onesimus? No doubt Philemon obeyed Paul and forgave Onesimus. Otherwise he probably would have destroyed this letter...

While there is much merit in the above, and correct in the main, it is the Bible Commentary by ALBERT BARNES that I believe gives the truth of the matter on the epistle of Paul to Philemon.

This letter from Paul to Philemon has been often greatly misunderstood and perverted by many a Christian leader and whole sects, to claim that God and the Bible endorse and teach the practice of "slavery." While the Bible does address the subject of slavery and even lays out laws and rules to govern that practice, doing so is NOT the same as saying that God and the Bible endorse and encourage and justify and make righteous the practice of slavery.

God often under the Old Testament ALLOWED many things, for as Jesus put it to the Pharisees, "because of the HARDNESS of the heart." The practice of slavery in Israel was one of those allowances because of the hardness of the heart. And in allowing it, God gave certain laws to regulate it, to make it humane and somewhat "respectable." But slavery was NEVER the ideal of the Lord.

I believe ALBERT BARNES gives the correct understanding of this letter of Paul to Philemon, and gives enough evidence that there is no way of proving Paul or this letter he wrote, endorses in any way the practice of slavery or that Paul was sending Onesimus back to Philemon as a slave, albeit as a "Christian" slave.

I shall give you much of what Albert Barnes has to say. For all of his words on the matter of the book of Philemon, the reader can ascertain for themselves from "Barnes' Notes on the New Testament."

But first in my own words, with some amplification I will render in modern English Paul's letter to Philemon:

"This letter is from Paul, who is in prison for preaching the Gospel about Christ Jesus, and also from our brother Timothy. I am writing to you Philemon, our much loved co-helper, and to our sister Apphia and to Archippus, a fellow soldier in the work of the cross of Christ. I am also writing to the congregation that meets in your home. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you all grace and peace.

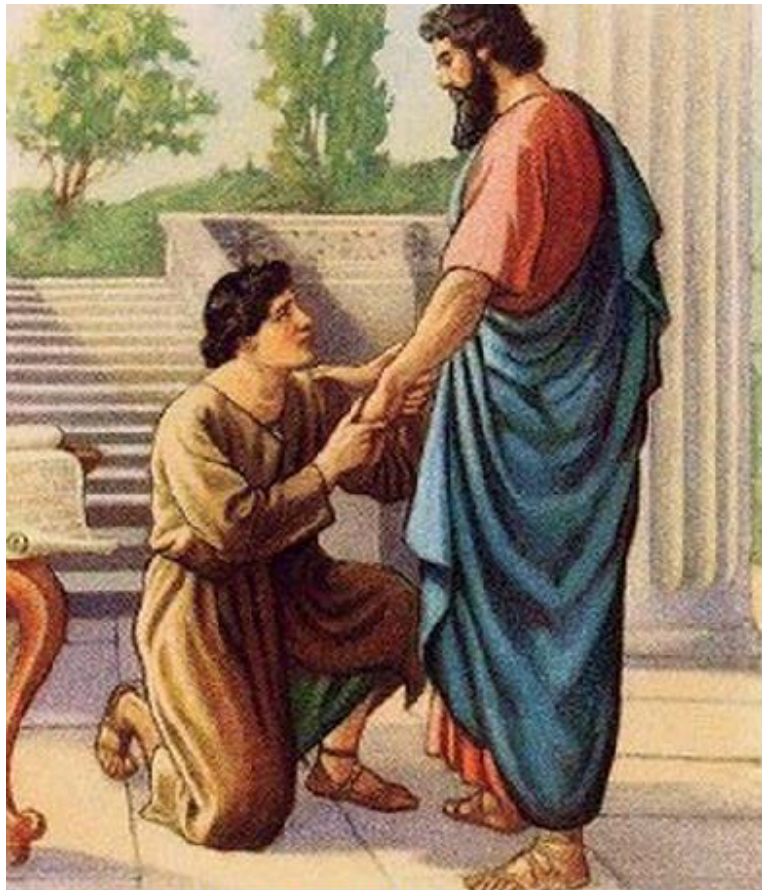
"I always thank God when I pray for you all. Philemon, I keep hearing of your trust in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's children. You are generous because of your faith. And I am praying that you will always put your generosity to work, for in so doing you will come to understand all the good things we can do in Christ's work. I myself have gained much joy from your love, my brother, because your kindness has so often helped the hearts and lives of God's people.

"And so, because of all this, I feel bold in asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ, for it is indeed the correct and right thing to do, but because of your love and service, I prefer to just ask you as a favor. Please take this then as a request from your friend Paul, an old man now, in confinement for doing the work of Christ Jesus.

"My request, even my plea, is that you show kindness to Onesimus. I hold him in my mind as my very own son, because he became a believer as a result of my ministry here in this confinement. Onesimus (which means "useful") has been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. Whom sending him back again to you, also comes my own heart and feelings. I really did want to keep him here with me to serve me, for a while, being in these chains for the Gospel's sake. But I do not want to do this without your consent and approval. And I do not want you

to help in this matter because you are forced to do it, but because you willingly want to do it.

“Perhaps you can think of it this way: Onesimus ran away for a little while so you could have him back for good. He is no longer just a servant; he is a beloved brother, and especially to me. Now he will mean so much more to you, both as a servant and as a brother in Christ. So, if you consider that I am your partner in God's work, give him the same welcome as you would give me if I were coming to you. If he has harmed you in any way, or stolen anything from you, then charge it to me, send me the bill for it. I Paul, write this in my very own handwriting ‘I will repay it.’ But I will not mention that you owe me your very own life.



Onesimus returns to Philemon with Paul's letter

“Yes, my dear brother, please do this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me encouragement in Christ. I am very confident as I write this letter to you that you will do what I ask, and even more. Please keep a guest room ready for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and soon let me return to you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, send you his greetings. So does Mark, Aritarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow co-workers. The favor and love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

FROM "BARNES' NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

"1. THE HISTORY OF PHILEMON

OF PHILEMON, to whom this epistle was addressed, almost nothing more is known than can be ascertained from the epistle itself. It is short, and of a private character; but it is a bright and beautiful gem in the volume of inspiration.

From Col. 4:9, it may be inferred that the person to whom it was addressed, was an inhabitant of Colosse, since Onesimus, concerning whom this epistle was written, is there mentioned as "one of them." ... He is said by Calmet and Michaelis to have been wealthy; but this cannot be determined with certainty, though it is not improbable. The only circumstances which seem to indicate this, are, that Onesimus had been his "servant," from which it has been inferred, that he was an owner of slaves; and that he appears to have been accustomed to show hospitality to strangers, or, as Michaelis expresses it, "travelling Christians." See ver. 22 of the epistle. But these circumstances are not sufficient to determine that he was a man of property.

There is no evidence, as we shall see, that he was a slave-holder; and Christians in moderate circumstances were accustomed to show hospitality to their brethren. Besides, it is not said in ver. 22, that he was accustomed to show general hospitality; but Paul merely asks him to provide for him a lodging. It is probable that he had been accustomed to remain with him when he was in Colosse.

It is quite clear that he had been converted under the ministry of the apostle himself. This appears from what is said in ver. 19: "I do not say to thee, how thou owest unto me even thine, own self." This cannot be understood otherwise than as implying that he had been converted under his preaching, unless the apostle, on some former occasion, had been the means of saving his life, of which there is no evidence. Indeed, it is manifest, from the general tone of the epistle, that Philemon had been converted by the labours of the author. It is just such a letter as it would be natural and proper to write on such a supposition; it is not one which the apostle would have been likely to write to anyone who did not sustain such a relation to him. But where and when he was converted is unknown. It is possible that Paul may have met with him at Ephesus; but it is much more probable that he had himself been at Colosse, and that Philemon was one of his converts there...

It is evident from the epistle, that Paul regarded him as a sincere Christian; as a man of strict integrity; as one who could be depended on to do right. Thus (vers. 5-7) he says, that he had heard of his "love and faith toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;" thus he confidently asks him to provide for him a lodging when he should come, (ver. 22) and thus he expresses the assured belief, that he would do what was right towards one who had been his servant, who, having been formerly unfaithful, was now converted, and, in the estimation of the apostle, was worthy of the confidence and affection of his former master.

In regard to his rank in the Christian church, nothing whatever is known. Paul calls him (ver. 1) his "fellow labourer;" but this appellation is so general, that it determines nothing in regard to the manner in which he co-operated with him in promoting religion. It is a term which might be applied to any active Christian, whether a preacher, an elder, a deacon, or a private member of the church. It would seem clear, however, that he was not a travelling preacher, for he had a home in Colosse, (vers. 2, 22) and the presumption is, that he was an active and benevolent member of the church, who did not sustain any office. There are many private members of the churches, to whom all that is said of Philemon in the epistle would apply...

Nothing is known of his age, his profession, or of the time and circumstances of his death. Neither is it certainly known what effect this epistle had on him, or whether he again received Onesimus under his roof. It may be presumed, however, that such a letter, addressed to such a man, would not fail of its object.²

THE OCCASION ON WHICH THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN

This can be learned only from the epistle itself, and there the circumstances are so marked as to make a mistake impossible.

(1) Philemon had had a servant of the name of Onesimus. Of the character of this servant, before Paul became acquainted with him, nothing more is known than that he had been "unprofitable" to Philemon, (ver. 11) and that he had probably done him some wrong, either by taking his property, or by the fact that he had escaped from him, ver. 18. It is not necessary to suppose that he was a SLAVE; for all that is implied of necessity in the word which is employed to designate his condition in ver. 16, (*doulos*) and all that is stated of him in the epistle, would be met by the supposition that he was bound to Philemon, either by his parents or guardians, or that he had bound himself to render voluntary service. See Notes on ver. 16.

(2) For some cause, this servant had fled from his master, and had gone to Rome. The cause of his escaping is unknown. It may be, that he had purloined the property of his master, and dreaded detection; or that he had, by his base conduct in some other way, exposed himself to punishment; or that he merely desired freedom from oppression; or that he disregarded the bonds into which he himself, or his parents or guardians, had entered, and had therefore escaped.

Nothing can be inferred about his condition, or his relation to Philemon, from the fact that he ran away. It is, perhaps, quite as common for apprentices to run away, as it is for slaves; and they who enter into voluntary bonds to render service to another, do not always regard them.

(3) In some way, when at Rome, this servant had found out the apostle Paul, and had been converted by his instrumentality. Paul says, (ver.10) that he had "begotten him in his bonds" - which seems to imply that Onesimus had come to him, and not that Paul had searched him out. It does not appear that Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, was allowed to go at large, (comp. Acts 28:30) though he was permitted to receive all who came to him. Why Onesimus came to the apostle is not known.

It may have been because he was in want, and Paul was the only one in Rome whom he had ever seen; or it may have been because his mind had become distressed on account of sin, and he sought him out to obtain spiritual counsel. Conjecture on these points is useless, where there is not even a hint that can serve as a clue to find out the truth.

(4) From some cause, equally unknown, Onesimus, when converted, was desirous of returning to his former master. It is commonly ASSUMED, that his returning again was at the instigation of the apostle, and that this furnishes an instance of this belief, that runaway slaves should be sent back to their masters. But, besides that there is NO CERTAIN evidence that he EVER was a slave, there is as little proof that he returned at the instigation of Paul, or that his return was not wholly voluntary on his part. For the only expression which the apostle uses on this subject, (ver. 12) "whom I have sent again" - does not necessarily imply that he even proposed it to him, still less that he commanded it. It is a word of such general import, that it would be employed on the supposition that Onesimus desired to return; and that Paul, who had a strong wish to retain him, to aid him in the same way that Philemon himself would do if he were with him, (comp. ver. 13) had, on the whole, concluded to part with him, and to send him again, with a letter, to his friend Philemon. It is just such language as he would have used of Timothy, Titus, or Epaphroditus, if employed on an important embassy at the request of the apostle. Comp. Luke 7:6, 10,19; 20:13; Acts 10:5; 15:22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 9:3; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 2:19, 23, 25, 28; 1 Thess. 3:2, 5; Titus 3:12, for a similar use of the word "send."

There is nothing in the statement which forbids us to suppose that Onesimus was himself disposed to return to Philemon, and that Paul "sent" him at his own request. To this, Onesimus might have been inclined from many causes. He may have repented that he left his master, and had forsaken the comforts which he had enjoyed under his roof. It is no uncommon thing for a runaway apprentice, or servant, when he has seen and felt the misery of being among strangers and in want, to wish himself well back again in the house of his master. Or he may have felt that he had wronged his master in some way, (comp. Notes on ver. 18) and, being now converted, was desirous of repairing the wrong. Or he may have had friends and kindred in Colosse whom he was desirous of see again. Since any one of these, or of many other supposable causes, may have induced him to desire to return to his master, it should not be assumed that Paul sent him against his will, and thence be inferred that he was in favour of sending back runaway slaves to their masters AGAINST their will. There are many points to be proved, which CANNOT be proved, to make that a legitimate inference.

(5) Whatever were the reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Philemon, it is clear that he was apprehensive of some trouble if he went back. What those reasons were, it is impossible now to determine with absolute certainty; but it is not difficult to conjecture what they may have been, and any of the following will account for his apprehensions - either (a) that he had done his master wrong by the mere act of leaving him, depriving him of valuable services which he was bound to render; or (b) that he may have felt that the mere act of running away had injured the character of his master, for such an act always implies that there is something in the dealings of a master which makes it desirable to leave him; or (c) that he had in some way injured him in respect to property, by taking that which did not belong to him, ver. 18; or (d) that he owed his master, and he may have inferred from his leaving him that he meant to defraud him, ver. 18; or (e) that the laws of Phrygia were such, that Onesimus apprehended that if he returned, even penitent, it would be judged by his master necessary to punish him, in order to deter others from committing a similar offence.

The laws of Phrygia, it is said, allowed the master to punish a slave without applying to a magistrate. It should be said also that the Phrygians were a severe people, (Curtius, Lib.v.c.1) and it is not improbable that, from the customs there, Onesimus may have apprehended harsh treatment if he returned. It is not proper to assume that any one of these was certainly the reason why he feared to return, for this cannot be absolutely determined. We should not take it for granted that he had defrauded his master - for that is not necessarily implied in what is said in ver. 18, and we should not impute crimes to men without proof; or should we take it for granted, that he feared to be punished as a runaway slave - for that CANNOT be proved; but some one or more of these reasons, doubtless, operated to make him apprehensive, that if he returned he would meet with, at least, a cold reception.

(6) To induce his master to receive him kindly again, was the main object of this courteous and kind epistle. For a view of the arguments on which he urges this, see the Analysis of the epistle. The arguments are such, that we should suppose they could not be resisted; and we may presume, without impropriety, that they had the desired effect on the mind of Philemon; but of that we have no certain evidence.

THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE

THERE can be no doubt that this letter was written from Rome about the time when the epistle to the Colossians was written. The circumstances which conduct to this conclusion are such as the following:

(1) Paul at the time when it was written was a prisoner. "Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ;" ver. 1. "Whom I have begotten in my bonds," ver. 10. Comp. ver. 23, "Epaphras my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus."

(2.) It was written when he had hopes of obtaining his liberty, or when he had such a prospect of it that he could ask Philemon, with confidence, to "prepare him a lodging" ver. 22.

(3) Timothy was with him at the time when it was written, (ver. 1) and we know that Paul desired him to come to him to Rome, when he was a prisoner there, as soon as possible, 2 Tim. 4:9: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."

(4) We know that Onesimus was actually sent by Paul to Colosse while he was a prisoner at Rome, and it would be morally certain that, under the circumstances of the case, he would send the letter to his master at that time. No other instance is mentioned in which he sent him to Colosse, and the evidence is as certain as the nature of the case admits, that that was the time when the epistle was written. See Col. 4:9.

(5) The same persons are mentioned in the salutations, in the two epistles; at least, they are so far the same as to make it probable that the epistles were written at the same time; for it is not very probable that the same persons would, in another place, and on another occasion, have been with the apostle. Thus Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demos, join in the salutations both to the church at Colosse and to Philemon. Probably at no other time in the life of Paul were all these persons with him, than when he was a prisoner at Rome. These considerations make it clear that the epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and at about the same time with the epistle to the Colossians. If so, it was about A.D. 62.

THE CHARACTER OF THIS EPISTLE

THIS letter is almost wholly of a private character; and yet there is scarcely any portion of the New Testament of equal length which is of more value. It is exquisitely beautiful and delicate. It is a model of courtesy and politeness. It presents the character of the author in a most amiable light, and shows what true religion will produce in causing genuine refinement of thought and language. It is gentle and persuasive, and yet the argument is one that we should suppose would have been, and probably was, irresistible. It is very easy to conceive, that the task which the apostle undertook to perform, was one which it would be difficult to accomplish - that of reconciling an offended master to a runaway servant. And yet it is done

with so much kindness, persuasiveness, gentleness, and true affection, that, as the letter was read, it is easy to imagine that all the hostility of the master was disarmed, and we can almost see him desiring to embrace him who bore it, not now as a servant, but as a Christian brother, ver. 16.

"It is impossible," says Doddridge, "to read over this admirable epistle without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address, that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is - not only with all the warmth and sincerity of a friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the Apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a master-piece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written on a similar occasion, (Lib. ix. Let. 21;) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged by every impartial reader vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle." As a specimen of the courtesy and politeness which the Christian ought to practise at all times, as well as furnishing many valuable lessons on Christian duty, (see the remarks at the close) it deserves a place in the volume of inspiration ...

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

The epistle embrace, the following subjects:

(1). The salutation, ver. 1-3. A mention of the excellent account which the apostle had heard of Philemon, and the occasion which he had for thankfulness on his behalf, ver. 4-7. (a) He always remembered him in his prayers, ver. 4. (b) He had heard of his faith and love, and of his kindness towards those who bore the Christian name, ver. 5. (c) He desired that his goodness in making others, in common with him, partaken of the expression of his faith, might be even more effectual in securing the proper acknowledgment of it wherever it might be known, ver. 8. (d) He says that he had great joy and consolation from the happiness which he had conferred on Christians who needed his aid, ver. 7. The main subject of the epistle - the desire that he would receive his servant Onesimus again, and the arguments to persuade him to do it, vers. 8-21. (e) He places it on the ground of entreaty, not of command. He might, in virtue of his apostolic office, enjoin many things on him, and possibly this, yet he chooses to place it wholly on other grounds, and to make it a matter of personal friendship, ver. 8.

(2.) Particular reasons why he should do it (a) For love's sake - love to Paul - now an old man, and in prison on account of their common religion, ver. 9. (b) Paul regarded Onesimus as his own son, and asked that he might be received and treated as such, ver. 10. (c) He assures Philemon that, whatever he might have been formerly, he would now find him to be profitable to himself, ver. 11. (d) He assures him that Onesimus was especially dear to him, and that he would have been very useful to him in his circumstances, but that he did not think it proper to retain him with him without the consent of Philemon. Onesimus, therefore, was not sent back as a worthless vagabond, and Philemon, in receiving him, might be sure that he was receiving one whom Paul believed was fitted to be eminently useful, vers. 12-14. (e) He suggests to Philemon that probably it was so arranged by divine Providence, that Onesimus should depart in order that he might receive him again in a far more tender and endearing relation, not as a servant, but as a Christian brother, vers. 15, 18. (f) He appeals to the personal friendship of Philemon, and asks that if he regarded him as a participator with him in the hopes of the gospel, or as a fellow-labourer in a common cause, he would receive him as he would himself, ver. 17. (g) He says that he would himself become security for Onesimus if he owed Philemon anything, or had in any way wronged him, vers. 18, 19. (h) He concludes the argument by referring to the happiness which it would give him if Philemon would receive his former servant again; and with the expression of his conviction that he would do more than he asked in the matter, and then asks that, while he showed favour to Onesimus, he would also prepare a lodging for him, for he hoped soon to be with him, vers. 20-22. Perhaps by this last suggestion he hoped also to do much to favour the cause of Onesimus - for Philemon could hardly turn him away when he expected that Paul himself would soon be with him. Such an argument would be likely to be effectual in the case. We do not like to deny the request which a friend makes in a letter, if we expect soon to see the

writer himself. It would be much more easy to do it if we had no expectations of seeing him very soon.

4. The epistle closes with affectionate salutations from certain persons who were with Paul, and who were probably well known by Philemon, and with the customary benediction, vers. 23-25 ...

VERSE 11: "Which in time past was to thee unprofitable."

Either because he was indolent; because he had wronged him, or because he had run away from him. It is possible that there may be an allusion here to the meaning of the name Onesimus, which denotes profitable, (Greek ... to be useful, to be profitable, to help) and that Paul means to say that he had hitherto not well answered to the meaning of his own name, but that now he would be found to do so.

"But now profitable to thee."

The Greek here is ... *euchreston*, but the meaning is about the same as that of the word Onesimus. It denotes "very useful." In 2 Tim. 4:21, it is rendered, "meet for use"; in 2 Tim. 4:11, and here, "profitable." It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament.

"And to me."

Paul had doubtless found him useful to him as a Christian brother in his bonds, and it is easy to conceive that, in his circumstances, he would greatly desire to retain him with him.

VERSE 12 "Whom I have sent again." That is, to Philemon. This was, doubtless, at his own request, for

(1.) there is not the slightest evidence that he compelled him, or even urged him to go. The language is just such as would have been used on the supposition either that he requested him to go and bear a letter to Colosse, or that Onesimus desired to go, and that Paul sent him agreeably to his request. Comp. Phil. 2:25, "Yet I suppose it necessary 'to send' to you Epaphroditus my brother, and companion in labour;" etc. Col. 4:7,8, "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have 'sent' unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate;" etc.

But Epaphroditus and Tychicus were not sent against their own wills - nor is there any more reason to think that Onesimus was. See Intro.

(2) Paul had no power to send Onesimus back to his master unless he chose to go. He had no civil authority; he had no guard to accompany him; he could entrust him to no sheriff to convey him from place to place, and he had no means of controlling him, if he chose to go to any other place than Colosse. He could indeed have sent him away from himself; he could have told him to go to Colosse, but there his power ended. Onesimus then could have gone where he pleased. But there is no evidence that Paul even told him to go to Colosse against his own inclination, or that he would have sent him away at all unless he had himself requested it.

(3) There may have been many reasons why Onesimus desired to return to Colosse, and no one can prove that he did not express that desire to Paul, and that his "sending" him was not in consequence of such a request. He may have had friends and relatives there; or, being now converted, he may have been sensible that he had wronged his former master, and that he ought to return and repair the wrong; or he may have been poor, and a stranger in Rome, and may have been greatly disappointed in what he had expected to find there when he left Philemon, and may have desired to return to the comparative comforts of his former condition.

(4) It may be added, therefore, (a) that this passage should NOT be adduced to PROVE that we ought to "send back runaway slaves to their former masters" against their own consent; or to justify the laws which require magistrates to do it; or to show that they who have

escaped should be arrested and forcibly detained; or to justify any sort of influence over a runaway slave to induce him to return to his former master. There is NOT THE LEAST evidence that any of these things occurred in the case before us; and if this instance is ever appealed to, it should be to justify what Paul did - AND NOTHING ELSE. (b) The passage shows that it is right to aid a servant of any kind to return to his master IF he desires it. It is right to give him a "letter," and to plead earnestly for his favourable reception IF he has in any way wronged his master - for Paul did this. On the same principle, it would be right to give him pecuniary assistance to enable him to return - for there may be cases where one who has fled from servitude might wish to return.

There may be instances where one has had a kind master, with whom he would feel that on the whole he could be more happy than in his present circumstances. Such cases, however, are exceedingly rare. Or there may be instances where one may have relatives that are in the neighbourhood or in the family of his former master, and the desire to be with them may be so strong that on the whole he would choose to be a servant as he was before, rather than to remain as he is now. In all such cases it is right to render aid - for the example of the apostle Paul goes to sustain this. But it goes no further. So far as appears, he neither ADVISED Onesimus to return, nor did he COMPEL him; nor did he say one word to INFLUENCE him to do it; nor did he MEAN or EXPECT that he would be a SLAVE when he should have been received again by his master. See Notes on ver. 16.

"Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels." There is great delicacy also in this expression. If he had merely said, "receive him," Philemon might have thought only of him as he formerly was. Paul, therefore, adds, "that is, mine own bowels" - "one whom I so tenderly love that he seems to carry my heart with him wherever he goes." (Doddridge).

VERSE 13: "Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead. That he might render me the service which I know you would if you were here." The Greek is, "for thee;" that is, what he should do for Paul might be regarded as done by Philemon himself.

"He might have ministered unto me."

He might have rendered me assistance; to wit, in such a way as one who was in bonds would need.

VERSE 14: "But without thy mind would I do nothing." Nothing in the matter referred to. He would not retain Onesimus in his service, much as he needed his assistance, without the cordial consent of Philemon. He would not give him occasion for hard feeling or complaint, AS IF Paul had induced him to leave his master, or AS IF he persuaded him to remain with him when he wished to return - or AS IF he kept him away from him when he owed him or had wronged him. All that is said here is entirely consistent with the supposition that Onesimus was DISPOSED to return to his master, and with the supposition that Paul did not compel or urge him to do it. For it is probable that IF Onesimus had proposed to return, it would have been easy for Paul to have retained him with him. He might have represented his own want of a friend. He might have appealed to his gratitude on account of his effort for his conversion. He might have shown him that he was under no moral obligation to go back. He might have refused to give him this letter, and might have so represented to him the dangers of the way, and the probability of a harsh reception, as effectually to have dissuaded him from such a purpose. But, in that case, it is clear that this might have caused hard feeling in the bosom of Philemon, and rather than do that he preferred to let him return to his master, and to plead for him that he might have a kind reception.

It is, therefore, by no means necessary to suppose that Paul felt that Onesimus was under OBLIGATION to return, or that he was disposed to COMPEL him, or that Onesimus was not inclined to return voluntarily; but all the circumstances of the case are met by the supposition that, if Paul retained him, Philemon might conceive that he had injured HIM. Suppose, as seems to have been the case, that Onesimus "owed" Philemon, (ver.18) and then suppose that Paul had chosen to retain him with himself, and had dissuaded him from returning to him, would not Philemon have had reason to complain of it? There was, therefore, on every account, great propriety in his saying that he did not wish to use any influence over him to retain him with him when he purposed to return to Colosse, and that he felt that it would be wrong for him to keep him, much as he needed him, without the consent of Philemon.

Nor is it necessary, by what is said here, to suppose that Onesimus was A SLAVE, and that Paul believed that Philemon had a right to him and to his services as such. All that he says here would be met by the supposition that he was a hired servant, and would be in fact equally proper even on the supposition that he was an apprentice. In either case, he would feel that he gave just ground of complaint on the part of Philemon if, when someone desired to return, he used any influence to dissuade him from it, and to retain him with himself. It would have been a violation of the rule requiring us to do to others as we would wish them to do unto us; and Paul therefore felt unwilling, much as he needed the services of Onesimus, to make use of any influence to retain him with him without the consent of his master.

"That thy benefit."

The favour which I might receive from thee by having the services of Onesimus. If Onesimus should remain with him and assist him, he would feel that the benefit which would be conferred by his services would be in fact bestowed by Philemon, for he had a right to the Service of Onesimus; and while Paul enjoyed it, he would be deprived of it. The word rendered "benefit" here - means "good," and the sense is "the good which you would do me;" to wit, by the service of Onesimus.

"Should not be as it were of necessity."

As it would be if Paul should detain Onesimus with him without affording Philemon an opportunity of expressing his assent. Paul would even then have felt that he was in fact receiving a "good" at the expense of Philemon, but it would not be a VOLUNTARY favour on his part.

"But willingly."

As it would be if he had given his consent that Onesimus should remain with him.

CHAPTER 7

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON (PART 2)

FROM "BARNES' NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT"

Continued from Part 1

VERSE 15.

"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season."

Perhaps on this account, or for this reason - he left you for a little time. Greek, "for an hour." The meaning is, that it was possible that this was permitted, in the providence of God, IN ORDER that Onesimus might be brought under the influence of the gospel, and be far more serviceable to Philemon as a Christian, than he could have been in his former relation to him. What appeared to Philemon, therefore, to be a calamity, and what seemed to him to be wrong on the part of Onesimus, might have been permitted to occur in order that he might receive a higher benefit. Such things are not uncommon in human affairs.

"That thou shouldest receive him far ever." That is, in the higher relation of a Christian friend and brother; that he might be united to thee in eternal affection; that he might not only be with thee in a far more endearing relation during the present life than he was before, but in the bonds of love in a world that shall never end.

VERSE 16.

"Not now as a servant." The adverb rendered "not now," means "no more," "no further," "no longer." It implies that he had been before in this condition, but was not to be now. Comp. Matt. 19:6, "They are no more twain." They were once so, but they are not to be regarded as such now. Matt. 22:46, "Neither durst any man from that day forth, ask him any more questions:" They once did it, but now they did not dare to do it. Luke 15:19, "And am no more worthy to be called thy son," though I once was. John 6:66, "And walked no more with him; though they once did. See also John 11:54; 14:19; 17:13; Acts 8:39; Gal.4:7; Eph.2:19. This passage, then, proves that he had been before a servant - "doulos." But still it is not certain what KIND of a servant he was. The word does not necessarily mean SLAVE, nor can it be proved from this passage, or from any other part of the epistle, that he was at any time a slave...

The word denotes servant of any kind, and it should never be assumed that those to whom it was applied were slaves. It is true that slavery existed in the heathen nation, when the gospel was first preached, and it is doubtless true that many slaves were converted ... but the mere use of THE WORD does not necessarily prove that he to whom it is applied was a slave. If Onesimus were a slave, there is reason to think that he was of a most respectable character ... and indeed all that is implied in the use of the term here, and ALL that is said of him, would be met by the supposition that he was a VOLUNTARY SERVANT, and that he had been in fact entrusted with important business by Philemon. It would seem from ver. 18, ("or oweth thee ought,") that he was in a condition which made it possible for him to hold property, or at least to be entrusted. "But above a servant, a brother beloved."

A Christian brother ... He was especially dear to Paul himself as a Christian, and he trusted that he would be so to Philemon.

"Specially to me."

That is, I feel a special or particular interest in him, and affection for him. This he felt not only on account of the traits of character which he had evinced since his conversion, but because

he had been converted under his instrumentality when he was a prisoner. A convert made in such circumstances would be particularly dear to one.

"But how much more unto thee."

Why, it may be asked, would he then be particularly dear to Philemon? I answer, because (1) of the former relation which he sustained to him, member of his own family, and bound to him by strong ties; (2) because he would receive him as a penitent, and would have joy in his returning from the error of his way; (3) because he might expect him to remain long with him, and be of advantage to him as a Christian brother; and (4) because he had voluntarily returned, and thus shown that he felt a strong attachment to his former master.

"In the flesh."

This phrase is properly used in reference to any relation which may exist pertaining to the present world, as contradistinguished from that which is formed primarily by religion, and which would be expressed by the subjoined phrase, "in the Lord." It might, in itself, refer to any natural relation of blood, or to any formed in business, or to any constituted by more friendship, or to family alliance, or to any relation having its origin voluntary or involuntary servitude. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to meet the full force of the expression, either that Onesimus had been a slave, or that he would continue to be regarded as such. WHATEVER relation of the kind, referred to above, may have existed between him and Philemon, would be appropriately denoted by this phrase. The new and more interesting relation which they were now to sustain to each other, which was formed by religion, is expressed by the phrase "in the Lord." In BOTH these, Paul hoped that Onesimus would manifest the appropriate spirit of a Christian, and be worthy of his entire confidence.

"In the Lord."

As a Christian. He will be greatly endeared to your heart as a consistent and worthy follower of the Lord Jesus.

On this important verse, then, in relation to the use which is so often made of this epistle by the advocates of slavery, to show that Paul sanctioned it, and that it is a duty to send back those who have escaped from their masters that they may again be held in bondage, we may remark,

(1) there is no certain evidence that Onesimus was ever a SLAVE at all. ALL the proof that he was, is to be found in the word "doulos" - in this verse. But, as we have seen, the mere use of this word by no means proves that. All that is necessarily implied by it is that he was, in some way, the SERVANT of Philemon - whether hired or bought cannot be shown.

(2) At all events, even supposing that he had been a slave, Paul did NOT MEAN that he should RETURN as such, or to be regarded as such. He meant, whatever may have been his former relation, and whatever subsequent relation he might sustain, that he should be regarded as a beloved Christian brother; that the leading conception in regard to him should be that he was a fellow-heir of salvation, a member of the same redeemed church, a candidate for the same heaven.

(3) Paul did not send him back IN ORDER that he might be a slave, or with a view that the shackles of servitude should be riveted on him. There is not the slightest evidence that he FORCED him to return, or that he ADVISED him to do it, or even that he expressed a WISH that he would; and when he did send him, it was NOT as a SLAVE, but AS A BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD. It cannot be shown that the motive for sending him back was, in the slightest degree, that he should be a slave. No such thing is intimated, nor is my such thing necessary to be supposed in order to fair interpretation of the passage.

(4) It is clear that, even if Onesimus had been a slave before, it would have been contrary to the wishes of Paul that Philemon should now hold him as such. Paul wished him to regard him "not as a servant;" but as a "beloved brother." If Philemon complied with his wishes, Onesimus was never afterwards regarded or treated as a slave. If he did so regard or treat him, it was contrary to the expressed intention of the apostle, and it is certain that he could

never have shown this letter in justification of it. It cannot fail to strike any one that if Philemon followed the spirit of this epistle, he would not consider Onesimus to be a slave; but if he sustained the relation of a servant at all, it would be as a voluntary member of his household, where, in all respects, he would be regarded and treated, not as a "chattel," or a "thing," but as a Christian brother.

(5) This passage, therefore, may be regarded as full proof that it is not right to send a slave back, against his will, to his former master, to be a slave. It is right to help one if he wishes to go back; to give him a letter to his master, as Paul did to Onesimus; to furnish him money to help him on his journey if he desires to return; and to commend him as a Christian brother, if he is such; but beyond that, the example of the apostle Paul does not go. It is perfectly clear that he would NOT have sent him back to be regarded and treated as a slave; but being able to commend him as a Christian, he was willing to do it, and he expected that he WOULD BE treated, not as a slave, but as a Christian. The case before us does not go at all to prove that Paul would have ever sent him back to be a chattel or a thing. If, with his own consent, and by his own wish, we can send a slave back to his master to be treated AS A CHRISTIAN and as A MAN, the example of Paul may show that it would be right to do it, but it does not go beyond that.

(6) In confirmation of this, and as a guide in duty now, it may be observed, that Paul had been educated as a Hebrew; that he was thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of the Old Testament; and that one of the elementary principles of that system of religion was, that a runaway slave was IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES to be returned by force to his former master.

"Thou shalt NOT DELIVER UNTO HIS MASTER THE SERVANT THAT IS ESCAPED FROM HIS MASTER TO THEE," Deut. 23:15.

It CANNOT be supposed that, trained as he was in the principles of the Hebrew religion - of which this was a positive and unrepealed law, and imbued with the benevolent spirit of the gospel - a system so hostile to oppression, the apostle Paul would have constrained a slave who had escaped from bondage to return to servitude against his will. (7) It may be added, that if the principles here acted on by Paul were carried out, slavery would speedily cease in the world. Very soon would it come to an end if masters were to regard those whom they hold, "not as slaves," but as BELOVED CHRISTIAN BROTHERS; not as CHATTELS and THINGS, but as the redeemed children of God. Thus regarding them, they would no longer feel that they might chain them, and task them, and sell them as property. They would feel that, as Christians and as men, they were on a level with themselves; and that they who were made in the image of God, and who had been redeemed with the blood of His Son, OUGHT to be FREE! (Remember that in the time when Albert Barnes wrote these notes on the New Testament, SLAVERY was practiced in many parts of the world, including North America - Keith Hunt).

VERSE 17.

"If thou count me therefore a partner."

The word rendered partner, means a partaker, a companion. The idea in the word is that of having something in common with any one - as common principles; common attachments; a common interest in an enterprise; common hopes. It may be applied to those who held the same principles of religion, and who have the same hope of heaven, the same views of things, etc. Here the meaning is, that if Philemon regarded Paul as sharing with him in the principles and hopes of religion, or as a brother in the gospel, so that he would receive him, he ought to receive Onesimus in the same way. He was actuated by the same principles, and had the same hopes, and had a claim to be received as a Christian brother. His receiving Onesimus would be interpreted by Paul as proof that he regarded him as a partaker of the hopes of the gospel, and as a companion and friend...

VERSE 18. "If he hath wronged thee."

Either by escaping from you, or by failing to perform what he had agreed to, or by unfaithfulness when he was with you as a servant, or by taking your property when he went away. Any of these methods would meet all that is said here, and it is impossible to

determine in which of them he had done Philemon wrong. It may be observed, however, that the apostle used delicacy in this matter. He does not say that he had wronged him, but he makes a supposition that he might have done it. Doubtless, Philemon would suppose that he had done it, even if he had done no more than to escape from him, and, whatever Paul's views of that might be, he says that, even if it were, he would wish him to set that over to his account. He took the blame on himself, and asked Philemon not to remember it against Onesimus.

"Or oweth thee ought."

It appears from this, that Onesimus, whatever may have been his former condition, was capable of holding property, and of contracting debts. It is possible that he might have borrowed money from Philemon or he may have been regarded as a tenant, and may not have paid the rent of his farm, or the apostle may mean that he had owed him service which he had not performed. Conjecture is useless as to the way in which the debt had been contracted.

"Put that on mine account."

Reckon, or impute that to me. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, except in Rom. 5:13, where it is tendered "imputed." It means "to reckon;" to "put to one's account;" to wit, what properly belongs to him, or what he assumes. It never implies that that is to be charged on one which does not properly belong to him, either as his own act, or as that which he has assumed. In this case, it would have been manifestly unjust for Philemon to charge the wrong which Onesimus had done, or what he owed him, to the apostle Paul without his consent; and it cannot be inferred from what Paul says here that it would have been right to do so.

The steps in the case were these: (1) Onesimus; not Paul, had done the wrong. (2) Paul was not guilty of it, or blameworthy of it, and never in any way, or by any process, could be made to be, or conceived to be. It would be true for ever that Onesimus and not he had done the wrong. (3) Paul ASSUMED the debt and the wrong to himself. He was willing, by putting himself in the place of Onesimus, to bear the consequences, and to have Onesimus treated AS IF he had NOT done it. When he had voluntarily assumed it, it was right to treat him as if he had done so; that is, to hold him responsible. A man may assume a debt if he pleases, and then he may be held answerable for it. (4) If he had not assumed this himself, it never could have been right for Philemon to charge it on him. No possible supposition could make it right. No agency which he had in the conversion of Onesimus; no friendship which he had for him; no favour which he had shown him, could make it right. The CONSENT, the CONCURRENCE, on the part of Paul, was absolutely NECESSARY in order that he should be in any way RESPONSIBLE what Onesimus had done.

(5) The same principle prevails in imputation everywhere. (a) What we have done is chargeable upon us. (b) If we have not done a thing, or have not assumed it by a voluntary act, it is not right to charge it upon us. (c) God reckons things as they are. The Saviour voluntarily ASSUMED the place of man, and God reckoned, or considered it so. He did not hold him guilty or blameworthy in the case; but as he had voluntarily taken the place of sinners, he was treated as if he had been a sinner. God, in like manner, does not charge on man crimes of which he is not guilty. He does not hold him to be blameworthy, or ill-deserving for the sin of Adam, or any other sin but his own. He reckons things, as they are. Adam sinned, and he alone was held to be blameworthy or all-deserving for the act. By a divine constitution he had appointed that if he sinned, the consequences or results should pass over and terminate on his posterity - as the consequences of the sin of the drunkard pass over and terminate on his sons, and God RECKONS this to be so - and treats the race accordingly. He never reckons those to be guilty who are not guilty; or those to be ill-deserving who are not ill-deserving; nor does he punish one for what another has done. When Paul, therefore, voluntarily assumed a debt or an obligation, what he did should not be urged as an argument to prove that it would be right for God to charge on all the posterity of Adam the sin of their first father, or to hold them guilty for an offence committed ages before they had an existence. The case should be adduced to demonstrate one point only - that when a man assumes a debt, or voluntarily takes a wrong done upon himself, it is right to hold him responsible for it....

CHAPTER 8

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON (PART 3)

FROM ALBERT BARNES' NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT:

The epistle to Philemon, though the shortest that Paul wrote, and though pertaining to a private matter in which the church at large could not be expected to have any direct interest, is nevertheless a most interesting portion of the New Testament, and furnishes some invaluable lessons for the church.¹ It is a model of courtesy.

It shows that the apostle was a man of refined sensibility, and had a delicate perception of what was due in friendship, and what was required by true politeness. There are turns of thought in this epistle which no one would employ who was not thoroughly under the influence of true courtesy of feeling, and who had not an exquisite sense of what was proper in intercourse with a Christian gentleman. The epistle shows that he had great tact in argument.

And great skill in selecting just such things as would be adopted to secure the end in view. It would be hardly possible to accumulate, even in a letter of fiction, more circumstances which would be fitted to accomplish the object which he contemplated, than he has introduced into this short letter, or to arrange them in a way better fitted to secure the desired result.

If we remember the state of mind in which it is reasonable to suppose Philemon was in regard to this runaway servant, and the little probability that a man in his circumstances would receive him with kindness again, it is impossible not to admire the address with which Paul approaches him. It is not difficult to imagine in what state of mind Philemon may have been, or the obstacles which it was necessary to surmount in order to induce him to receive Onesimus again - and **ESPECIALLY TO RECEIVE HIM AS A CHRISTIAN BROTHER.**

If, as has been commonly supposed, Onesimus had been a slave; if he had run away from him; if he had been formerly intractable and disobedient; if he had wronged him by taking property with him that did not belong to him, or if he had owed him, and had run off without paying him, it is not difficult for anyone to imagine how great was the difficulty to be overcome in his mind before the object of Paul could be accomplished. This will be felt to be especially so, if we bear in remembrance the repugnance necessarily felt by a slaveholder to receive one who has been a slave as an equal in any respect, or to regard and treat such an one as a Christian brother on the same level with himself. Or if we suppose that Onesimus had been a voluntary servant in the employ of Philemon, and had failed to render the service which he had contracted to perform, or had embezzled property, or had gone off in debt, greatly irritating the mind of his master, the difficulty to be overcome before he received him again would be little less. In either case, it would be necessary to soothe his irritated feelings, and to inspire confidence in one who hitherto had evinced little claim to it, and to persuade him now to receive one who had shown that he was not to be trusted as a Christian brother.

If the epistle be examined with reference to either of these suppositions, it will be found to be composed with the most finished tact and art. This epistle has been frequently appealed to by the friends and advocates of slavery as furnishing a support or apology for that institution.

Indeed, it would seem to be regarded by the advocates of that system as so clear on the point, that all that they need to do is to name it as settling the whole matter in debate. The points which it is supposed by the advocates of that system to prove are two:

FIRST, that slavery is right - since it is assumed that Onesimus was a slave, and that Paul does not intimate to Philemon that the relation was contrary to the spirit of Christianity; and

SECOND, that it is our duty to send back a runaway slave to his master - since it is assumed that Paul did this in the case of Onesimus.

It cannot be denied that this view of the matter would be sustained by most of the commentaries on the epistle; but it is time to inquire whether such an exposition is the true one, and whether this epistle really gives countenance to slavery in respect to these points.

In order to this, it is important to know exactly what was the state of the case in reference to these points - for in interpreting the New Testament it should not be ASSUMED that anything is in favour of slavery, nor should anything be ADMITTED to be in favour of it, without applying the most rigid principles of interpretation - any more than in the case of profaneness, adultery, or any other sin.

As the result of the examination of the epistle, we are now prepared to inquire what countenance the epistle gives to slavery in three respects, and whether it can be fairly appealed to either in justification of the system, or in showing that it is a duty to return a runaway slave against his consent to his former master.

To make out these points from the epistle, it would be necessary to demonstrate that Onesimus was certainly a slave; that Paul so treats the subject as to show that he approved of the institution; that he sent back Onesimus against his own will; that he returned him - because he supposed he had done wrong by escaping from servitude; and that he meant that he should continue to be regarded as a slave, and held as a slave, after his return to Philemon.

Now, in regard to these points, I would make the following remarks in view of the exposition which has been given of the epistle.

(1) There, is no positive evidence that Onesimus was a SLAVE at all. See Notes on verse 16. Even if it should be admitted to be PROBABLE that he was, it would be necessary, in order that this epistle should be adduced in favour of slavery, that that fact should be made out without any ground of doubt, or the argument is worthless. It is clear that the epistle, under any circumstances, can be adduced in favour of slavery only SO FAR as it is certain that Onesimus was a slave. But that is NOT CERTAIN. It cannot be made to be certain. It should not be taken for granted. Either of the suppositions that he was bound to service till he was of age, by a parent or guardian, or that he had voluntarily bound himself to service for wages, will meet all that is necessarily implied in the epistle.

(2) There is not the least evidence that Paul used any force, or even persuasion to induce him to return to his master. It cannot be proved from the epistle that he even ADVISED him to return.

It is certain that he did not compel him to do it - for Paul had no power to do this, and no guard or civil officer accompanied Onesimus to secure him if he had chosen to escape. Every one of the circumstances mentioned in the epistle will be met by the supposition that Onesimus DESIRED to return, but that there were circumstances which made him apprehensive that if he did, he would not be kindly received and that, at his request, Paul wrote the epistle to induce Philemon to receive him kindly. Nothing more can be PROVED; nothing more is necessary to be believed, in order to a fair interpretation of the epistle. Nothing is more natural than the supposition that when Onesimus was truly converted, he would desire to return to Philemon if he had in any way done him wrong.

But to make it proper to adduce this epistle to show that it is a DUTY to return a runaway slave to his master, even on the supposition that Onesimus was a slave, it is necessary to PROVE either that Paul ADVISED him to return, or that he COMPELLED him to do it against his will. No one doubts that it would be right to help one who had escaped from slavery, if, on any proper account, he should WISH to go back to his former master: if he felt that he had wronged him, or if he had a wife and children in the neighbourhood, or if he was satisfied that he could be more happy in his service than he could be elsewhere.

To this point, and this only, this epistle goes.

(3) There is no evidence that Paul meant that Onesimus should return AS a slave, or with a view to be retained and treated AS a slave. Even opposing he had been so formerly, there is not the slightest intimation in the epistle that when he sent him back to his master, he meant

that he should throw himself into the chains of bondage again. Nor is there the slightest evidence that IF he had supposed that this would be the result, he would have even CONSENTED that he should return to his master. No man can take this epistle, and prove from it that Paul would have sent him at all, if he had supposed that the effect would be that he would be reduced to slavery, and held in bondage.

If such had been his expectation, he would never have written such a letter as this. The expression of such a desire would have found a place in the epistle; or, at least, the epistle would not have been so framed as almost of necessity to lead to a different result.

(4) There is very satisfactory evidence, besides this, that he did NOT mean that Onesimus should be regarded and treated by Philemon as a slave. It would be impossible for Philemon to comply with the wishes breathed forth in this letter, and meet exactly the desires of Paul in the case, and yet retain him as a slave, or regard him as property - as a "chattel" - as a "thing." For

IF he had been formerly a slave; if this is the fair meaning of the word "doulos" - then this is expressly declared. Thus, in verse 16, he is commanded to receive him "NOT NOW as a SERVANT. If he had been a slave before, he did NOT WISH that he should be received as such now, or regarded as such any longer. How COULD Philemon comply with the wish of the apostle, and yet regard Onesimus as a slave? The very attempt to do it would be directly in the face of the expressed desire of Paul, and every moment he held him as such he would be disregarding his wishes.

(b) He desired him to receive and treat him, in all respects, as a Christian brother - as one redeemed - as a man - "ABOVE a SERVANT, a BROTHER BELOVED." How could he do this, and yet regard and treat him as a slave? IS it treating one as a Christian brother to hold him as property; to deprive him of freedom; to consider him an article of merchandise; to exact his labour without compensation? Would the man himself who makes another a slave suppose that HE was treated as a Christian brother, if HE were reduced to that condition? Would he feel that his son was so regarded if HE was made A slave? There are no ways of reconciling these things. It is IMPOSSIBLE for a master to regard his slave as, in the proper and full sense of the phrase, "a CHRISTIAN BROTHER." He may, indeed, esteem him highly as a Christian; he may treat him with kindness; he may show him many favours; BUT - he regard him also AS HIS SLAVE; and this fact makes a difference wide "as from the centre thrice to the utmost pole" in his feelings towards him and other Christians. He is NOT on a level with them AS a Christian. The notion of his being HIS SLAVE mingles with all his feelings towards him, and gives a colouring to all his views of him. He cannot but feel, if he himself is under the influence of religion, that that slave, if he were treated in all respects AS a Christian, would be as free as himself; would have, right to his time, and skill, and liberty; would be permitted to form his own plans, and to enjoy the avails of his own labour; and would be secure from the possibility of being SOLD.

(c) Suppose news that Paul, after a short interval, had actually come to the residence of Philemon, as he expected to, (ver. 22) and had found him regarding and treating Onesimus AS A SLAVE; would he have felt that Philemon had complied with his wishes? Did he ask this of him? Did he not request just the contrary? verse 18. Would it not be natural for him to say to him that he had NOT received him as he wished him to? And how could Philemon reply to this?

(5) The principles laid down in this epistle would lead to the universal abolition of slavery. If all those who are now slaves were to become Christians, and their masters were to treat them "not as slaves, but as brethren beloved," the period would not be far distant when slavery would cease. This probably will be admitted by all. But a state of things which would be destroyed by the widest prevalence of Christianity, is not right at any time. Christianity, in its highest influences, interferes with nothing that is good, and would annihilate nothing which is not wrong. That which is true, and best for the welfare of man, will survive when the true religion spreads all over the world; and to say, as is commonly admitted even by the advocates of slavery, that Christianity will ultimately destroy the system, is to say that it IS NOW WRONG!! For Christianity destroys nothing which is in itself right, and which is admirable for the highest good of man. It will, destroy intemperance, and idolatry, and superstition, and war, because they are evil and wrong - and ONLY because they are so;

and for the same reason, and that only, will it abolish slavery. When a man therefore, admits that the gospel will ultimately destroy slavery, he at the same time admits that it is NOW an EVIL as a SIN. The gospel is adapted and designed to put an end to the system. It DID annihilate it in the Roman Empire, and its tendency everywhere is to secure its final abolition. The system, THEREFORE, is evil. It is opposed to the spirit of religion. It is destructive of the welfare of society. It is a violation of human rights. It is contrary to the will of God.

The gospel everywhere teaches us to regard the slave "no longer as a slave, but as a brother;" and when this is secured, the system must speedily come to an end.

For this, and for all its other anticipated influences, we should labour and pray that the gospel may be diffused as speedily as possible all over the world; that it may raise man everywhere from his degradation; and invest every human being with the dignity of a freeman; that it "may undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and bid the oppressed go free," Isa. 58:6.

AMEN to Albert Barnes' notes on this book and letter of Paul the apostle to Philemon. Barnes was writing in a time and an age when slavery was a common practice in various parts of the world, including North America.

So we end our commentary on the 14 epistles of Paul. What wonderful inspiration they hold. What glorious revelations and truths of the Most High they contain. Yes, as the apostle Peter said, some of the writings of Paul are hard to understand, by those who wrest the words of God, to their own destruction. For those who know the Scriptures do not contradict each other, for those who know there is unity in all the words of God, for those who will search the Scriptures, who will study to show themselves approved to God, and so correctly putting verse with verse, there is wonderful and eternal salvation to be found.

We have come to near the very end of the New Testament books. What wonderful books they are. What magnificent teachings they give us. Just think if the whole world, all nations and peoples on earth were LIVING by the New Testament, what a GLORIOUS and HAPPY world we would be living in.

There would be PEACE, JOY, GOODNESS, FRIENDLINESS, CO-OPERATION, LOVE, KINDNESS, PATIENCE, and everything that is RIGHTEOUSNESS, would be filling this earth. If the world was living the New Testament, they would be living the TEN COMMANDMENTS, every single one of them. The day WILL COME when that will be a REALITY! We continue to pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

With the book of REVELATION yet to investigate and read and expound to you, I know that it would seem the world will not WILLINGLY TURN to God and His way of His commandments. So, sad to say, the world must go through a time at the end of this age, that will be so horrific there will never have been a time like it in the entire history of mankind, nor will there be such a time again.

Yet, beyond it all there will come a new age, for one thousand years under Jesus the Christ, and then for all eternity under the Father. That is for the next pages in this New Testament Bible Story.

CHAPTER 9

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 1)

Introduction

This introduction is taken from the NKJV Personal Study Bible, Thomas Nelson publishers, 1990,1995.

The word "revelation" is a translation of the Greek term meaning "apocalypse," which refers to an unveiling of God's secret purpose.....An additional consideration in understanding. Revelation is the frequent use of visions and symbols. In interpreting these, one should recognize that the author has interwoven many echoes from the Old Testament. Attention to these Old Testament settings may help us understand a given symbol or vision....This book certainly had relevance to the situation that surrounded its first readers. Yet its primary focus seems to be on events associated with the return of Christ....

AUTHOR AND DATE

The tradition that John the apostle wrote Revelation was almost unchallenged through the second century. Five times the author names himself as John, but the term "apostle" is never used....several linguistic evidences support the early church tradition that John the apostle wrote the Revelation as well as the Gospel and epistles of John. The Revelation uses some vocabulary similar to the other books of John. Also, the Revelation, the Gospel, and the epistles of John are all fond of contrasts.

Dating the composition of Revelation is complicated....[Most give it as between 80 and 96 A.D. - Keith Hunt]

PURPOSE

In all this John's message is that God's victory has already been won. The Lamb is the King of kings and Lord of lords.....

I have not given a lengthy introduction as some Bible Commentaries will do such as "Barnes' Notes on the New Testament." It is not really relevant per se. and I will skip the "Outline of Revelation" as presented in the above NKJV Personal Study Bible.

REVELATION CAN BE UNDERSTOOD!

Let's make it very clear from the start, the book of Revelation TODAY, CAN BE UNDERSTOOD! It is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST OF THINGS THAT MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS, and He bears witness by Himself and gave this prophecy to John to write and who then bore witness to the Word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to all the things that he saw. There is a blessing for all who read and take heed to the words of this prophecy, and KEEP those things which are written in it; for the time is near (1-3).

I want you to hang on to that phrase "for the time is near." and we shall compare it with similar phrases. Some have or try to understand this Revelation book as for the time shortly after the life of John. The truth of the matter is the book is written MAINLY in the time setting of the DAY OF THE LORD. That prophetic time frame

mentioned in TWO DOZEN OR MORE prophecies in the Old Testament, and the context of all of them is the events of the last THREE AND one half YEARS OF THIS AGE. GETTING EVEN MORE SPECIFIC, THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS PROBABLY TALKING ABOUT "THE DAY" OF THE LORD, AS A DAY BEING ONE YEAR IN FULFILMENT.

Story Flow

There is most clearly a STORY FLOW through the book of Revelation. If we leave out what is not the story flow, but inset passages that explain the symbols, or go back in an event to bring you up to the overall present time we are in at that time in the prophecy. So a certain amount of "drop back" scenes play out in this mainly Revelation that is still yet beyond us.

Let me again state, this is A REVEALING OF WHAT MUST COME SHORTLY BEFORE THE RETURN OF JESUS IN POWER AND GLORY.

Angels were sent to John to help him see many things and to write about them, events that for the main part of this book are taking place in that section of prophecy called "the day of the Lord" or "the day of God's wrath" or "the great day of His wrath has come (chap.6:17).



The Apostle John about to be caught up in a vision of the Day of the Lord

Some churches argue that "the Lord's day" here refers to a literal day of the week such as Sunday. This phrase almost certainly does not refer to a literal day of the week. Instead it probably refers to the end-time period of the last number of years at

the end of this age. The phrase "Lord's Day" is used in many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and refers to that time period shortly before the Messiah comes in glory and power to the earth (verses 1-3).

The Main Story Flow Minus the Inset Chapters is:

CHAPTER 1: John in the visionary Spirit see the glorified Son of man.

CHAPTER 4: The setting of the vision continues in heaven at the Throne of God.

CHAPTER 5: God holds a scroll in His right hand. No one is worthy to open the scroll except the Lamb, the lion of Judah, the Root of David, the Son of man, Jesus the Christ.

CHAPTER 6: The 7 seals and the opening of the first 6 seals.

CHAPTER 7: The sealing of the servants of God. 12 thousand from the 12 tribes of Israel and a great multitude.

The second half of this chapter does include a jump to where these servants or saints will be with the Lamb of God (Christ) and the Father into eternity.

CHAPTER 8: The opening of the 7th seal. Seven angels with seven trumpets prepare themselves to sound.

FOUR trumpets are sounded and various destruction come upon the earth.

THREE trumpets remain to be sounded (called Woe, woe, woe) - verse 13.

CHAPTER 9: The first WOE or 5TH TRUMPET sounds. The army from the bottomless pit comes and torments people FIVE months (verses 1-12).

The second WOE or 6TH TRUMPET sounds. The army from the EAST of Euphrates comes and kills one third of mankind still left on earth (verses 13-21).

CHAPTER 10: The vision continues and preparatory words are given to get ready for the third WOE or the 7TH TRUMPET, the LAST TRUMPET, to sound.

CHAPTER 11:14-19: The third WOE comes quickly - the 7TH TRUMPET sounds. The time has now come for Christ to take the kingdoms of this world and reign over them. The time of the dead to be resurrected and given rewards. Jesus will come and destroy those who are destroying the earth. The "temple of God" is opened in heaven.

CHAPTERS 14: Jesus is to come on the wings so to speak of a white cloud. The harvest of mankind is to take place. Jesus will make war and the wine-press of blood will be like a river.

CHAPTER 16: The 7TH TRUMPET WOE is made up of 7 LAST PLAGUES. The 6th vial is the gathering together of the armies of the Beast power into the place called Armageddon. The 7th vial is a mighty earthquake and hail, especially upon the prophetic "Babylon."

CHAPTER 19:11-16: Jesus' literal coming riding on a white horse with armies from heaven. He takes rulership of the earth. He destroys the "beast man" and the "false prophet" in the lake of fire.

CHAPTER 20: Christ and the saints rule the earth for 1,000 years (verses 1-6). Satan is chained and cast into the bottomless pit. At the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed, another battle takes place around Jerusalem. God is the winner.

The WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (verses 11-13). Billions who lived and were never called to salvation will be resurrected and offered eternal life. They will have to live by the Bible, and receive salvation exactly the same way as the saints already in the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 21 AND 22: The NEW heaven and the NEW earth. God the Father will come with the new Jerusalem from heaven, to live and dwell with His children FOREVER MORE. We are given a small glimpse into that eternal age, as it will be on this earth, as the headquarters of the entire universe.

Inset Chapters

Basically the rest of the chapters and verses of the book of Revelation are what we call INSET chapters. They tell us VERY IMPORTANT things that effect the MAIN STORY flow. It is like the Hollywood films that tell a story flow, but now and again they go back in time, to different times and play out scenes, that fill-in certain parts for our knowledge, to give us a better and fuller understand of the main story flow of events.

Example: Revelation 11:1-13. The inset is about the TWO FINAL WITNESSES for God's truth based in Jerusalem for the 42 months that the Beast power exists at the end of this age. The 42 months include both the "great tribulation" and "the day of the Lord." The Two Witnesses live and preach the truth of God during that last period of time. They are killed and resurrected just very shortly before Jesus returns.

Revelation 12 is an inset chapter. It is an overview of the TRUE Church of God, going way back to Genesis 37 and up to the coming GREAT tribulation, the wrath of the Day of God - last 42 months of this age.

NOTE: Many of the details of parts of the book of Revelation, such as Chapter 13, are dealt with in detail in other studies on my website, under "prophecy" and "end times." I will in this New Testament Bible Story, when we get to those chapters, refer the reader to those in-depth studies, and not go into too great depth with them.

CHAPTER 10

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 2)

Revelation 1

The first point we need to notice is that this is none other than the revelation of JESUS CHRIST, which He gave to the apostle John to record, via an angel. John bears witness to the things he SAW, to the WORD of God, and to the TESTIMONY of Jesus Christ. There is a blessing to for those who read, and hear the Word of God, and KEEP those things which are written herein (verse 1-3).

Another very important point to notice are the phrases "things which must SHORTLY come to pass" and "for the time is at HAND."

Some, because of those phrases, teach that the things in Revelation have taken place, shortly after John's time, or others will say they have taken place up to and including the "middle ages."

They do not understand how God writes at times, and that He often views "time" with much different eyes and mind than we humans do. Here, within the book of Revelation itself is the example of what I've just stated. Turn to chapter 22 and read verses 7, 12, and 20. After all that Jesus reveals in this book, He says THREE TIMES in one chapter, that He is coming QUICKLY!!

Obviously, to God, the span of time is often nowhere near how we look at time. To us our life time, and many life times, is long. How many have lived in the last 200 years WANTING and THINKING Jesus would come in their life time, many indeed. We saw in the writings of Peter that a thousand years to the Lord can be but a day. That is a way of saying God often does not view time as we do.

When these prophetic events unfold (which are mainly to do with the last 42 months, 1260 days, of this age, the prophetic "Lord's day," then yes, Jesus will come QUICKLY! What is 2,000 years or so to God, since John recorded the events in Revelation? In the eternal ages of the past and the future, they are but the blink of an eye.

Someone tried to tell me once that the message to the seven churches of chapter 2 and 3, were all fulfilled in John's day, and have nothing to do with the future or "church eras" per se. They pointed to those phrases in verses 1-3 about things "shortly coming to pass." It is first of all disproved by the phrases I pointed to in chapter 22 - "come quickly." Secondly, the whole main prophetic story is "on the Lord's day" (verse 10). Thirdly, somewhat less, but still true, is that the seven churches are in a "prophetic" book.

If they have nothing really to do with prophecy, but only for "spiritual" lessons, then why have them in such a book as Revelation. Being in this book would I argue strongly indicate that there is a "prophetic message" intended.

Add to that the fact that these seven churches are "represented" in HEAVEN with seven candlesticks and Jesus walking in the midst of them (verses 12-13, 20). This

should tell us the seven churches are greater in scope than JUST being seven literal churches in the time of John. If they were only for seven churches in Asia Minor, why those churches, which were hardly well known even in John's day. Why not the church at Corinth, or Rome? And to have SEVEN candlesticks in heaven, one for each of those relatively unknown churches. I think there is more to it all than something in the now distant past.



The Seven Candlesticks and the Seven Stars of God

Yes, of course they can stand for seven different spiritual attitudes (and certainly that is to teach us that lesson). But with verse 10 and the "Lord's day" vision, the seven churches I believe are prophetic in nature also. More on that when we arrive at chapter 2 and 3, and one MORE IMPORTANT fact that adds weight to the churches also being prophetic church ages.

John does write to the seven churches which are in Asia Minor, grace and peace he sends them from the One is was, and is, and is to come (God in Jesus the Christ is the one to come) and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne. Verse 20 gives us the interpretation of the seven Spirits - they are the seven Spirit ANGELS, the seven stars in Jesus' right hand are (represent) the seven angels, one angel for each of the seven churches. It would seem that God put a special work of an angel over each of the seven churches, which are the seven candlesticks, among whom Jesus walks (verse 4).

This letter also comes from Jesus Christ, a faithful witness, and the FIRST BEGOTTEN (more correctly should be translated as first BORN - see Col.1:15-18). When you understand it, Jesus was the FIRST human person to ever be born into eternal life. No person EXCEPT Christ has ever been glorified into immortal life from

flesh and blood. Enoch was not, Moses was not, Elijah, was not. That truth is covered in detail in various studies on my website.

John says Jesus is THE PRINCE of the kings of the earth, and the one who LOVED US, and washed us from sins in His own blood (verse 5).

In Jesus so doing He has made us also into kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever (verse 6). The saints will rule with Jesus for 1,000 years (chapter 20) on this earth. The saints born into the very Family of God will function as a king - leadership; and priest - spiritual guides, to the people living in that 1,000 year period.

Jesus will come in the clouds (He said He would - Matt.24:30; and so was Paul inspired to say the same in 2 Thes.4:13-16). You may remember the angels saying He would come again in like manner as He went, with clouds (Acts 1:9-11). Every eye will see Him. This could certainly be possible as the earth turns. It could also be a "general statement" - the majority will see Him when He comes again in glory and power.

They which pierced Him? Could mean the Jews, will see Him and mourn for Him with repentance (see Zech.12 through 13). It will eventually include even the very persons that hammered the nails into His hands and feet, and plunged the spear into His side. They will also one day be resurrected and see Jesus, in that White Throne Judgment period, spoken about at the end of chapter 20. All nations will wail because of him, some with tears of joy, that He has finally come back to earth, and others because the evil way of life will be destroyed by Him, and the merchants will wail at the destruction of their wealthy trading Empire as it is crushed and brought low (see Rev.18).

Jesus proclaims He is the ALPHA and the OMEGA (the first and last letters of the old Greek alphabet) - the beginning and the ending. In other words from past eternity to future eternity. He was the One which is now, was in the past, and will come again. He is the ALMIGHTY!

ALL THE NAMES THAT THE FATHER HAS ARE ALSO THE NAMES THAT THE SON HAS.

Once more there is no mention of the Holy Spirit as another third separate personal being in heaven alongside the Father and the Son.

John was as many of them were, partaking in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus. He was exiled to the isle of Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (verse 9).

He say he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" and hears a voice, like as a trumpet. The "Lord's day" here in a prophetic book was NOT a particular day of the week, but the prophetic "Lord's day" mentioned in many places in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. It may well be that as some prophetic passages give, a day for a year in fulfillment (Isaiah 34:8). If so then this "Lord's day" would be the LAST year of this age before Jesus comes again (verse 10).

The voice John hears says: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: What you see, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

John turns and sees seven candlesticks and the One in the midst, like unto the Son of man. This indicates that the candlesticks were INDIVIDUAL and Jesus can walk among them. As we see in chapter 2 and 3 each candlestick can be removed, which also indicates they are individual candlesticks.

Jesus says again He is the first and the last. He lives, and was dead; but is alive now forever more. He has the keys to hell and of death. Yes, Jesus said in the Gospels that He was the resurrection and the life. He also said that all judgment had been given to Him from the Father. It is only through Him that death can be overcome with life. He does, He has, He IS, the key for unlocking the grave of death.

John was to write the things he saw, the things which are, and the things to be hereafter.

The seven stars in Jesus hand represents the angels of the seven churches. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches (verses 11,12, 17-20).

The Glorified Christ!

If you want to know what Jesus looks like NOW, in His glorified state of being, you will find it in verses 13-16.

He is clothed with a garment down to His feet. He is girt about the chest with a GOLDEN girdle. His HEAD and His HAIR are WHITE like wool, as white as snow. His EYES are like a FLAME of FIRE. And His FEET like unto BRASS, as if burned in a furnace; and His VOICE like as the sound of MANY WATERS. He held in His RIGHT HAND seven stars, out of His MOUTH went a sharp TWO EDGED SWORD; and His face was as the SUN shines in its full strength (verses 13-16).

While some of the description is somewhat visionary in nature, like the two edged sword coming out of Jesus' mouth, like the "word of God" is depicted as a "two edged sword" in other writings of the New Testament, there is still enough description here to prove that Jesus (and hence the Father) are NOT JUST UNSHAPED NOTHINGS, as, believe it or not, some Christian religions actually teach. I do not know about you, but I certainly do not worship ETERNAL BEINGS (God and Christ) that have NO FORM or SHAPE, that have NO BODIES, but are just NOTHINGNESS! This teaching by some, must be one of the craziest theological teachings in all of Christendom.

I have proved elsewhere in other studies that Jesus and the Father DO HAVE BODIES, do have FORM AND SHAPE. Moses we are told actually saw the BACK-FORM of God in His GLORIFIED body. He was not allowed to see His front form and face, because God told him that no human man can look upon God's face and live.

CHAPTER 11

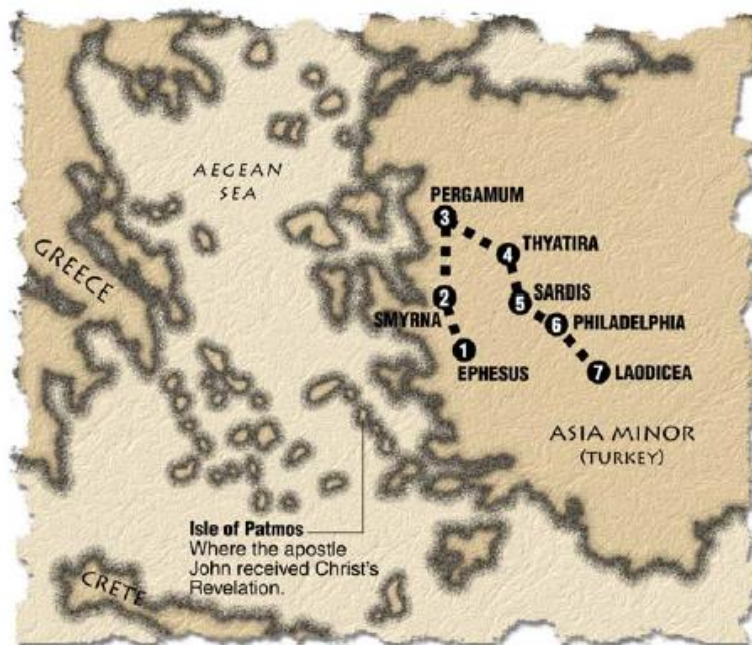
THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 3)

Revelation 2

The Letters to the Seven Churches

Let me say this immediately. On my website you will find an in-depth study concerning the SEVEN CHURCHES. It is called "The SEVEN Churches of REVELATION." It is either under the "Prophecy" or the "End Time" categories.

As the writer of that study shows, of course these seven churches can present seven attitudes of mind for all Christians, for all ages. All the examples in the Bible can have spiritual meaning for all of us, lessons can be learnt from any passage or passages in the Bible. And yes, as this book of Revelation was written by John, it was to be sent to those literal seven churches in Asia Minor. It did have a lesson for each of them at that time in history.



ANCIENT MAIL ROUTE

The seven Church eras of Revelation 2 and 3 are named after these seven ancient cities, which were once connected along a mail route.

With all that said, there is still evidence that the message to the seven churches is PROPHETIC. That it was to address SEVEN time ages from the start of the church in 30 A.D. to the very coming of Christ.

The other very strong point to prove that is in chapter 2:10, and the second time age of the true church. The people of the Smyrna time frame, were to have 10 days of tribulation. Would this really have been ten literal days for a literal church in Asia Minor, that was so very close by the other churches, and not have tribulation in any of the other nearby churches, but only in Smyrna? I think it is a little hard to accept that teaching.

I was reading through a "church history" book some years back. It was one of the famous "classic" books of church history that is still obtainable today, written by Philip Schaff (8 volume set). He had no "axe" to grind, he was not even dealing with the book of Revelation. He was just stating what Christian history has recorded. There were many persecution times for the Christian church as a whole, but the GREATEST persecution was from 303 to 313, exactly 10 years! Yes, that is a fact recorded in the history of the Christian church.

As I was reading this, I immediately remembered Revelation 2:10. It all added up as we say. The first age of Ephesus was well on its way out, and the second church age of Smyrna had arrived and was under way by 300 A.D. That church time frame experienced the greatest Christian persecution in the history of the "Christian" (used in the widest sense) church.

To me that is proof enough that there is a THIRD way to understand the churches of Revelation 2 and 3. The third way being general time frame ages for the Church of God.²

My view of this time frame is NOT AS the Worldwide Church of God taught it. I will explain as we proceed. Nobody should try to set dates in time ages with Church of God history. Those who do (as some have in the past) are going to find they are barking up the wrong tree, they are out on a limb that is going to come crashing down, and they are going to have mud all over their face. Then, what most, who can see that the "churches" of Revelation do have time ages in them, have not seen is that time ages can and do OVERLAP each other. Jesus preached the New Testament covenant and Kingdom of God, WHILE the old covenant was still in operation. The "overlapping" of church ages can be a period of hundreds of years.

EPHESUS

The city of Ephesus, was capital of proconsular Asia; an opulent city on the West coast of Asia Minor, located on the banks of the Cayster and about forty miles SE of Smyrna. Its harbor was ample. It was an ancient city. It came into the Roman Empire in 133 B.C. Paul conducted the longest of his ministries here (two years and nine months, Acts 19:8,10). The city's importance lay in its political prominence, its economical clout derived from its position on major trade routes, and its religious leadership as a center for the worship of Diana, or Artemis.

The temple of this goddess was one of the wonders of the seven wonders of the world. It was 180 feet wide and 377 feet long, and the roof was supported by 117 60-foot columns. These were 6 feet in diameter and 36 of them were sculptured at the base with life-size figures. There were many Jews in the city who were more or less influenced by Christianity (Acts 2:9; 6:9).

² **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Notice what Christ said to the churches with regards to His coming:

"I will come to you quickly" (Ephesus)

"I will come to you quickly" (Pergamos)

"I will come upon you as a thief" (Sardis)

"I come quickly" [no will this time] (Philadelphia)

"I am at the door" (Laodicea)

There is a progression of time that is seen in these phrases.

Contrary to Keith's claim, I recall the Worldwide Church of God did teach a degree of overlap with the church eras which I also support.

Timothy was the bishop of the church founded by Paul. According to Eusebius John spent his last years in Ephesus. John opposed the doctrines of Nestorius, and Paul opposed the idolatry of those who made or worshipped shrines or practiced magic (19:13). His opposition resulted in a serious riot. A small Turkish town today represents the once noted city, which is called Ayasuluk (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988, pp.366-367).

Here is the mention of the NICOLAITANS. A sect or party that arose in the apostolic period of the church, they are mentioned again in verse 15.

The "nicolaitans" are compared to those who "hold the teaching of Balaam." They were practitioners of idolatry, and the community of women was another doctrine which they are said to have adopted, and their conduct seems to have been in the highest degree licentious (Imperial Bible Dictionary, S.V.).

The word "nicolas" in Greek means "victor over the people."

The word "Ephesus" can mean "desirable."

Jesus, who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and who "walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, speaks. He knows they have good works, they have labor, and patience, and He knows how they cannot bear those who do evil; and they have tried, tested them who were saying they were apostles, but were not as far as God was concerned. They had found those individuals to be liars.

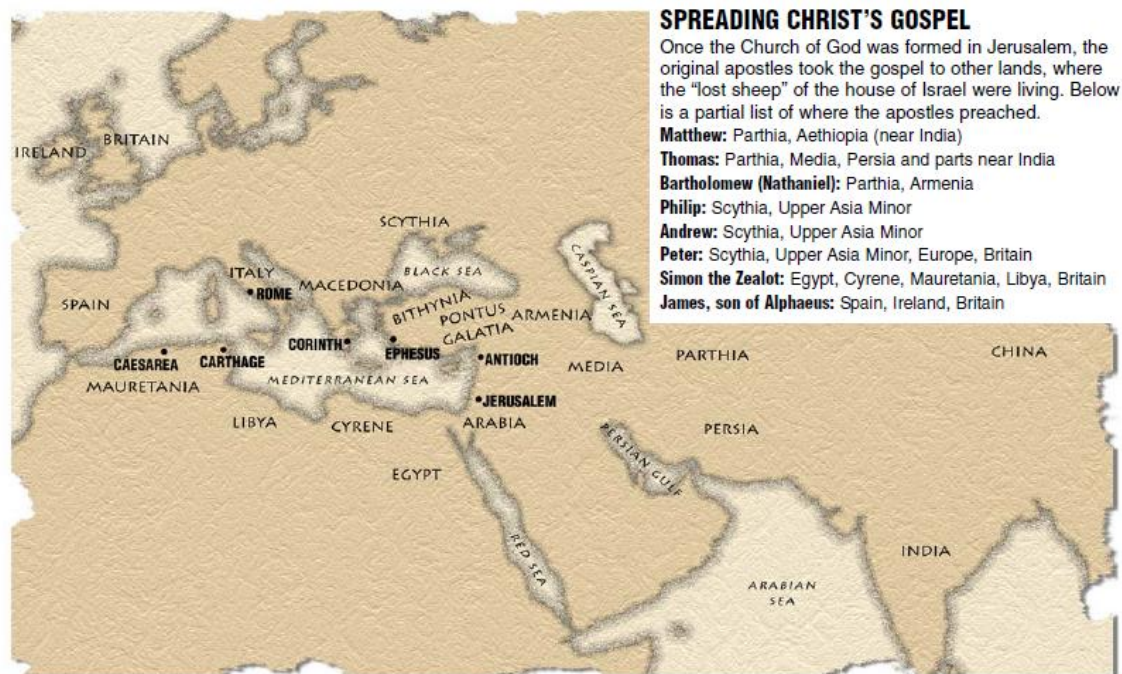
The way to test any man who claims to be a minister of God is by the Scriptures. Our wonderful example is Acts 17, when Paul was tested to see if he was speaking according to the Scriptures. Anyone can claim "anything." Words are cheap as they say. The acid test is do their words align with the words of God in the Scriptures of the whole Bible, and does their life correspond with their teaching.

Jesus knew what they had borne, what patience they had, and for His name they worked hard, and did not faint. BUT, in time, they had left their first love, their zeal for Christ's truth and Gospel got colder. They are told to REPENT! If they do not, their candlestick will be removed.

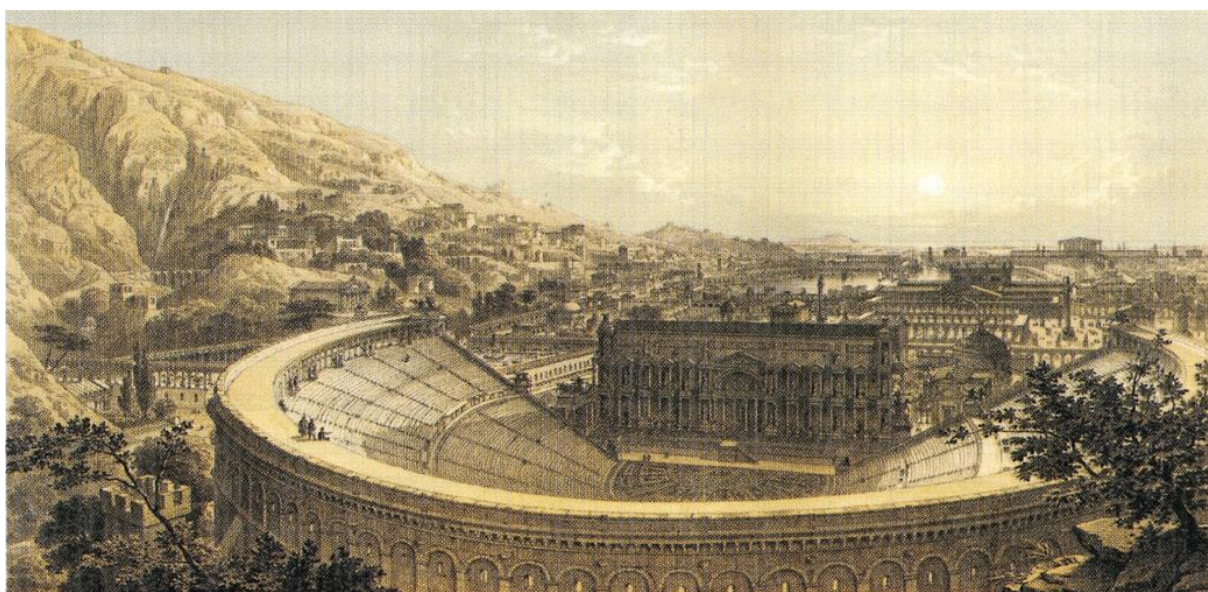
They did hate the ways and doctrines of the Nicolaitans, which Jesus also hated. They are to listen to what the Spirit says, "To him that overcomes will I (Jesus) give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

The paradise of God is explained to us in Revelation chapter 22:2,14. No private interpretation is needed, the Scriptures interpret themselves. The paradise of God is to dwell at the throne of God. It is to have eternal life in the very presence of the Most Holy One.

The personal application and lesson of this church is very obvious. Keep working hard for Christ's work of salvation and the Kingdom. Stay with the faith once delivered to the saints. Do not allow yourself to get complacent and having your love of God in you starting to get cold. Continue to hate anything that is a false theology.



This church of Ephesus fits right in with the time age of the first century of the Church of God, into the late second century. We have seen in the letters of Peter and John, that before they died, the faith once delivered was being corrupted. Many anti-christs had come on the scene, some came out from within the very Church of God, just as the apostle Paul had predicted (Acts 20).



The City of Ephesus

Many had remained faithful and had tested the spirits to see if they were truly from God. In the second century, Polycarp (a disciples of John the apostle) took the time and energy to travel to Rome to debate with the bishop of Rome, the practice of observing Passover and NOT Easter, as the Roman church was then already adopting. Then, later in the second century, Polycrates (a disciple of Polycarp) also went to Rome to debate with the Roman bishop the same truth but the Roman church was adopting false doctrines and would not repent or admit the truth of the matter.

By the time the Church of God was into the third century A.D. it was getting a cold heart, and was beginning to get apostatized. They did in the most part hate the teachings of the Nicolaitans.

If we take the word "nicolas" as it means "to rule over people" we see that the doctrine of the church government of Rome, and what finally came to be called the "Roman Catholic church" was swinging along into domineering the people. We saw that back in John's day, before he died, in his third epistle, we had one man taking over with dictatorial power one of the churches of God.

The Church of God continued maybe for a couple of centuries to get colder in heart and mind, to depart from the first love zeal. They did not as a whole, REPENT. It was now time for faithful people to move OUT and congregate as a body of people, that would be the time age of Smyrna.

The candle-stick of Ephesus was removed, just as Jesus said it would be if they did not repent!

SMYRNA

Smyrna means "myrrh" - a rich and prosperous city of Ionia, forty miles N of Ephesus, at the mouth of the small river Meles. Anciently it was one of the finest cities of Asia Minor and was called "the lovely - the crown of Ionia - the ornament of Asia." To its credit the church at Smyrna was still faithful, and against her no word of reproach was uttered. It was Polycarp's field of Christian usefulness, and here he suffered martyrdom, around A.D. 169. (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).



Ancient Smyrna

Jesus again reaffirms He was the first and the last - eternal. He was dead once, but is alive forever more. Jesus, as God in the flesh, did not exist for three days and three nights, He was as dead as a door nail, as the saying goes. If it was not for the power of the Father to raise Him back to life, He would still be dead, and we would have no salvation. we are saved not only by His death, but also by His life (Romans 5:10).

Jesus tells the church at Smyrna that their works, their tribulation and their poverty (but rich in the things that count) He knows well. He knows also those who claim to be spiritual Jews, but are indeed the synagogue or church of Satan, and what they claim is blaspheming. He tells these faithful followers of Him to not fear the things they may suffer: indeed the Devil will have some of them thrown into prison, to be tried. They will have tribulation ten days. If they will remain faithful unto death, He will give them a crown of life. Those who overcome and stay faithful, shall not suffer from the second death (chapter 20:14).

The second death is the lake of fire, which shall burn up the wicked, as they become ashes under the feet of the righteous. See my website study on "Death - Then What?" which also covers the subject of the second death, for the un-repentant wicked.

This is the church of ONLY TWO that have no reproaches said against them.

The truth for our spiritual lesson is obvious. Remain zealously faithful even unto death.

Church history shows that the largest and greatest "Christian" persecution was under Diocletian from 303 to 313 A.D. It was exactly 10 years. Using the prophetic day for a year principle (Ezekiel 4:6), we do then have a ten year great persecution against the truth of the Gospel.

The time age of the first church had ended, when is not known, but probably into the third century. False teachers had come, many by this time. The church at Rome was gaining power in numbers and doctrine. There was one last overall persecution by the Roman empire of anyone under the name of Christian from 303 to 313. It was Constantine who adopted Roman Christianity, won the battles to become Roman Emperor, and DECREED a stop to Christian persecution, at least against Roman Christianity. It was Constantine who brought in the Sunday laws in about 321 A.D.



The Roman church had been observing Sunday for some time, before Constantine gave the Sunday official status in the Roman Empire. Also the Roman church had been observing Easter instead of Passover for about 200 years by 313 A.D.

So it was that by 313 A.D. there were MANY, not the few, who claimed to be spiritual Jews, but God knew what they really were, they were deceived by Satan the Devil.

After 313 A.D. the focus of the Roman Empire was on persecution of those who differed with the Bishop of Rome, and the Roman Catholic (the word "catholic" means "universal") religion. For a number of hundreds of years the true Church of God was indeed under mighty persecution as we find in the church of Pergamos as the time of the age moved along.

PERGAMOS

Pergamum, a city in Asia Minor, about 200 miles from the sea. It had a vast library of 200,000 volumes at one time. In this town was first discovered the art of making parchment, which was called "pergamena." The city was greatly addicted to idolatry, and its grove, which was one of the wonders of the place, was filled with statutes and altars. Here was one of the seven churches of Revelation 2:13.

The wealth of the Attalic princes had raised Pergamum to the rank of the first city in Asia as regards splendor. It was a sort of union of pagan cathedral city, a university town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who all had a passion for expenditure and ample means of gratifying it (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).

Please read the above again. Let it sink in what you have read. Now, think about the city of ROME, in the Roman Empire until the Empire fell about 500 A.D. Even after that, think about Rome and the mighty influence it had in the world of Christianity, under kings and bishops that also wanted wealth and splendor. The connection should be obvious. Rome was the Pergamum of the Western world from the time of Constantine to the middle ages and the famous Protestant Reformation battle under Luther.

The spiritual lesson is clear. Do not mix idolatry or put any stumbling block before yourself that will lead you away from serving and obeying the way and life and laws of the true eternal God.

Jesus, who has the two edged sharp sword, the Word of God, says He knew His true followers in the Pergamos time age of the Church of God. He knew their works, And He knew that many of them lived where Satan's seat was. Now, was the old literal city of Pergamum, at the time of the last years of the first century when John was writing this revelation of Christ, the CENTER, the SEAT of Satan?

When you consider WHAT the city of ROME was becoming in the way of so-called "Christianity" by the end of the first century A.D. the city of Pergamum could not have been the SEAT of Satan! When you consider what Polycarp and Polycrates did in going to ROME over certain doctrinal issues, during the second century, it is clear that ROME was the SEAT of Satan.

Anti-pas can be a derivation of Anti-patris "instead of his father" - put in simple language, "instead of father" - against the "father" in the Roman Catholic churches. There was as some record the probability that a man by the name of Antipas was put to death in the city of Pergamum. But the time setting of it all could well fit the true church of God being against what the Roman Catholic church was teaching. The idolatry, things tied in with mystery spiritual fornication and idols, dressed up in Christian names is fitting during the powerful rise and domination of the Roman Catholic religion until the Protestant Reformation.

This is again brought out in verse 15, where we again meet the doctrines of the Nicolaitans - the rulership over people. The true church of God, hated as Jesus did, the teaching that individual people as pastors and bishops had FULL DICTATOR RULERSHIP over the people.



Ancient Pergamos sat atop of a mountain with a great theatre and was the home of the Temple of Zeus (left) which was thought to be the seat of Satan being referred to in the letter to Pergamos (in addition to the dual application of being Rome). Interestingly, this seat of Satan was removed and reconstructed in the Pergamon museum in Berlin, Germany. In the same museum is also the original Ishtar gate from Babylon. Germany, which will be the heart of the coming Babylonian Beast power, is now home to this "seat of Satan" and the main gate into Babylon.

Satan had a HUGE SEAT of POWER at ROME, the influence of the Roman Catholic religion for a 1,000 years and more, was staggering to say the least. It not only ruled the religious life of people, it was also very political, and governed much of secular life, such as claiming the earth was flat and other such teachings. It persecuted people who said the earth was NOT flat. It branded all who did not accept its teachings in theology and otherwise, as HERETICS.

So for hundreds of years God's people fought the religion of Rome. For the most part God's children remained faithful and true, BUT as it is with time, eventually the people of God caved in, got spiritually lazy, were slowly decaying. The church history of Britain shows as recorded by the famous Bede, that by 700 A.D. the Catholic church had gained strong footing in Britain.

Again, the Passover as observed by John and Polycarp, and brought to England, under the early apostles, was conquered by the Roman Easter. The 7th day Sabbath observation in Britain was finally destroyed by 1100 A.D. (The Welsh held on to it until that century).

By and into the second millennium A.D. God's people had to be told to REPENT, or that candlestick of the Pergamos time age, was going to be corrected very harshly by the mouth of the Lord. If the people of the Almighty would REPENT, they would then overcome and eat of the hidden manna, the true bread of life (Jesus in truth), be given a WHITE stone (white represents righteousness - see chapter 19:8), and in that stone a NEW name only known to that righteous person. Exactly what that "name" subject is all about ... well I cannot know to tell you, for only he that has receives it knows. Will it be such for all eternity, I cannot tell you the answer to that either.

All so far said, fits very well with the historical record of Church History up to the time of around about the Protestant Reformation, up to some time BEFORE and then INTO that historical time age is the church of Thyatira. As mentioned before, keep in mind that true church time ages can OVERLAP by sometimes hundreds of years.

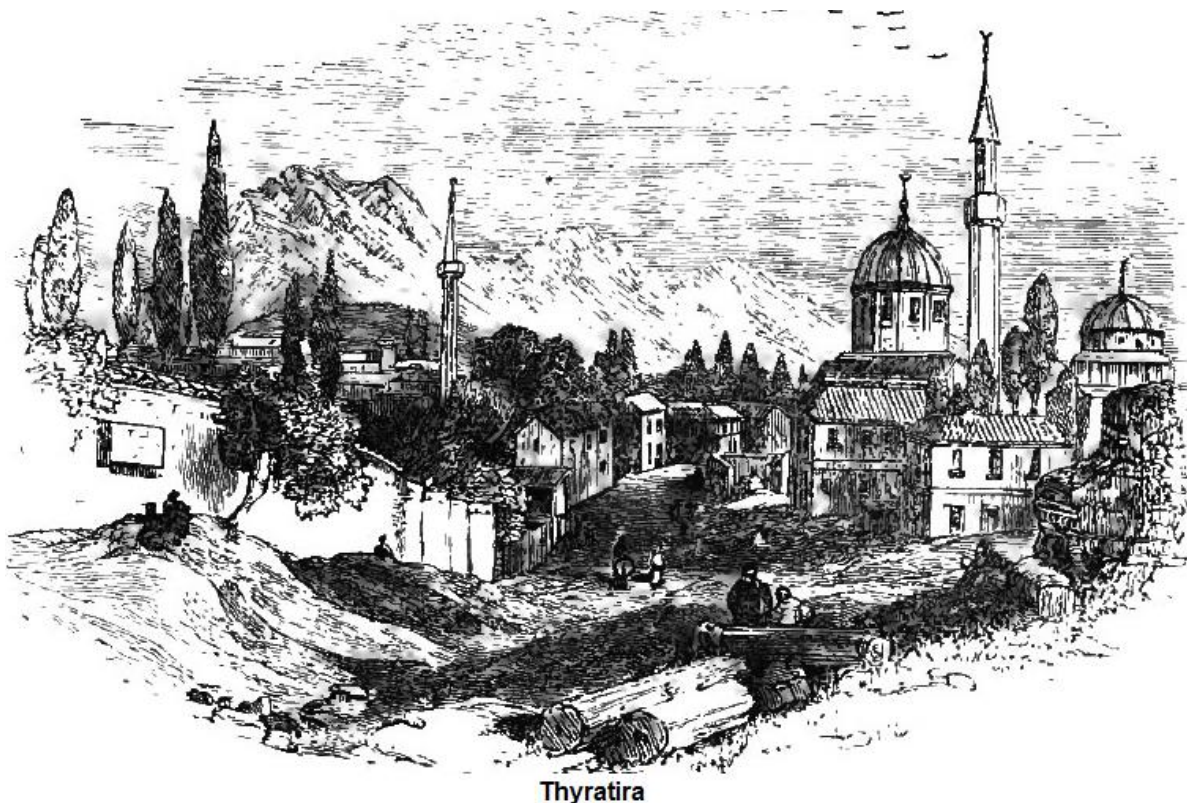
CHAPTER 12

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 4)

Revelation 3

THYATIRA

One of the seven churches of Asia Minor. It was situated a little south of the river Lycus and at the northern extremity of the valley between Mt. Tmolus and the southern ridge of Temnus. The waters of Thyatira are said to be so well adapted for dyeing that in no place can the scarlet cloth out of which fezes are made be so brilliantly or so permanently dyed as here. So in the Acts (16:4) Lydia, the first convert of Paul at Philippi is mentioned as "a seller of purple fabric" from Thyatira. The principal deity of the city was Apollo, and a priestess of Artemis is also mentioned in the inscriptions (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).



Ah, remember that important fact, a PRIESTESS is mentioned in that city. The color "scarlet/purple" is also connected with this city. Now read Revelation 18 and note the words "scarlet" and "purple" then go back to Revelation 17 and read verses 1-3,4,6 (blood is scarlet).

As most OLD Bible Commentaries tell you, what you are reading in chapter 17 and 18, is the mighty power of the state/church Roman Catholic Holy Roman Empire. And a "woman" as most will agree, represents in prophecy A CHURCH (see Rev.12 for that proof).

The Son of God, with eyes like unto a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass, speaks to Thyatira. "I know they works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first" (verse 18,19).

Jesus has a few things against them. There is a woman in the equation. She is called Jezebel, who says she is a prophetess. The Old Testament Jezebel comes to mind. Bottom line, she was against God and the truth of God, she was outwardly appealing, decked in her Sunday best as we say, but under it all was basic evil and deception. The people of God in this time age had got to the point where this "woman" was influencing them into spiritual fornication and various practices of idolatry.

God had given and allowed much time for her to REPENT, but she would not.

Note verse 22, there is a time coming when she will be cast into GREAT TRIBULATION, unless she repents. And then note verse 23. This woman church in scarlet and purple, will HAVE CHILDREN!! And unless they also repent, they will DIE! God will search the heart and He will give rewards according to works - good righteous works = good rewards; bad evil spiritual deceptive works = death.

This mighty religious power DID HAVE CHILDREN born out of her - they protested at their mother, and became the PROTESTANT churches movement. They all have SOME spiritual fornications that their mother has.

God gives encouragement to those who have not fallen for the DEPTHS of Satan. Satan comes at times, maybe most of the time, as an angel of LIGHT! It all looks good outwardly. The Roman Catholic church looks nice and good - many of its leaders do good works, with different less fortunate people around the world. It speaks truth many times, it has an outward form that makes it sound very "Christian" religious. She is somewhat MYSTERIOUS in her form of religion, especially to those who are far from her rites and outward dress and ceremonies.

This time age of Thyatira is from some hundreds of years BEFORE and some few hundred years AFTER the PROTESTANT children were born to her. But unless mother and children REPENT they will all come to nothing and will have to be killed.

Jesus tells the church of Thyatira, the people, to hold fast to the true faith once delivered to the saints. And he that does so, and keeps Jesus' works to the end, shall have rulership over the nations, they shall share with Jesus the ruling of the nations during the 1,000 year Kingdom of God on earth (verses 25-27).

They will also inherit the MORNING STAR! Again no need to guess what that is. The Bible interprets itself. Turn to Revelation 22:16. There it is. Now isn't it wonderful that the Scriptures interpret themselves. The morning star is JESUS the CHRIST! Those that remain faithful in the true ways of the Lord will inherit JESUS HIMSELF, meaning they will be His brothers and sisters in ETERNITY. What could be more wonderful and splendid than for all eternity to have Jesus call you His brother or sister. Do you remember in the Gospels Jesus once said, "Who is my mother, my brother, and my sister, but they who DO the WILL of my Father in heaven."

It was a long time age for the people of the church of Thyatira. They were persecuted and often killed for their stance against the doctrines and the depth of

Satan as he governed the mighty Holy Roman Empire. That is why this woman "Jezebel" in chapters 17 is said to have become DRUNK by the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (Rev.17:6). And she also is said to have made the inhabitants of the earth drunk by her spiritual fornication. She is also in bed with the kings and rulers of the earth, she is a political as well as a spiritual Jezebel.

The personal lesson is that the ways of Satan can be DEEP - mentally understand them, but do not KNOW them in relation to how you live and worship the true God.

SARDIS

Sardis was a western Asia Minor city fifty miles E of Smyrna. It was located on important commercial routes running east and west through the rich kingdom of Lydia, of which it was the capital. It was also made wealthy by textile manufacturing and jewelry making. Wealthy Sardis citizens took up with mystery cults, notably with that of Cybele (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).



Ancient Sardis

Jesus says He has the seven Spirits and the seven stars. Yes, He is in charge of his church. He knows their works, they live but yet are dead.

Probably during the Protestant Reformation and certain some time after it, the Sardis church time age came into being. The Protestant Reformation did do one thing for God's people. It brought a new zeal of LIGHT into God's children, a new spiritual age had come for the truths of the Lord to be proclaimed loud and strong BY SOME of the Church of God. The SEVENTH DAY Sabbath was loudly proclaimed by SOME. A FEW even taught the keeping of the Festivals of Leviticus 23 - the Feasts of the Lord. The truth of who and where the House of Israel had wandered to, the truth of the tribe of Joseph and who they had become, was proclaimed loud and strong. The truth of water baptism by full immersion was taught by many of God's people. The truth of the SECOND coming of Jesus in glory, back to this earth, in literal form, was proclaimed by some in the Church of God. The truth of the depth of Satan and the mysteries of Babylon as found in the Roman Catholic religion was

shouted from the housetops by some in the Church of God. All of this and more, was done by SOME in the congregations of the Lord. We had now entered the Sardis time age for the body of Christ. God's people were SPIRITUALLY LIVE with zeal ... WELLLLL some of them were. For a few hundred years or so, (especially, and even to this day as it will be till Christ comes) after the Protestant Reformation, God's people were ALIVE yet DEAD.

The Lord Jesus tells them to be WATCHFUL, to STRENGTHEN the things that remain, truths that remain, but yet are ready to die! God has not found the works of wishy-washy Christians perfect. There were and STILL ARE the descendants of God's people from the Reformation period, who are barely hanging on to certain truths of the word of God. They DID HEAR, Jesus says they did, they are to get and HOLD FAST, to REPENT! The lesson for us? Love the truth, love searching the Scriptures, desire to grow in grace and knowledge, prove all things and HOLD FAST to that which is good.

Now here's where many have not understood church ages. They can OVERLAP each other, sometimes by hundreds of years. This age of the Sardis church will STILL BE ON THIS EARTH WHEN JESUS COMES BACK. If they do NOT repent and WAKE UP from spiritual slumber, Jesus will come in an hour they think not, as a thief in the night, unexpected. So this Sardis church time age IS STILL WITH US, and will be right up to the coming of Christ!

In this body of people there are SOME who have NOT defiled themselves. They were willing to LEARN, be CORRECTED, willing to GROW in grace and knowledge. Some were still searching the Scriptures and so were able to be led into MORE truth and light by the Spirit of God. They were willing to buck the trend, swim up-stream, when everyone else was going with the flow down-stream. Jesus says to those people, that they shall walk with Him in WHITE, for they are WORTHY!

So from the Protestant Reformation or thereabouts have been the Sardis people of God, and they will still be there at Christ's coming, but only a relative FEW will walk with Jesus in white.

For those who overcome that "dead" attitude of mind, they will be clothed in white raiment, and their names will NOT be BLOTTED OUT of the book of life. Their names Jesus will confess before the Father, and the angels.

As we shall see in the last two church time ages they also will be in existence when Jesus comes again. We shall have THREE ages of the Church of God in existence when the end comes and Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

And that all makes good sense for when the rubber meets the road, there can only be THREE types of spirituality in the overall world of Christianity concerning the true body of Christ. The ones who are in the main spiritually DYING, they are not looking to grow in grace and knowledge; the ones who are fully and zealously remaining STRONG in all the truths of God, and willing to grow; and the ones who THINK they are spiritually just great, but are really SICK and have become BLINDED through their own self-righteousness and affluent physical riches (they are sickly luke-warm), not wanting to be shown any errors.

We'll finish with the last two churches of Revelation next time.

CHAPTER 13

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 5)

After the Protestant Revolution, it was getting much easier for the true people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ, to openly proclaim all truths found in the Bible, without being persecuted even to death. The Church of God was then, as is put in Revelation, "alive." But, as nearly always happens, over time, the zeal FOR truth as well as the zeal to PROCLAIM it, starts to dwindle. Whatever the time frame was (God knows) it was true that the Church of God was alive, but yet they were in many ways "dead."

And when this happens, Jesus, who is in charge of His Church, moves SOME within His body the church, to move on out so to speak and form other individual local groups and/or a work that has many local groups co-operating together, to proclaim the Gospel around the world.

So it was, no time date to pin-point it, but from what we can see from church history, it was probably in the 1700 A.D. and after, that the people who would be the 6th time frame, or the church of Philadelphia came on the scene of the world.

I want you to take special note of the below, taken from the New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

PHILADELPHIA

"Philadelphia – 'Brotherly love' - A city in Lydia of Asia Minor. It was built by Attalus II (Philadelphus), whose name it bears. It was situated on the lower slopes of the Tmolus, about 28 miles SW of Sardis and 100 miles W of Smyrna. It has been several times almost destroyed by earthquakes. Its name is now Alasehir, 'city of God.' The town is an unimportant place of 15 to 20 000 people."



Philadelphia

Jesus says He is holy, true, and has the key of David, He opens and no man shuts, He shuts and no man opens. Jesus is in charge of His church. And He is the One to give it power to go here or there and spread the Gospel in this manner or that manner.

The key of David? As David had the key to his house so to speak, had authority and power over his house, so Jesus has authority over His house, His church, and can execute whatever judgment as He needs to for the keeping of His house. As Jesus said, He would build His church and the gates of hell or the grave would never prevail against it.

Jesus knows the works of this people in this time age of His church. There will be an open door for them to proclaim the truths of God and the Gospel, and until Jesus says differently, no man can shut that door. Certainly the modern worldwide INTERNET is maybe the greatest open door for teaching the truths of God all around the earth. And it will for now only get more so with the Internet, as modern space age technology develops.

If you noticed above about today's literal town of Philadelphia in Turkey (Asia Minor), it is UNIMPORTANT, SMALL, IT HAS THEN LITTLE STRENGTH as such. The true people of God have always been the relatively SMALL unimportant, in the view of the world, religious group of Christians. Jesus once said that His followers would be the VERY LITTLE flock (as the Greek reads). On the whole they would have very little strength, very little compared to the Babylon Mystery Catholic church. It would be something like Elijah in his day, when he lamented that to the Lord that he was the only person NOT bowing the knee to Baal. God answered him by saying he was wrong, because God had 7,000 others out there, here and there, that had not bowed the knee to Baal.

It is true, the VERY ELECT, are few and far between, they are the SALT of the earth, the very little flock. A few here and a few there, one here and two or three there, scattered around the world. So it has been for the last 500 years or so. But they have been there, and the door to spread the Gospel has been open in various ways, personal evangelism, written words of evangelism, broadcasts over radio, TV, and now the Internet. The true people of God have had an open door which no man can shut. At the present that door remains open.

God's people in these end time hundreds of years, have NOT DENIED His name, and have been willing to KEEP His word. They are faithful. They are the ones who strive for the faith once delivered to the saints. They are willing to grow in grace and knowledge, willing to be taught, be corrected, willing to be humble and submissive to the leading of the Spirit of God.

We have had people in the last few hundred years who kept the 7th day Sabbath, and who observed and proclaimed the keeping of the Festivals of God. We had the black man working on the trains in the late 1800s who just read his Bible and came to see the Festivals of Leviticus 23 should be observed, and raised up a good work among other black people.

We had the Seventh Day Adventist minister in the very early 1900s who came to see the Festivals of God should be observed, had his study paper printed in the worldwide Adventist magazine, and some SDA churches in South America were

willing to agree and observe those Festivals. We had minsters in the 1930s in the Church of God, Seventh Day, who came to admit those Festivals should be observed. Some formed their own organizations [such as the Worldwide Church of God which was by FAR the one that made the most impact on this world with the Plain Truth magazine and World Tomorrow program – Editor RW] and spread the word of God.

We have SDA ministers like Samuele Bacciocchi PhD. who admit the Festivals of the Lord should be observed, and some in the SDA church DO observe them.

So the word of God is not denied, the name of God and what He stands for is not denied. They are few relatively speaking, but they do have an open door. One day the world will have to admit, come before those people made immortal, and actually worship at their feet. Yes, those people will then be in the God Family, and worshipping before them, will be natural, as they will have the name of God in their character. All that I fully explain in my study called "A Christian's Destiny."

Yes, the world, and the false Christianity in it, the BILLION plus will have to one day admit, those few with outward little strength WERE and ARE the very sons and daughters of God the Father. They will KNOW THEN that God truly DID LOVE those few!

And because they did KEEP the word of Christ's PATIENCE, which is interpreted for us in Revelation 14:12 as KEEPING the COMMANDMENTS of God and the FAITH of Jesus Christ, they will, a part of them (this is another of those "general" statements used in the Bible) be KEPT SAFE from the hour of TRIBULATION or Temptation to come on the WHOLE world (see Rev. 12:14-16; Luke 21:36).

Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly; hold FAST what you have, that no man take away thy crown" (verse 11).

Yes, when the prophecy of this book of Revelation REALLY starts to unfold, when we are down to the last 42 months, 1260 days of the close of this age, then Jesus WILL COME QUICKLY! The point is when Jesus is ready to come quickly, there will be true faithful people of God on this earth, doing the work of God, going through the open door set before them to teach, to preach, to expound the prophecies of Revelation and all the prophetic books of the Bible. They will be spreading the Gospel and warning the nations of this earth what will take place as the Lord has declared. For a short while God will stop His word going but by the two witnesses of Revelation 11. But until then His children will have an open door set before them.

Those at this end time who do overcome the world and Satan, will be some of the very "pillars" of glorified perfection in the Temple of God. They will have the VERY NAME of GOD, and in type symbolism the name of NEW Jerusalem, which will come down from God eventually (as shown in Revelation 21, 22). And they will have, in whatever way Jesus means it, HIS NEW NAME!

All of this for the true faithful children of God at the close of this age (which remember can cover a number of hundreds of years).

LAODICEA

"The town was located on a flat-topped hill. A wall (about a kilometer long on each side of its four sides) surrounded the crown of the hill. The Laodicean condition describes the spiritual lukewarmness and worldliness that will prevail in the professing church of Christ at the end of the age. Rich, cultured, religiously ritualistic - this church will have become so self-satisfied and worldly as to have ostracised Christ completely. He is represented prophetically as standing on the outside knocking for admission (Rev. 3:20). The awful spiritual condition, so utterly abhorrent to God, calls forth one of the boldest figures used in the NT, 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth' (Rev. 3:16 cf. 2 Tim.3:1-8 for the spiritual and moral condition at the end of the church age)" (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).



Ancient Laodicea was a rich, wealthy city. It piped in hot water from the nearby mountains and cold water from a river some distance away. The water would lose either heat or cold due to travelling some way and would often be lukewarm and not useful, which parallels the spiritual condition of Laodicea.

As it happens so often, because of time and human nature twisted by the help of Satan the Devil, there will be a people during the whatever decades or more (maybe a few hundred years) who will still be at the very close of the age, in a Laodicean mind-set. Jesus says He is the Amen! The faithful and true witness of His very own body - the Church of God. He is the beginner (as it should be understood) of the creation of God. Yes, Jesus was the ONE who DID the creating in Genesis chapter one. All that subject is covered in various studies on my website.

Jesus knows their work, that they are neither hot nor cold, they are resting with their feet up, in a self-righteous manner, and so because of it, because they are "lukewarm" He will spit them out of His mouth.

Look at their attitude. They say they are "rich and increased with goods; and have no need of anything." They must be saying, "I'm physically blessed so God must be rewarding me for serving Him, in the way I do." Or "I have all I need, physically and spiritually, I have the truth, so I'm just fine."

Jesus answers them, "You know not that you are WRETCHED, and MISERABLE, and POOR, and BLIND, and NAKED...." What language Jesus uses, He is really telling them the naked truth (excuse the pun)! These people will not even come close to trying to see WHERE and HOW they are short of the maturity of spirituality. They have deceived themselves into thinking it's all over, just hang on to what they have

had, or what they NOW have as thinking it is the better truth than what they had before, but in reality it is going back into UN-truth. Either way, they have deceived themselves, and they are really WRETCHED and BLIND and NAKED, they have no white garment of the righteousness of God, in reality, but they think they are wearing a spotless white robe.

When you lose the desire to LEARN, to be CORRECTED, to GROW in grace and knowledge, when you lose the desire to HUNGER and THIRST after RIGHTEOUSNESS, then you are Laodicean! The personal lesson should be clearly evident.

Christ counsels them to buy of Him GOLD tried in the fire. He wants them to have the REAL spirituality that makes a difference, actually the difference of life or death. Then He says they can have true riches, and a WHITE garment, so they are then clothed in the correct outfit for His wedding (see Rev.19:7-9). And so being clothed properly their spiritual nakedness does not appear and does not bring them shame. Jesus wants them to anoint themselves with EYESALVE, get their eyes open and have true vision, so they can SEE the spiritual reality and truth that is REALLY of God, and not man-made.

Jesus WILL CORRECT! He will REBUKE! He does it because He loves people. He wants people to REPENT! He stands at the door of our hearts and minds, wanting us to OPEN to Him, so He can come in and have a FEAST with us on truth and righteousness. If people WILL REPENT, admit the error, go the right way, do the correct thing, be HUMBLE, then He can come into them. And those who will open to Him, can sit with Him at His throne (during the millennium age - Rev.20:1-4), just as He sat down with the Father at His throne, when He went back to heaven after His resurrection from death.

There will be, there already IS ... THREE church time ages in existence today. They are overlapping each other, maybe by hundreds of years.

There is the walking dead, with only a few in clothes of white and still have their names in the book of life. There is the true faithful, who have found and are remaining true to the faith once delivered to the saints, and there are the "rich" in their OWN eyes, who will not see their wretchedness, who will not admit error and sins and all that makes them spiritually naked.

CHURCH ERA	EVENTS
Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7)	Apostolic era (A.D. 31-98). Persecution begins at Rome (A.D. 64). Church flees to Pella; Jerusalem falls (A.D. 69-70).
Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11)	Church leaders attempt to combat heresy (A.D. 150s-190s). Ten years severe persecution (Rev 2:10; A.D. 303-313). Nicene Council outlaws true religion; Church flees (A.D. 325).
Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17)	Constantine of Mananali leads Church (about A.D. 675). Sergius leads Church (about A.D. 800). Paulicians relocate to Balkans (about A.D. 800-900).
Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29)	Peter DeBruys and Henry of Lausanne lead Church (1104-1135). Peter Waldo leads Church (1161-1217). RC Inquisition begins against Church (1229). Gutenberg Bibles printed (1450). RC persecution for the 1,260 years restrained after 1585. Destruction of Spanish Armada (1588).
Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6)	Church revives in England as persecution abates (1600s). Bampfields and Stennetts lead Church (about 1650-1750). Stephen Mumford establishes Church in America; 1668. Arriving immigrants set up churches in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (1700s). Many depart Church to align with Adventists (1840s-1860s). Church of God Seventh Day established in Stanberry, Mo. (early 1900s).
Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13)	Herbert W. Armstrong begins first radio broadcast (1934). Radio broadcast begins in Europe (1953). Literature, TV and radio reach over 100 million (1970-1980s). Mr. Armstrong dies (1986).
Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22)	Remnants fragment after apostasy.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Above is a chart showing key events from each church era as per the more common understanding of church eras within the Church of God.

My prayer for you dear reader is that you will be a pillar in the Temple of God, and have written on you the name of God, and be given Jesus' new name (verse 3:12).

Church	Title	Verses	Problem/Praise
Ephesus	The Loveless Church	Rev 2: 1-7	Forsook its 1 st Love
Smyrna	The Persecuted Church	Rev 2: 8-11	Suffered Persecution
Pergamos	The Compromising Church	Rev 2: 12-17	Needed to Repent
Thyatira	The Corrupt Church	Rev 2: 18-29	Had a False Prophetess
Sardis	The Dead Church	Rev 3: 1-6	They Fell Asleep
Philadelphia	The Faithful Church	Rev 3: 7-13	Endured Patiently
Laodicea	The Lukewarm Church	Rev 3: 14-22	Had Lukewarm Faith

CHAPTER 14

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 6)

Revelation 4

John is in vision in heaven, he sees a throne and One sat on the throne. A voice like trumpet says "Come, and I will show you things that must be hereafter (verse 1-2).

He that sat on the throne looked like the crystalline brightness of jasper and the fiery sardius (Amplified Bible), and a rainbow of emerald round about the throne. There were 24 "elders" sitting on 24 seats, they were clothed in white and on their heads was a golden crown (verses 3-4).

We are not given any information about the elders, we speculate they were created beings of the Father just as angels are. We do know for certain, from the Scriptures, they are not human beings that were glorified in immortality. There proceeded from the throne lightnings, thunder and voices: seven lamps of fire were burning, which were to represent the Seven Spirits of God, which were the seven angels of the seven churches we have just finished reading about. Before the throne was a sea of glass looking like that of crystal.

Four "beasts" were around and in the midst of the throne, they had eyes before them and behind them. The first beast was like a "lion" - the second like a "calf" - the third like a "man" - the fourth like a "flying eagle." Each beast had six wings that were full of eyes all over them. They did not rest or sleep, all day and night (not that there is night in heaven - just a way of saying - continually) but said, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." When those beasts give thanks and honor to Him that sat on the throne, then the 24 elders would fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and would cast their crowns down before the throne (verses 5-10).

The last verses indicated the four creatures did not keep saying "Holy, holy, holy etc. 24/7. But when they did praise, then the elders would bow down, and would say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive glory, honor, and power, for thou hast created all things; and for Thy PLEASURE they are and were created."

Interesting are those last few words. God takes pleasure in creating things.



The four living creatures and the 24 elders bowing before the Throne.

He has the emotion of "pleasure" - enjoyment in various things He creates. He is an artist, likes to create even for just the fun of it, and the warm pleasure He get from

His creations. We sometimes forget that God, who made us, with emotions, has those same emotions also. It should not surprise us, as God said in the beginning, "Let us make man in our image." And so He did, even with the emotions He has, He gave to use also. When you read through the Bible take note at all the different emotions God has.

Revelation 5

God the Father, who is the One sitting on that heavenly throne, had in His right hand a scroll shut tight with SEVEN seals. An angel goes forth proclaiming, "Who is worthy to open the book and loose the seven seals?"

There was no one (as the Greek should read) in heaven, or on earth, or anywhere else for that matter, who was found worthy, either to open or even look upon the book. John said he wept, because no one was found worthy to open the seals and into the book. Then an elder came forth to John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; the root of David; has prevailed; He is worthy to open the book and loose the seven seals." This is of course talking about Jesus the Christ. He is worthy to loose the seven seals and read the book.

John looks and behold he sees a Lamb (meaning the Son of man, Jesus) in the midst of the four beasts and the 24 elders. The Lamb looked like it had been slain, and it had seven horns and seven eyes, which represented the seven Spirits sent forth into the earth.



**The scroll sealed with
7 seals.**

Seven is God's number for COMPLETION or PERFECTION. Jesus came and took the book out of the hand of Him sitting on the throne. As Jesus takes the book, the 4 beasts and 24 elders bow or prostrate themselves before Him, each of them has a harp type musical instrument, and golden vials which are full of incense, which represent the prayers of the saints.

They sang a new song, saying: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals, for you were slain, and did redeem THEM (is the correct reading) - humans - to God by Thy blood, from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And has made THEM unto our God, kings and priests; and THEY shall reign on earth (verses 1-10).

Yes, the saints, those redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb will be under Christ, kings and priests during the 1,000 years of the Kingdom of God on earth, and so then shall reign on EARTH, not up in heaven. So is the truth of all your Bible, as I have elsewhere fully explained in various studies.

John hears the voices of many angels, beasts, and the elders, around the throne, the number being ten thousand times ten thousand [10 million] ... and thousands of thousands ... now that was a mighty lot indeed, and they said, "Worthy is the Lamb

that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

John then in symbolic form, not in any literal way, hears every creature in earth's heaven, on the earth, in the sea, all saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." It is that all creation is acknowledging the Most High and His Son Jesus the Christ.

Then we are told the four beasts said, "AMEN! And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that lives for ever and ever."

What a scene, now if Hollywood would try to duplicate that on the big screen, with their modern computer animation effects, what an effect that would be. It would take your breath away!

Revelation 6

The First Four Seals

We read at the beginning of this book that it is the REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST, so it is fitting that the interpretation of the seals of the book, be revealed to us BY Jesus Christ. And they are. The interpretation of them is found in the book of Matthew, chapter 24.

You will notice in verse 5 of Matthew 24 what Jesus gave as the SIGNS leading up to His visible and bodily return to this earth.

The first sign was people coming in His name, saying that Jesus was indeed the Christ, but would DECEIVE the MANY, not the few. Then there would be WARS and talk of war. Then comes FAMINE. Then comes PESTILENCE.

Going back to Revelation 6. We have: THE WHITE HORSE, but the rider has a bow. Jesus has a sword when He is depicted in prophecy.

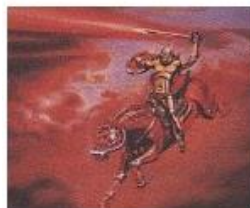
THE 4 HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE



THE 1ST SEAL

THE WHITE HORSE - FALSE RELIGION

Revelation 6:2 Matthew 24:4-5



THE 2ND SEAL

THE RED HORSE - WORLD WAR

Revelation 6:3-4 Matthew 24:6-7



THE 3RD SEAL

THE BLACK HORSE - FAMINE

Revelation 6:5-6 Matthew 24:7



THE 4TH SEAL

THE PALE HORSE - DISEASE

Revelation 6:8 Matthew 24:7

This white horse rider goes forth to conquer. This first seal is the RELIGIOUS DECEPTION on the earth, under the name of Christ, and white righteousness. It will deceive the MANY!

THE RED HORSE, is the second seal of the book, and it is WARFARE on the earth. THE BLACK HORSE, is the third seal, and him on this horse has balances, to weigh the wheat and barley, and be careful with the oil and wine. Obviously this is FAMINE!

THE PALE HORSE and its rider, represents DEATH, WITH A MIXTURE OF the above two seals. The fourth part of the earth is given to this rider and seal. There will be death via the sword, hunger, beasts of the earth, and death.

This is the PESTILENCE of Matthew 24. And what a pestilence it will be. This seal alone is horrific, nothing like it in the history of mankind, up to the opening of this seal of the book.

The Fifth Seal

Back in Matthew 24, Jesus goes on to talk about, His followers being delivered up to be afflicted and even killed, verse 9.

Back in Revelation 6:9-11, we find in symbolic form the saints under the altar (sure are not there in any physical or real living way, would be pretty crowded under the heavenly altar. And knowing the truth about death, we know the saints do not go on living when they die - so this is figuratively speaking) crying out to God that they should be avenged. They died for the faith once delivered, for obeying the Word of God.



THE 5TH SEAL

MARTYRDOM OF CHRISTIANS

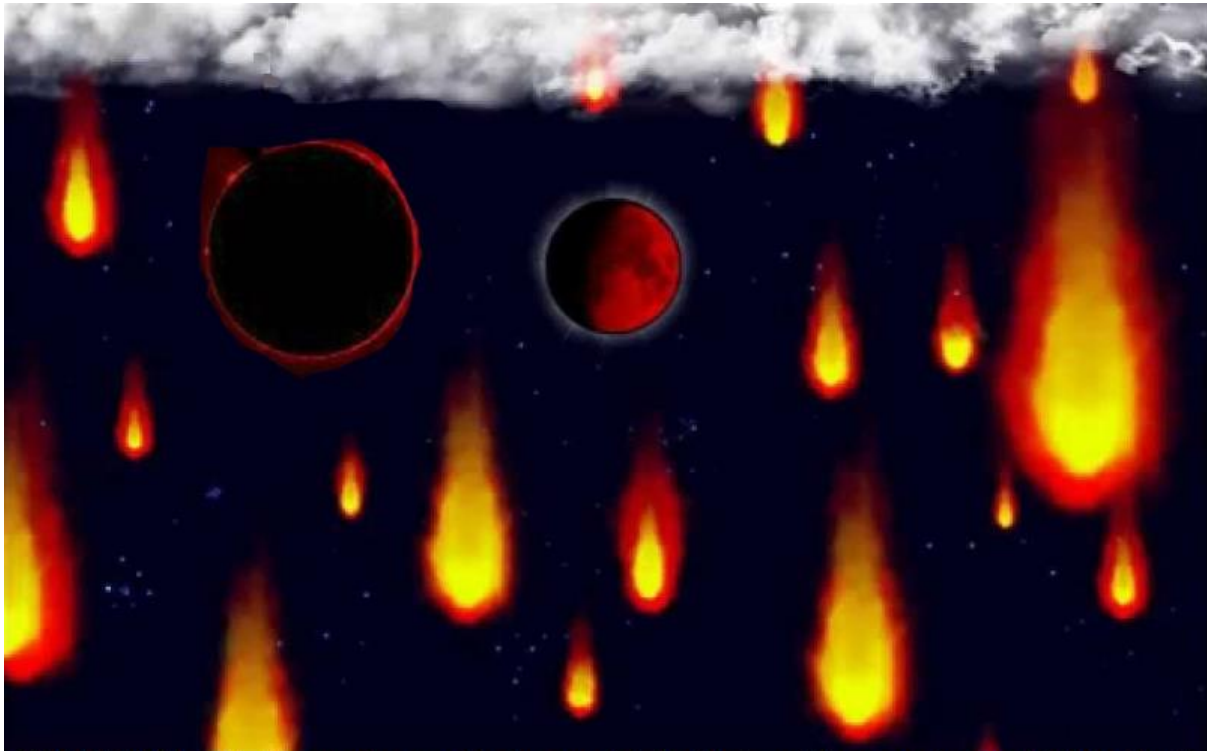
Revelation 6:9-11, 12:17 Matthew 24:9

Figuratively then, all the children of God from the time of Adam, and especially those who had to die for the true faith, are asking God when they can expect to be avenged. They are in the vision, dressed in white robes, yes, white robes to represent the righteousness of God (chapter 19:7-8), and one important Bible definition of righteousness is found in Psalm 119:172 - all of God's commandments are righteousness.

They are told they have to yet wait for a season, because some of their fellow servants or saints, must yet be killed for the faith, before Jesus comes again to earth (verse 11). We shall again see in other chapters of Revelation, that this fact is so very true. There will yet come another great killing of the true saints of God.

The Sixth Seal

THE SIXTH SEAL IS OPENED, and what do we have, but unthinkable and devastating signs in the universe. There will be a massive earthquake, the sun will become as black as sackcloth of hair, the moon as blood. The stars or chunks of meteors will fall from heaven to earth, just as the leaves or fruit of the fig tree drop to the ground in a violent storm.



THE 6TH SEAL - "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood and the stars of heaven fell to the earth" (Rev. 6:12-13).

The heavens will be kind of rolled up and mountains will be leveled and islands moved from their place in the waters and seas. People of all ranks, from kings to the farmers will try to hide themselves in the caves of the earth. They will for a time realize there is a God in heaven and they want to hide from Him and His son. That will be somewhat short lived, for we will read later that even as the MIGHTY day of God's WRATH is unfolding, many will still continue to curse Him and stay in their sins.

In Matthew 24; after the GREAT TRIBULATION and the killing of the people of God (which by the way will not only be the saints but it is the time also when Judah - the Jews, and all the tribes of Israel including the English speaking nations will be taken captive and at least two thirds will die by the time the DAY OF THE LORD arrives), there will be the HEAVENLY SIGNS, read Matthew 24:15-28; then note verse 29! There it is, Jesus interprets Himself - the heavenly signs come AFTER the killing of some of the saints of God.

It is CLEAR, it is a one, two, three - the KILLING of saints, THEN the HEAVENLY SIGNS, THEN Revelation 6:17 - THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD, THE DAY OF GOD'S WRATH COMES ON THE EARTH.

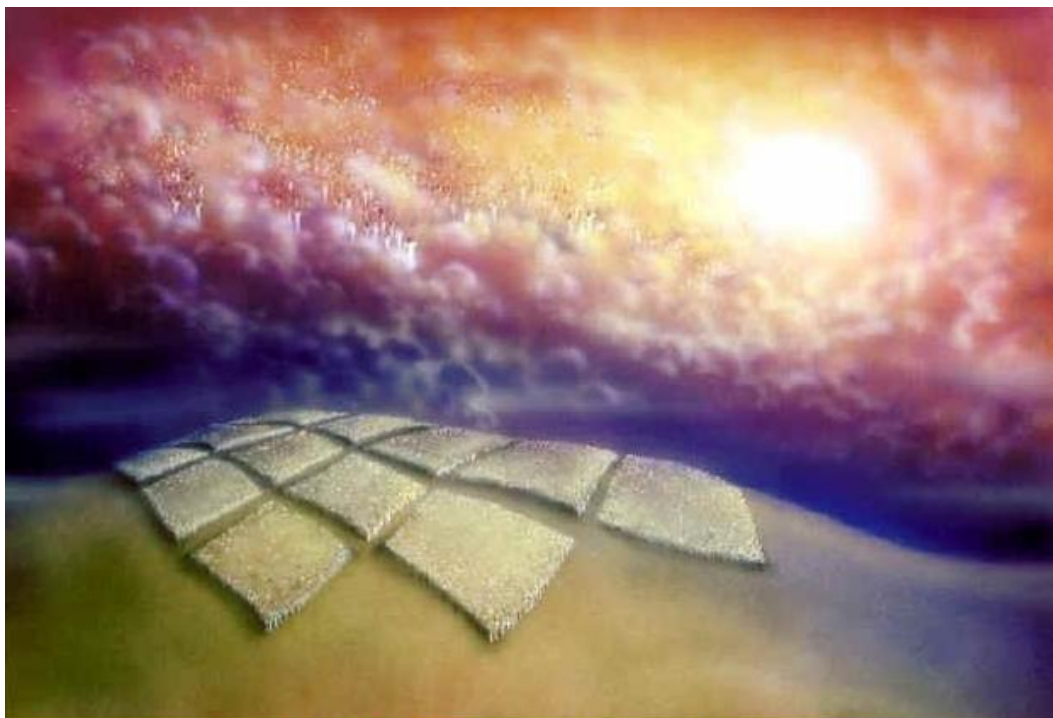
I have put MANY studies on my website to prove what Revelation 6 and Matthew 24 is all about. I ask the reader to study them all as they are much more detailed than what I can cover here.

The Day Of The Wrath Of God

Revelation 6:17 is the start of the prophetic DAY OF THE LORD. As prophecy does often use a day to represent a year (Ezekiel 4:6), as just about all who try to understand prophecy will agree, then it COULD be possible that the DAY OF THE LORD, the DAY OF HIS WRATH, will be about ONE YEAR in length (Isaiah 34:8). Notice I said "could be" and "ABOUT" one year in length. Do not make the mistake of COUNTING on that, and have mud on your face if that year comes and goes and Jesus has not yet returned. If you are alive when all these things happen, then I can tell you that once into the Day of the Lord, Jesus will not be FAR from coming back, but do not set your mind on a "calendar" date.

Revelation 7

Read it for what it is and simply BELIEVE it! We are into an INTERLUDE from opening the SEVENTH SEAL. That seal is not opened until chapter 8, see it for yourself, notice 8:1. There that's easy right? Yes indeed it is. Four angels hold back the four winds of the earth - an interlude time. Then another angel from the east having THE SEAL of God shouts to the four angels, which will hurt the earth once they are allowed to blow their winds. They are told to, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have SEALED the servants of our God in their foreheads. This is being sealed with the Holy Spirit of God that will for these people not only the means salvation in them, but protection from the physical harm to come on the earth during the Day of God's wrath. Saints are sealed with the Holy Spirit in having salvation, see Ephesians 1:3.



The 144 000 of Revelation 7 and 14.

The 144 000

The sealing of these specific people is given to us. All we need do is read it for what it says. 12,000 from each tribe of Israel will be SEALED! Pure and simple is chapter 7:1-8. I do not know why the tribe of Dan is not included. I guess we'll have to ask Jesus about that when He comes back.

The Great Multitude

Revelation 7 verses 9-17 are NOT a part of the "story flow" - they are INSET verses. We have just seen that 12,000 from each tribe of Israel are sealed for salvation. As the thought was on sealing, the Lord Jesus wants you to know that "sealing" for salvation is NOT JUST an "Israelite" prize or gift. So we are in our story put FORWARD in time, to when the RESURRECTION of ALL saints has happened, and all from all nations of the earth are standing and LIVING in the very presence of God the Father and Jesus the Christ. They have attended the WEDDING of the Lamb as His bride, they are dressed in white robes (see chapter 19:7-9).

They are shouting, or singing, "Salvation to our God, which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb (Jesus)." The angels, the four beasts of heaven, the elders, all fall down, bow down, and worship God. They say, "Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

An elder speaks up and asks what are these people that are dressed in white robes, and from where do they come. Now, he probably asks this FOR OUR SAKE, so we today can know from where they come. The elder in heaven I would think, would really know, but for our sake today, the question is asked.

The answer is given. They are those who came out of great tribulation and have endured to the end, through the blood of Christ they washed their robes and made them white. Salvation is ONLY through the blood of Christ.

This is probably a general statement, the part of the whole used for the entire whole. It is what the Bible does at times. The focus is given to those who did literally go through great tribulation, like as the apostle Paul and others did down through the past ages. But the rest of the saints, who maybe had no physical tribulation in their lives, are NOT EXCLUDED. It is a part of the whole, standing for the entire whole.

We know from MANY other Scriptures that ALL God's children will live before Him, the first resurrection WILL RAISE ALL the past saints up to that very point when Jesus comes at the last trumpet sound and the first resurrection takes place. Again, all of that truth is covered in various studies on my website.

Certainly down through the ages THOUSANDS of the children of God have gone through great tribulation to keep faithful to the Most High.

Here is the part standing for the whole. We are transported into the time when God's children from ALL nations will be living in glory, serving the Most High for all eternity, and this section of Revelation actually goes into the time of the new heaven and the new earth of chapter 21, 22. For notice it, verse 15. He that sits on the throne - the Father, the Most Holy One, SHALL DWELL AMONG THEM! Ah, this is chapter 21:3.

It is the time when the Father shall come down, with the heavenly Jerusalem, to DWELL with His children.

Then indeed, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb (Jesus) which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (verse 16-17).

Yes, finally all is completed eventually, and the very words of Revelation chapters 21 and 22 are a reality. Indeed VERY GOOD NEWS beyond all the horrific events to come on the earth and its people that are recorded in the chapters of Jesus' Revelation. But now we must get back to the story flow, and into the very DAY OF THE LORD mentioned in dozens of verses throughout the prophetic books of the Bible.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Are those of the 144 000 actually 12 000 from each physical tribe or is this something symbolic - perhaps spiritual Israelites whose character and temperament matches those of the corresponding physical tribes? Are they ALL of the firstfruits (at least up to the start of the Great Tribulation) or are they merely a part of the firstfruits? It may be possible that the number of true firstfruits from 30 AD up to now is still short of that magic number and God is still working on bringing His total of firstfruits up to that number.

Author Art Bradic in his book "The 144 000" notes that the order of the tribes of Israel in Revelation 7 is utterly unique. He also notes that if we substitute the names of the tribes with the meaning of those names it also very revealing. Bradic writes:

The fact that the tribes are not listed according to birth order, assembly by ensigns, or geographical location is another indicator that this is not physical Israel. (p.62)...

The Almighty God inspired the names of the tribes of Israel in such a way that they tell a wonderful story of every true christian's struggle and ultimate triumph. Notice how a paragraph placing the meaning of these names in their order might read:

I will praise the Lord (Judah)
for He has looked on me (Reuben)
and good fortune comes (Gad).
Happy am I (Asher)
because my wrestling (Naphtali) with God
makes me forget (Manasseh) my trials.
God hears me (Simeon)
and has joined me (Levi) to Him.
He has purchased me (Isaachar)

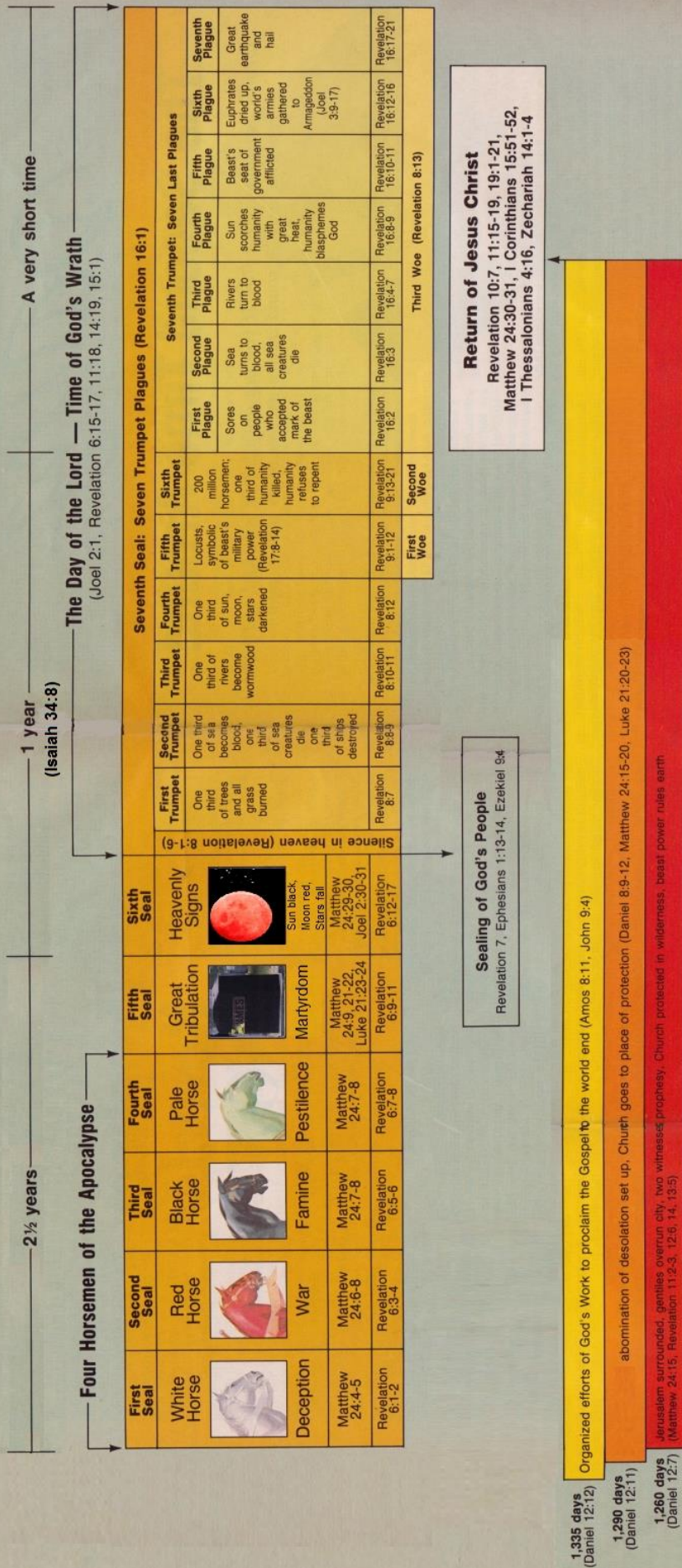
and my Husband will dwell with me (Zebulon).
God will add (Joseph) me
to the Son of His right hand (Benjamin)" (p.67).

Perhaps this explains why Joseph and Manasseh are used as tribal names and not Ephraim and Manasseh in order to get a more meaningful fit with the story you get from the meanings of the names. Dan didn't drive out the Canaanites from their inheritance and some of them weren't content with their inheritance and did their own thing by seeking a new area to settle way up in the north of Israel. They also played a part in Israel going into idolatry with the idols that were set up in Dan in the north in Jeroboam's time. Perhaps the spiritual lesson we can learn that's emphasised here is that you can't go your own way like the tribe of Dan did and expect to be a part of the firstfruits in the Kingdom of God.

There are 12 x 12 000 and the number 12 is significant in the Bible and generally thought of as the number of organisational beginnings so, in this end-time context, could they be the ones chosen for governmental roles in the coming Kingdom of God?

There are differing views on who the great innumerable multitude is – one view is that they are those converted and receive God's spirit during the Great Tribulation. Another view is that they are converted during the Tribulation but don't receive God's spirit till after Christ's return. Jude 14 says that the Lord comes with his 10 000's of saints as opposed to a great innumerable multitude. The 144 000 and the great innumerable multitude could possibly be representative, in part or in whole, of the two great spiritual harvests of the firstfruits and the greater harvest of the millennium and after.

The Seven Seals of Revelation



CHAPTER 15

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 7)

Revelation 8

The SEVENTH SEAL is now to be opened. There was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Why this silence? We are not told. We can only speculate. Is it a "hush" in the now reality that the ages have waited for - the last stage leading up to the coming of the Messiah in glory and power to destroy those who are destroying the earth, and to finally usher in the Kingdom of God on earth for the promised 1,000 years of the RESTITUTION of all things. Or maybe it's the serious awe of the universe, the angels and all other created creatures, holding their breath so to speak, for now is coming the very personal and direct time of God's wrath on this earth.

Whatever the reason, the truth of the matter is that in God's heaven there will be SILENCE for about half an hour. That part of eternal history no doubt the host of heaven will always remember, SILENCE in heaven, no praising or singing or playing of music or sounds of thunder and whatever else those beings in heaven do - for a very short time, there will be SILENCE! (verse 1).

The seven angels standing before God are given SEVEN TRUMPETS. As we proceed, it becomes clear that the SEVENTH seal IS comprised of SEVEN TRUMPET SOUNDS (verse 2).

Another angel comes and stands at the heavenly altar, having a golden censer or bowl. He has much incense, and he offers it up with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which is before the very throne of God. The smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angels' hand. The angel then takes the censer, fills it with fire, and throws it onto the earth. There were voices, thunder, lightning, and a great earthquake (verses 3-5).

All very real but symbolic. All done in heaven and no person on earth shall see it happen. But the reality of it happening will surely be felt afterwards by what then takes place on the earth. God starts to flex His muscles. The seven angels are ready to blow their trumpets.

First Trumpet

The first angel sounds his trumpet, there followed a great hail and fire mingled with blood, being cast down on the earth, it burnt up a THIRD of all trees, and all the green grass was burnt up (verses 6-7).

This alone is mind-dumbing. This has never happened to the earth since it was created, in the scale and depth of it all. We can only imagine in part, what this will look and sound like.

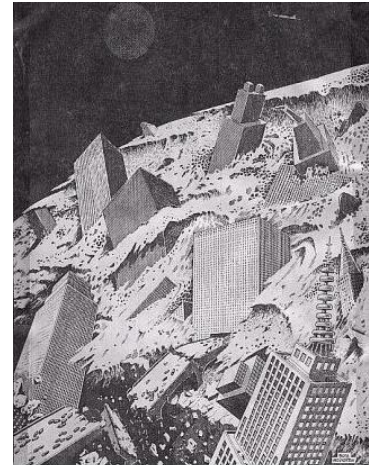


"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mixed with blood" (Rev. 8:7).

Second Trumpet

The second angel sounds his trumpet. A great mountain like whatever, with fire was cast into the sea: a THIRD part of the sea became blood. A THIRD part of the creatures in the sea that had life were killed; and a THIRD part of the ships on the sea were destroyed (verses 8-9).

This is really getting "freaky" - it's like a strange horror movie taking place. But, however all this unfolds and whatever the sight of what makes all this happen is like, we are told the END RESULT! And it is far from being anything but catastrophic. These end results are how they read, no symbolism here, they will happen, as the plain words we are reading say.



Possible tsunami created as the great mountain of fire (large meteor) strikes the earth.

Third Trumpet

A great "star" from heaven falls to earth. As stars can represent angels, could this be an angel coming to earth, burning as it were a lamp. It falls, in whatever way, a miracle perhaps, on the THIRD part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water. Whatever this is it is called "wormwood" (wormwood is a bitter plant and grows in desert type areas). The third part of waters became wormwood, so bitter, and obviously even more than bitter because MANY died from the wormwood waters. This has never happened on the earth as yet, so it is yet to come.



Fourth Trumpet

Now the sun and moon and stars are greatly affected, exactly HOW we are not told, but we are told the result: the THIRD part of them is DARKENED. The day shone not for a third part, and the night also shone not for a third part. Again, this sounds science-fiction stuff, but it will happen during the early part of the DAY OF THE LORD, the DAY of God's WRATH. John then beholds and hears an angel; flying through the heaven and saying, "WOE, WOE, WOE, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the TRUMPET of the THREE angels which are yet to sound!"



The 4th Trumpet Plague of Revelation 8 - a third part of the sun and moon's light is cut

Revelation 9

Fifth Trumpet

The FIFTH angel sounds - the FIFTH TRUMPET.

A star falls from heaven to earth, and to him (indicating this is an angel) was given the key to unlock the bottomless pit. He opened the pit and smoke arose, as like from a great furnace. The sun and air were darkened by the smoke. Out comes LOCUSTS on the earth, they had power on the earth like scorpions have - a mighty sting!

This is obviously "symbols" we are now seeing through John. He is transported in vision to the Day of God's Wrath, and the things he sees would have been so strange and also terrifying, he had to use language that his mind could relate to.

Scorpions as used in Nahum 3, which is a prophecy about the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians eventually migrated through Europe and are the GERMAN people today.

Craig White has done years of detailed research on the German people and where they came from. He now has a large detailed book called "In search of THE GREAT GERMAN NATION." This can be purchased from: originofnations.org or Amazon.com or Barnes and Nobel.com

This 5th trumpet is the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire out of Europe, that is today gaining more POWER and more IMPORTANCE on the world scene. It will eventually be ONE of the TWO LAST GREAT powers on the earth.

At the outset of the GREAT TRIBULATION, Judah (the Jews) and MOST of the rest of the WESTERN world (who are the very House of Israel - see Britam.org website for the most detailed truth on that subject) will have been destroyed and taken captive by this European LAST resurrected Holy Roman Empire.

All that remains by the sounding of this FIRST WOE, or 5th TRUMPET, is for the mighty Satan controlled Beast Power of Europe to conquer the EASTERN world (of Russia, China, India, Japan, etc.) who will by this time be the ONLY other WORLD POWER!

Whatever space age technology they have by that time, they will be commanded by God, allowed by God, to ONLY hurt the persons who have NOT the seal of God. They will not be allowed to hurt the trees, the grass, or any green thing. They will NOT KILL, they will only "torment" people like the torment of a scorpion, when they strike a person. They will TORMENT people for FIVE MONTHS!

In those days people will WANT TO DIE, but they will not be allowed to die. Some kind of miracle God is likely to perform here, people desiring to die, seeking to die, but shall not be able to die.

The vision type locust scorpions were shaped like horses prepared for battle (that's the only way John could put it in human terms of his day); on their heads were crowns of gold (they were kings of warfare we might say); and they had the faces of men (showing man was behind these war machines). They had the hair of a woman

(probably the air flowing behind them looked to John like the hair of women blown in the wind). They had teeth, what you bite with, and cause pain, like that of a lion. Their breastplates were like iron - they were indeed mechanical machines of war. The sound of their wings (the sound of them flying through the heaven) was like the sound of many horse pulled chariots running to battle. Their tails were like that of a scorpion, for the result was like that of scorpions stinging people - out from them came the sting. For their POWER was to HURT people for FIVE months, not to kill them but only to hurt them, but the sting will be so horrible, people will want to die, but God will not allow them to die.

The king over them was the angel from the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is "Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue his name is Apollyon. The word means "destroyer" (verses 1-12).

In other in-depth studies on my website the BEASTS of REVELATION are fully expounded. The great one who will have control of the "beast" man and the "false prophet" man of later chapters of Revelation, will be Satan the Devil.

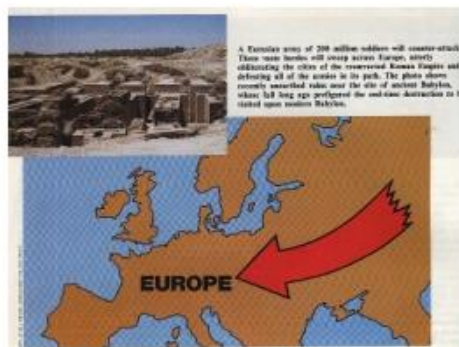
This 5th TRUMPET or first WOE, is the workings of the BEAST POWER as the resurrected RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL power of the Holy Roman Empire of Europe. It will have ALREADY destroyed the people of Israel - Judah and Israel - conquered the Western world. It will have ALREADY killed MANY of the saints of God, true Christians who cannot be deceived by this Babylon Mystery Religion of a Roman Catholic governed European power.

Now this mighty Empire will strike at the remaining power, the people in the EAST, on the other side of the Euphrates river.



5TH TRUMPET - 1ST WOE

EUROPE ATTACKS ASIA



6TH TRUMPET - 2ND WOE

ASIA COUNTERATTACKS AND INVADES EUROPE

The Sixth Trumpet

The SECOND WOE and its trumpet angel will sound. A voice from the four corners of the altar in heaven, tells this 6th angel to sound, and loose the four angels stationed at the river Euphrates. These four angels let loose what they have been holding back. It was for a certain DAY, HOUR, MONTH, and YEAR, and now it is. A whole THIRD of mankind (from those still remaining after all that has transpired so far on earth) are KILLED by the events of the 6th trumpet sound or second woe.

The army is a staggering two hundred million. The people of the EAST can indeed number such an army. Again, John put it in terms he understood in his day. This army is like men on horses, with breastplates of fire, of jacinth, and brimstone. They had heads of lions, out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

What a sight, it was terrifying for John to see all this, and to see in vision a THIRD part of mankind killed by this army from over the east of the river Euphrates. This army had tails like a serpent, ready to sting and kill. Even their heads could kill and hurt people. It was for John no doubt an unbelievable future scene he saw in vision in heaven.

By the end of this 6th trumpet (second woe) the earth and its people on it ... well there really are not the words to say it. Truly, even with all the wars down through the centuries of mankind, even with the great FIRST and SECOND world wars of the 20th century, there is NOTHING TO COME CLOSE to what the earth and its people will face in the future.

People of God WANT, they DESIRE, Jesus to come again, to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth, and certainly we look to that day, BUT before that can happen, we have to face the prophecy (all of it) in the book of Revelation!!

The only way the world could evade this prophecy is for the nations to REPENT! And that is VERY UNLIKELY INDEED!

You would think by this time in our prophecy, the people of the world, the MAJORITY of them at least, would REPENT IN DUST AND ASHES, CRY OUT WITH HUMBLE HEARTS, TO BE FORGIVEN OF SINS, AND TO HAVE THE GRACE OF GOD SHOWERED DOWN ON THEM. You would think by this time they would have LEARNT the lesson - got the MESSAGE - and would be ready to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior! BUT NO!

Look what is written in 9:20-21. "And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues: yet REPENTED NOT of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and of wood, which can neither see, hear, nor walk. They DID NOT REPENT of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their immorality, nor of their thefts" (verses 13-21).

They STILL, after all the power of the universe comes on them, and all that has gone before, WILL NOT REPENT!! They will not admit SIN, see where they are living contrary to God's way of life and righteousness. They will set their hearts and minds to be as concrete. They will "grit their teeth" and still REFUSE to REPENT!

It BLOWS ME AWAY! To think people will have this attitude. How they must love the "things" - the physical riches, the gold, the silver, the brass, the "gadgets" of our space age. How they must love just wanting to "do their own thing" - have sex when and with whom they choose, as many times as they can, love their jobs, and certainly ain't willing to rest on the day God claims is His. How they must love the razzle and dazzle of the physical world and the sin that goes with it all.

I hope and pray friends, that is NOT you! As they say, "you can't take it with you" and sin may seem pleasurable for the moment, and it may seem nice to not have anyone like God telling you what to do and how to do it and when to do it. But your Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to man, but the end result is DEATH!"

Many at this time of the age will see God at work all around them, with signs that are really mind-blowing and catastrophic. Yet most of them will still NOT repent. So is the DEPTHS of Satan the Devil, so is the DECEPTION he will manifest in the last days, upon the whole earth (see Rev.12:9).

Revelation 10

John sees another angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; a rainbow is upon his head; his face as the sun; his feet as pillars of fire. He has a little book open. His right foot is upon the sea, and his left foot on the land. He cries with a voice like a lion when roaring. When he cries out, seven thunders shout back. After the thunders shouted, John was about to write what it all meant. He was told "No, do not write, shut it all up. Seal up what the seven thunders have uttered" (verses 1-4).

The angel John saw standing upon the sea and land, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that lives forever and ever, who created all the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all that there is in them. The angel announces "There should be time no longer!"

It is getting closer and closer to the end of this age and the new age that is promised to come. It is fast approaching when Jesus will return in power and glory.

It is in the days of the voice of the SEVENTH trumpet angel, when he BEGINS to sound, that the Mystery of God, what He has been doing with mankind from the creation of Adam, will be FINISHED, just as He has declared for centuries through His prophets (verses 5-7).

John hears the voice from heaven that has been speaking to him, that he should go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which stands upon the sea and land. John obeys, and goes to the angel and asks for the little book. The angel replies, "Take it, eat it up; it shall be in thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey" (verses 8-9).

It would first taste good, like it is all okay now, it is all pleasant now, but on going into the belly, it was bitter. John takes the book and eats it, and yes, in his mouth it is sweet, and comforting, like a good chocolate bar (I love chocolate bars), but as soon as it was in his belly it was BITTER (verse 10).

What this little book is all about CANNOT be known, for it was sealed up! If someone today tries to tell you what this little book is all about, then I tell you, they are false

ministers, who do not know what they are talking about. You need to get away from them as quickly as you can. The "little book" is SEALED UP! It is NOT for us to know what is written in it. When what it contains comes to pass then perhaps SOME of us will know, but till then, it is sealed - period!

The angel tells John he must prophesy yet more, to kings, to nations, to many different peoples and languages.

What he writes in the next chapters is for them to hear and to know and to understand. Jesus is REVEALING the end time events that MUST come on this earth before He returns to become King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHAPTER 16

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 8)

Revelation 11

Chapter 11 and 12 are INSET chapters. They go back and tell us the story of the last 42 months of this age, the two witnesses in Jerusalem preaching the truths of God, during the time when Jerusalem shall be under the Gentile Beast power. And in chapter 12 we have the MAIN outline of the true Church of God from way back in Jacob and Joseph's time, to the last time of "time" (singular) "times" (plural) and "half a time" - 42 months or 1260 days.

This first verse some have used to try and prove that in the end times the Jews will build a Temple in Jerusalem, and start again to offer animal sacrifices. First, this teaching is based on a few Scriptures in the Bible that have not been understood correctly. Second, the fact is the Dome of the Rock would have to be removed, and this the Islamic people would never allow. Third, the animal-rights people would be up in arms and would probably burn down such a physical Temple, as quickly as it went up.³

The old Bible Commentator Albert Barnes in his "Notes on the New Testament" gives the truth of the matter.

The measuring of the temple, verses 1,2. A reed, or measuring stick, is given to John, and is directed to arise and measure the temple. This direction embraces two parts: (a) he was to measure, that is, to take an exact estimate of the temple, of the altar, and of the true worshippers; (b) he was carefully to separate this, in his estimate, from the outward court, which was to be left out and to be given to the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot, forty-two months, that is, three years and a half, or twelve hundred and sixty days - a period mentioned in the book of Daniel as well as in this book..... RISE AND MEASURE THE TEMPLE OF GOD. That is, ascertain its true dimensions with the reed in your hand.

Of course this could not be understood of the LITERAL temple - whether standing or not - for the exact measure of that was sufficiently known [and if literal with some literal temple in Jerusalem at the last time, then according to this, John was to literally measure the people as well. Can you imagine someone going about literally measuring people inside the temple, as well as the temple itself - a little bit crazy I would say - Keith Hunt]. The word, then, must be used of something which the temple would denote or represent, and this would properly be the church, as considered as the abode of God on earth.

Under the old dispensation, the Temple at Jerusalem was that abode; under the new, that particular residence was transferred to the Church and God is represented as dwelling in it.... Thus the word is undoubtedly used here, and the simple meaning that he who is thus addressed is directed to take an accurate estimate of the true church of God....

If the direction be understood figuratively, as applicable to the Christian church, the work to be done would be to obtain an exact estimate or measurement of what the true church was - as distinguished from all other bodies of men.... BUT THE COURT WHICH IS WITHOUT THE TEMPLE. Which is outside of the court proper.... There is undoubtedly reference here to

³ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** My views on this topic are discussed in my notes on page 93 of the second volume of this New Testament Bible Story.

the "court of the Gentiles" as it was called among the Jews - the outer court of the Temple to which the Gentiles has access....

In forming an estimate of those who, according to the Hebrew notions, were true worshippers of God, only those who would be regarded as such, who had the privilege of access to the inner court, and to the altar.....those who had no nearer access than that court (the court of the Gentiles), would be omitted; that is, they would not be reckoned as necessarily any part of those who were regarded as the people of God..... FOR IT IS GIVEN TO THE GENTILES.

It properly appertains to them as their own,. Though near the temple, and included in the general range of building, yet it does not pertain to those who worship there, but to those who are regarded as heathen and strangers....They occupied it, not as the people of God, but as those who were WITHOUT the true church, and who did not appertain to its real communion..... AND THE HOLY CITY. The whole holy city - not merely the outer court of the Gentiles which is said to be given to them, nor the Temple as such, but the ENTIRE holy city. There is no doubt that the words 'holy city' LITERALLY refers to Jerusalem.

Indeed, the first verse is setting aside the true people of God at the OUTSET of the "forty two months" (verse 2), when the holy city will be under the control and direction of the Gentile Beast power. It will NOT CONTROL the people of God. They shall REMAIN FAITHFUL to the faith once delivered to the saints, even if some of them must die for their faith. Such it has always been when religious persecutions came over the centuries past, and so it must be again, as we shall see in chapter 12.

God's people will be accurately ascertained, measured according to the Holy Temple they are as the body of Christ. The Gentiles cannot rule over them so as to make them give up their faith of Jesus and obedience to the commandments of God (see Rev. 14:12).

It is given for the Gentiles to rule the literal city of God, Jerusalem, for the last 42 months of this age or 1260 days. During that time, the Lord will have TWO witnesses LIVING and PREACHING in Jerusalem. They are of old represented by the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before God in heaven. They appear to also be referred to over in Zechariah 4:3. We have seen in the letters of Paul that God knew His plan for mankind before the earth came into being. Jesus we saw had been called to do His salvation work on this earth, before man was created, before the foundations of the earth. See 1 Peter 1:18-20 for that truth.

The two olive trees and the two candlesticks in heaven have pointed to the two witnesses that would come to Jerusalem, during the last 42 months of this age (verses 1-4).⁴

⁴ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** The two witnesses are described as the two candlesticks and a candlestick is a symbol for a church (Revelation 1:20). To paraphrase it: the two witnesses are the two churches - representatives of two churches.

The most likely answer for who these two church groups they represent are would be those who keep the word of Jesus patience and are protected from the great trial that tries the whole world (Rev. 3:10) and those who aren't protected in the wilderness that Satan goes after to attack (Rev. 12:17).

Now, notice the POWER these two witnesses will have. If anyone tries to kill them, they will say the word and fire will destroy their enemies. They will have the power to shut up heaven so that it does not rain during the time of their prophecy and preaching. They will have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues, as often as they see necessary (verses 5,6).

All this going on with the two "open to the world" witnesses, as well as that which pertains to the opening of the 6 seals we have been seeing. This last 42 months of history for this age, will make any of the science-fiction movies of Hollywood seem like Walt Disney cartoons.



The two witnesses will have miracle-working powers from God as they call the world to repentance towards God

When they shall have finished their work God sets before them, the Beast power (with the man "beast" - military leader, and the "false prophet" religious leader) of Europe will be allowed to kill them. Their dead bodies will lay in the street of Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified (verses 7-8). Their bodies will lay there for three and one half days, just so the world can see them dead in the street (verse 9).

Look at verse 9 and 10! The DECEPTION the world will be in, well nothing, will compare to it. You think we have great deception today with Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and whatever else the world is deceived into following. The deception in the last 42 months leading up to Christ's return, will be WILD, just unmatched. You will have the two witnesses proclaiming the truths of God, and performing GREAT MIRACLES, and when they are finally killed, the people of the

earth will REJOICE, make merry, and SEND GIFTS to each other, because the torment they plagued people with shall be over.

You talk about deception! This is the DEPTH of Satan's deception. I suppose the "false prophet" will have deceived the world into believing the Lord's two end-time witnesses to truth and righteousness, will be from Satan, while he is from God. Remember Revelation says the false prophet is also able to work miracles. The world will be TWISTED up-side-down. They will have it all backwards. The religious power of the West will have people believing the true saints of God are the heretics and from Satan, while the religious/political Beast power is from God.

After three and one half days the two witnesses will be raised up back to life again (verse 11) and yes, I guess great fear will come on them that see it all happen.

Do not assume that Jesus will come AFTER three days and a half that the two witnesses are laying dead in the street of Jerusalem. Do not make the mistake of thinking the RESURRECTION to immortality takes place when the two witnesses are raised up back to life. The verse DOES NOT SAY THAT! Thy witnesses will have the Spirit of life in them, but the Lord Jesus does not say it is immortal glorified life. So it could be that the two witnesses will be raised back to flesh and blood life ONLY.

Yes, a voice does shout out for them to come up to heaven, and they do, while their enemies behold it all. But again, this may only be a physical miracle raising them into the FIRST heaven only and carrying them away to where only the Lord knows.

The last verses of the book of Daniel give us MORE than 1260 days. Daniel will STAND (be resurrected) at the END "of the days" mentioned in verse 12 of chapter 12.

Be careful RIGHT TO THE END to not set dates! Jesus taught us that NO ONE, not even He Himself, knows the DAY or HOUR of his return to this planet earth.

At the same hour of these two witnesses being raised to life, there will be a GREAT earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell (Jerusalem that is), and in that earthquake were slain 7,000 persons, and finally SOME gave glory to God.

We have come in verse 14 in the story flow, to the FINISH of the SECOND WOE. ONE MORE IS TO YET COME!

Our story flow continues with verse 15 to 19. It is the OVERVIEW of the SEVENTH TRUMPET, the THIRD WOE.

This is the long awaited for, SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET! The long waited gloriously LAST TRUMPET, when the Kingdom of God is to come to this earth, when Jesus is to return and the kingdoms of this world shall become the KINGDOMS of our Lord, and of His Christ, and shall REIGN for ever and ever (verse 15).

The 24 elders before the throne of God, got up from their seats and "fell upon their faces, worshipping God; and saying: 'We give thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come; because you have used Your great power and has reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come; and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants and prophets, and

those who fear Your name, small and great; and should destroy those who are destroying the earth" (verses 16-18).

It is the time for the resurrection of the saints, the children of God. The judgment and rewards given to the resurrected sons and daughters of God are really the one and same thing. I ask the reader to see my study called "The Truth about Judgment Day." The Lord Jesus will come to make war and punish those who are destroying the earth. This is the time when what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 will come to pass. You may want to see that section again in this NT Bible Story.

At this time the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in the Temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail (verse 19).

A mighty heavenly miracle taking place here, the wording suggests that the opening of the Temple of God in heaven could be seen by those on earth. That would indeed be a revealing and a miracle.

We need to remember that this section of Revelation, is within the "story flow" but at the same time it is only an "overview" of the LAST trumpet. The revelation of Jesus will in coming passages, give us the full details of all that will happen when this SEVENTH trumpet or THIRD woe takes place.

Revelation 12

A "woman" in prophecy can and often does, represent "a church" (see chapter 19:7, 8). Here in verse one, we are taken back to Genesis 37:9-11. The time of Joseph, his brothers and his mother and his father Jacob. That, for whatever reason is chosen by God to start us into the history of the true "people of God" or the woman Church of God (the true church from all ages is the BRIDE of Christ when the wedding feast will take place - again "woman" representing the bride church of Christ - Revelation 19:5-9).

The true church is with child, a VERY SPECIAL child indeed. Then appears a great red dragon (interpreted for us in verse 9 - the Devil or Satan), having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head (explained in studies called "The Beasts of Revelation").



The woman and the dragon

Briefly, it is the seven Holy Roman Empires (one more yet to come) and the 10 horns are the last 10 nation kings to give their power and voice to the last (the 7th

resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire) ruled by the "beast" man - political/military leader, who will try to fight Christ at His coming - see Revelation 17:12-15.

Satan the Devil in history past, drew a third of the "stars" (representing angels) with him in his battle against God, which took place sometime BEFORE what we read of in Genesis chapter one. Those are inset words to clarify who this "red dragon" is.

Now we are brought to the historic time of the Devil dragon standing before the woman Church of God, who was to give birth to the special man child, and the dragon was ready to devour that child as soon as it was born. This is the time of Christ's birth to the woman Mary, who was a member of the woman true church. The man child Jesus was born, the One who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (verses 3-5).

There can be no mistaking the meaning of all this. Satan had all the children two years and under killed at the time of Jesus' birth, in an attempt to kill the child Jesus. You'll remember that from the Gospel story.

The child was caught up to God, and His throne (verse 5b). We are brought forward to the resurrected Christ and Him ascending to heaven to sit on the Father's right hand, and be our interceding High Priest (the book of Hebrews covers that important truth).

The woman true church, flees into the "wilderness" where she has a "place" (singular - will explain why I give emphasis to that in a moment) prepared for her by God, who will feed her in safety, for 1260 days or day for a year = 1260 years.

This was fulfilled from the year 554 A.D. to 1814 A.D. That period of time as covered in secular church history books (certainly the one I have) was when the false woman church, ruled by Satan, the Holy Roman Catholic church of the resurrected Holy Roman Empire, RULED with MIGHT and dictatorial POWER. Again all explained in my in-depth studies called "The Beasts of Revelation."

Now why do I give emphasis to "place" - singular. It is because some in these days of the last decades of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century, tell you that the part of God's people who will find "protection" from death and the Beast power, will find protection in ONE specific location on this earth. They believe that somehow all God's true children will be all taken to ONE specific place on earth (they may not know where exactly, although some think they do) during and for the whole 42 months period. They claim this because in verse 14 of this chapter, the singular "place" is used for protection of some of the people of God for 42 months, or time, times, and half a time.

BUT.....we have seen the SINGULAR "place" is used in verse 6. And verse 6 in the story flow of this history of the true church was 1260 years from 554 - 1844 A.D. And the facts of church history prove without a doubt that God's true people WERE **NOT** in just ONE location for all that length of time.

When the Roman Catholic church was reigning supreme during that time period, God's people were in the wilderness of the hills, the valleys, the mountains, ALL OVER EUROPE, BRITAIN, and SOME even in the far Eastern nations, untouched by the Roman Catholic church.

The singular word "place" does NOT MEAN in God's protective plan for some of His children, just one specific location on this earth. It did not during those 1260 years and it will not again, when some of the Lord's people will be protected during the last 42 months of this age.

Such is the short-sighted reading of the Bible by some, who will not look at the full context and see where God and history prove "place" does not mean one specific geographical wilderness area somewhere on this earth.

During that time period of 1260 years (verse 6) the people of God were protected in the wilderness of MANY NATIONS on earth. They went out into the hills, and the forests, the wild out of the way places in their particular country where they lived. The Christian church history books are full of that fact and truth!

We are moved forward in verse 7, to a time that is yet ahead of us (as I write in 2007), a time when once more Satan and his demon army will try to unseat the Almighty from His throne in heaven. There will yet be an invisible "star wars" in heaven, Michael and his angels will fight Satan and his army. The Devil will not win, and no place he will have in heaven. He and his army will be cast back down to this earth (verses 7-9).



"And there was war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7)

At this time in the history of this planet, John hears aloud voice in heaven saying: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the

word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time" (verses 10-12).

Satan may accuse God's children day and night, but we have a High Priest interceding for us day and night. We have the victory through Christ, His blood, and His interceding work. The Devil, after losing this battle with Michael and the righteous angels, will come to earth, and LOOK OUT as we say. This is the time of the GREAT TRIBULATION spoken about by Jesus, the time when many saints will be killed for their faith. A time when Satan will be allowed through his Holy Roman Empire Beast power to destroy the peoples of Israel and Judah, and kill many true Christians.

We are back in the time frame (during this outline of the major events of the true Church of God) of the FIFTH SEAL - of chapter 6. The time frame of the persecution of God's people (see also Jesus' words in Matthew 24:9).

To the true church / woman was given two wings of the eagle (not literally see Exodus 19:4 and a past happening with similar words - this is not some jet plane flight - Israel did not leave Egypt on a jet plane).

She, the true church / woman is given protection, she moves to the wilderness once more, into her place (we've talked about the singular "place" above, and it isn't necessarily what some want you to believe), where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, for 42 months or three and one half years, during the great tribulation and the day of the Lord.

The serpent, the Devil casts out of his mouth (gives command) that his army flood of waters (people - see chapter 17:15), go after the woman, that she might be destroyed by Satan's army. But God is mightier than the Devil, and causes the "earth" (earthquakes or whatever) to swallow up the flood army of men that Satan and his demons control (verses 13-16).

The dragon Devil he is angry, oh, indeed he is. He is not allowed by God to touch the true church people that are in the wilderness. But, Satan looks around and yes, he sees some of the Lord's people are not in the wilderness, they are not physically protected. They are some of the very same people, ones who KEEP the COMMANDMENTS of God (which the 4th one will make them stand out like a lighthouse on a hill), and have the testimony of Jesus Christ - they will be living as Jesus lived, and that will put a light on top of their lighthouse on a hill. They will stand out, be easily seen and found.

Satan is allowed by the Lord to "make war" with the "remnant of her seed." There will be an end-time, persecution and killing of part of the very true Church of God.

This story flow of the major history of the True Church of God, has brought us to the 5th SEAL or the killing of more saints of God, before the visible return of Christ our Lord.

Some of the people of God will find and be granted protection during the last 42 months of this age. Some will not be granted protection and will have to give their lives up for the faith once delivered to the saints.

You are NOT a less Christian, or an unworthy Christian because you are not protected, but are chosen to die for THE faith. The apostle Paul died for THE faith, so did the apostle Peter, so did Stephen (Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60) so did James (Acts 12:1-2). If you have to die for THE faith you will be in GOOD COMPANY, VERY GOOD COMPANY INDEED!

CHAPTER 17

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 9)

Revelation 13

This chapter is an INSET chapter. For the details of chapter 13 I refer the reader to my in-depth studies "The Beasts of Daniel and Revelation" under the section called "Prophecy" on my website.



The Beast of Revelation 13

A few comments in passing.

[This beast has 7 heads and 10 horns and was "like a leopard, and its feet like those of a bear, and its mouth like the mouth of a lion" (Rev 13:2). It is a composite of the four beasts of Daniel 7 – RW Editor]

The first 10 verses cover the ROMAN POLITICAL/MILITARY power. It was a mighty WAR machine. It did die, was wounded to death, but it arose again under a woman false church power. It did BLASPHEME against God; the theology it taught was false and in many ways blasphemous to God (verses 3,4,6).

It was a military/religious power that made WAR against the true saints of God, and it killed many of them (verse 7). It also ruled over many nations and peoples.

It will arise ONE more time, at the end of this age, it will rule again for 42 months, and all who will not worship its system will come under persecution. Only the very elect will not be deceived (Mat.24:24).

Verses 11-18 focuses on the RELIGIOUS power of this Beast, coming like a Lamb, looking and saying it represents Christ, but shall in fact be governed by the dragon - Satan the Devil. It will have a false prophet that will be able to work miracles. He will make people worship this whole system. If they do not they will be killed. A mark is put on the people, without it they cannot buy or sell, cannot be a part of its society.

To put it in BLUNT and plain words. This is the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, that arose, starting in 554 A.D. It was the might of a military power governed and ruled by the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. It will RISE ONCE MORE at the end of this age, in Europe, as it always has been a European power. The false prophet will be the POPE. This risen Roman Empire of Europe, will, attack and destroy the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America, and many other "Israelite" nations of the Western World. It will for a SHORT TIME, rise quickly and will also bring about the last GREAT persecution of the true saints of God.

Again, please study my studies called "The Beasts of Daniel and Revelation" as well as other studies under the category "Prophecy."

Revelation 14

We are back once more to the major event of the sounding of the SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET. So, this chapter is part of the story flow, but is focused on one main event.

We are taken to the wonderful event of that trumpet sound, the RESURRECTION and JESUS with the saints ON THE MOUNT ZION. This could be a spiritual mount Zion in the clouds or the literal mount Zion at Jerusalem.

With Him are the 144,000 that were sealed earlier. They are part that represents the whole. This type of Bible point is used many times in Scripture. We know from many other verses on the topic of the first resurrection and the coming of Jesus again to earth, that there will be the saints resurrected and glorified from all past ages, from Adam to this time of the Messiah's coming in glory to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

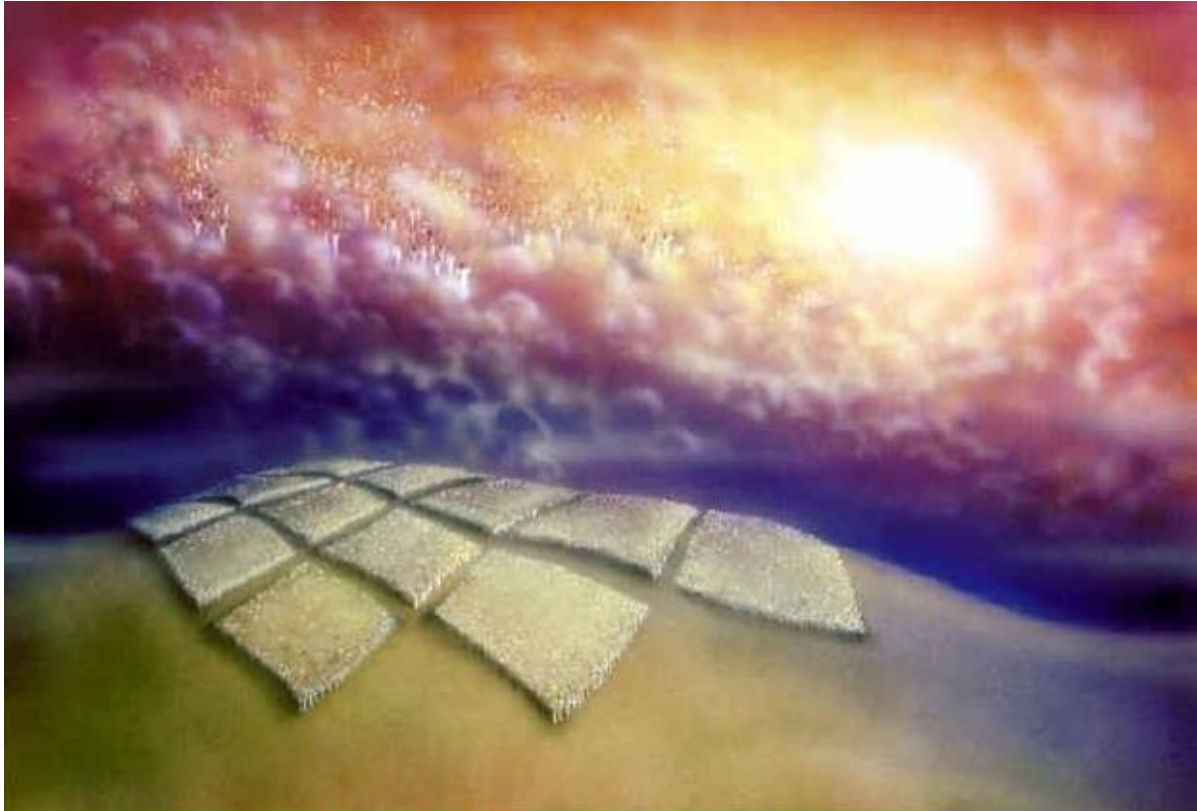
The PART represents the WHOLE.

John hears a voice of many waters, the voice of a great thunder, and the sound of harpers harping their harps. He hears them sing a new song before the throne of heaven, before the four beasts and the elders, but only the resurrected saints could learn that song (the 144,000 is the part that represents the whole).

Those in that resurrection are now with Christ, were the ones who were not defiled with the false woman or women of false Christianity - they are spiritual virgins - clean and pure from spiritual fornication. They are the ones who follow the LAMB, live by

His faith, have Jesus living in them, and they are the ones who have been willing to live by every word of God, to follow His righteousness, to obey His commandments (verse 12).

They were then redeemed - bought by the blood of Christ, and they are the very FIRST-FRUITS unto God and to the Lamb, Christ. They stand before God as having no guile in their mouth and are FAULTLESS before Him. (verses 2-6). See my study on "The Truth about Judgment Day" and "Saved by Grace."



The 144 000 of Revelation 7 and 14.

At this time, just before the 7 angels pour out their 7 last plagues of chapter 15 and 16, there is an ANGEL to go forth having the everlasting Gospel. This is where Jesus' words of Matthew 24:14 are fulfilled. Matthew 24:14 may not have to do with any human organization "getting the Gospel to the world" but could be referring to this event in Revelation 14 - no human organization can compare with an ANGEL proclaiming to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, the EVERLASTING GOSPEL!

The angel says: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Another angel follows saying: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornications."

Babylon fell once, centuries ago, but there is to come an end-time Babylon of the later chapters of Revelation. She is Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (chapter 17:5-6). She has made the whole earth

DRUNK with her SPIRITUAL FORNICATIONS. There is fast approaching a time that there will hardly be a nation on earth that is not drunk in some way with the false teachings and customs of the ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION. Most nations now observe Christ-mass, the 25th of December, in one form or another. The "Christian" world has been deceived into observing Sunday the first of day of the week, instead of the 7th day of the fourth commandment of God. And on and on it goes. Her daughters - the Protestants all have one or more (mostly more) of her spiritual fornications. The end-time BABYLON will FALL, we see that in Revelation 18 if you want to read it now.

We have seen in Revelation 9 and the 6th trumpet sound, that the army from the EAST will have a large part in destroying this European Babylon. Yes, it is time for you to read chapter 18, let it all sink deep into your heart and mind. This BABYLON OF ROMAN CATHOLIC EUROPE will FALL!!

By the time this angel of chapter 14:8 tells the rest of the world that Babylon is fallen, IT WILL HAVE ALREADY FALLEN!

But this is not yet the final end of all the evil Satanic falsehoods, the Babylon Beast power will still be in the Holy and, still have peoples and armies entrenched with its mind-set and brainwashed by its philosophies and theology.

A third angel must sound its voice saying: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand. The same shall drink of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they shall have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives his mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST" (verses 9-12).

This is the final warning to those still left on earth who will NOT give up worshipping the Roman Europe Beast power and its Roman Catholic religion.

The part about torment, fire, smoke ascending up forever, I have covered in depth under the studies "Death - then What?" on my website.

Once more in the last book of the New Testament, God makes it clear that the true saints are those who KEEP His COMMANDMENTS and who live by the very faith of Christ (faith OF Christ - see Galatians 2:20).

Yes the Roman Catholics and Protestants need to REPENT of NOT keeping the FOURTH commandment! It is plain to read what it is in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. You need to COME OUT OF BABYLON, with all of her other false practices and doctrines!

John then hears a voice from heaven saying: "Write! Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works to follow them."

Jesus said that "By their works you shall know them." By the way His followers live, as He lived (Gal.2:20 once more and Phil.2:5) shall be the acid test of truth as opposed to falsehood and error.

John then looks and in the time frame he sees the Son of man in a cloud, having a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle. Jesus is coming in the clouds, just as He left in clouds, so He will come in like manner (Acts 1).

We are still seeing the major event of the sound of the SEVENTH TRUMPET!

Another angel comes and with a loud voice to the One sat on the cloud, he tells that One, whom is Jesus, to thrust His sickle and reap, for the time has come for the reaping of the earth. And He who sat on the cloud did just that - thrust His sickle and the earth was reaped (verses 15-16).

This should remind you of the parables Jesus gave about harvest, reaping, fish catching, and all that pertained to this great event at the sound of the seventh and last trumpet. It's time indeed now for those who are destroying the earth to be destroyed.

Still yet another angel comes from out of the Temple in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle (verse 17).

Then yet again, another angel comes from the altar in the Temple. He has power over fire, and cries to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Thrust in thy sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are ripe."

The angel thrusts in the sickle into the earth and gathers the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (verses 18-20).

I have covered in detail the expounding of these last two verses of chapter 14. I believe it is in my study "Armageddon and the New Age."

Putting it in a nut-shell. See Joel 2:1, 30; 3:1-2, 9-15; Isa.63:1-4. A furlong is 606.5 feet, so 1,600 furlongs = 970,400 feet which is 183 miles. This distance takes you from Meggido to Edom, to the end of the depression of the land. It is the last battle, the famous battle of Armageddon (chapter 16:14-16 with Zech.14). The armies of the Beast power and armies from the East of Euphrates (chapter 16:12) will come together to fight Christ on His return to earth. They will MELT away, Jesus will destroy them by melting their skin from off their bones (Zech.14) and their blood will flow for 183 miles from Meggido to Edom, south of Jerusalem.

You talk about "space wars" - this will be one, but the armies of human beings will have NO chance at victory. You think about this. The events of what will happen are ALL WRITTEN in this book of the Bible. The false prophet guiding the Europe Babylon Mystery Roman Catholic religion, WILL BE ABLE TO READ ALL THIS, in the Bible he claims to represent! AND HE AND THE ARMIES HE LEADS WILL STILL TRY TO DEFEAT CHRIST!!



The great winepress of the wrath of God

Talk about the DEPTHS of the DECEPTIONS of Satan the Devil. This has got to be one of his deepest!

Revelation 15

We have been taken to ONE POINT of the SEVENTH TRUMPET, a VERY important time frame for sure. It was the time frame of Revelation 16:12-21.

Now we must go back a little, and have presented to us what exactly leads up to chapter 16:14-16 and the reaping of the earth in the battle at Armageddon.

John sees a sign in heaven, great and marvellous. Seven angels having SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, for in them is the full measure of the wrath of God finalized.

We are on the sea of glass, mingled with fire, the resurrected saints (and those who got victory over the last great Beast power, and all that it stood for in all its ways and teachings and life practices) are ALL THERE. They have harps and they sing the song of Moses (he will be there with them, maybe leading them in the song), and the song of the Lamb (whatever that is, Jesus will lead us to sing it), saying: "Great and marvellous are they works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify thy name? Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (verse 1-4).

After that, John looks and the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in heaven was opened (verse 5).

The SEVEN angels now come out of the temple, having the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES. They are clothed in pure and white linen, and are girded around the waist with a golden girdle.

It should now be clear to us that the SEVENTH TRUMPET is made up of THE RESURRECTION of the saints and the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

One of the four beasts around the throne of God, gives the seven angels, seven vials full of the wrath of God, the one who lives forever. The Temple then is filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power. No one, angel, beasts, or whatever is in heaven, was able then to enter the Temple, UNTIL the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

We are now at the FINAL end of this age, and very soon we will have the Kingdom of God on this earth, and the wonderful 1,000 year age shall be a reality, which the holy prophets have told us about from the ages past.

NOTE: If some of you are shocked at my saying the end-time Beast power, the Babylon Mystery Religion, is the very Roman Catholic church, the Papacy, I want you to know that just about all the OLD Protestant Bible Commentaries, like Albert Barnes' "Notes on the New Testament" all teach that very thing.

CHAPTER 18

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 10)

Revelation 16

John hears a voice from out of the Temple in heaven to the seven angels with the seven vials, "Go your way and pour out the vials of the WRATH of God upon the earth."

The FIRST angel pours out his vial, and there is a GRIEVOUS SORE upon all that are part of the Beast and have its mark, and worship its religious image (verses 1-2).

The SECOND angel pours out his vial upon the sea, and it becomes like the blood of the dead, and every living life in the sea dies (verse 3). Is this the whole sea of the entire world, or the sea close to the Holy Land? There is no elaboration, so only time will tell. But the thought of every life dying, is horrible to contemplate.



The seas and waters turn into blood

Again, is it the fountain of waters in and around just the Holy Land, or the entire earth; is not told us. But that angel is heard by John as saying, "You are righteous, O Lord, which are, and was, and shall be, because You have judged it to be this way. They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink; for they are worthy of such plagues" (verse 5,6).

Then John hears another out from the altar say, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are all thy judgments" (verse 7).

And the FOURTH angel pours out his vial upon the sun, and power was given to scorch people with fire. And people were scorched with GREAT heat, and did they REPENT? You would think by now it would had gotten through to their minds that God is God, that He is very REAL, and means business. But they only blaspheme the name of God, and they DID NOT REPENT! (verses 8,9).

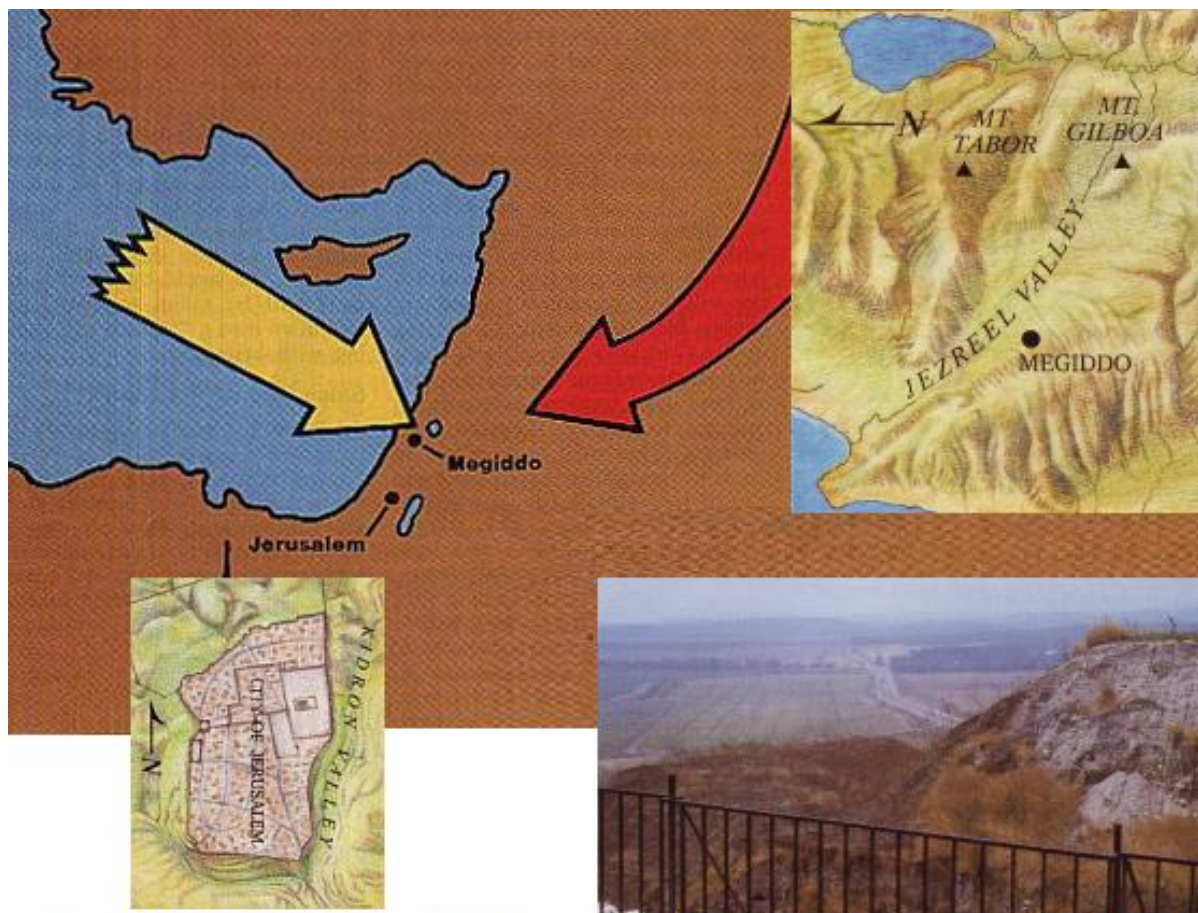
The FIFTH angel pours out his vial upon the seat or headquarters of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of the pains and their sores, and REPENTED NOT of their deeds" (verses 10-11).

Now by this time, actually three and a half years earlier, the beast "man" and the "false prophet" appear to have moved to Jerusalem, all explained in my other studies on "Prophecy." So it may be that the seat of the beast here spoken about is the Holy

Land, or it may be the seat the beast has in Europe. But wherever, you will notice they STILL HAVE the "sores" of verse 2. So that shows SOME of the vials will CONTINUE at least for some time, perhaps many days. And by the way so far all these vials could also be poured out in a matter of hours of each other, still on the same day. The miracles that they are only takes the angels a second or so to pour out.

We have scorching heat and then whatever length of time given, we have DARKNESS upon the kingdom of the beast. From one extreme to the other. But nothing so far will make the people of the kingdom of the beast REPENT!

So is the depth of Satanic deception!



The 6th last plague - The armies of the Roman empire and Kings of the East gather at Armageddon (Megiddo) to battle for control of the world

The SIXTH angel pours out his vial upon the river Euphrates; and the water of it dries up, that the way of the kings of the EAST might be prepared (verse 12). Do the kings of the East really need the Euphrates river to dry up? Probably not per se. Their armies in the modern world do not have to be stopped by a river. It is probably more symbolic the drying up of the water of the river Euphrates. It is a way of telling us and the world at that time, that the great BATTLE between man's physical armies and God is fast on its way.

John sees three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, representing Satan, out of the mouth of the "man" who rules the beast power and out

of the mouth of the "man" called the false prophet. These are the THREE great deceivers of the last 42 months of this age. Of course Satan is behind the two "men" deceivers, but they are the three as John sees it in vision. The three spirits are demonic. Satan is Satan, yet the beast man and the false prophet man, will have Satan's top demon spirits working inside of them. No doubt Satan has his right and left hand demons by his side, top ranked demons in his army of demons. These demons will work miracles through their human puppets. So as they go forth unto the kings of the earth, and the whole world, they will influence the mighty armies left in the world at this time (and obviously some will be from the East of the river Euphrates), to gather together to the BATTLE of the GREAT DAY of God almighty (verses 12-14).

Jesus says, "Behold, I will come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame (verse 15). Even at this very late time, Jesus says you better keep on keeping on the right road, for He will still come somewhat unexpectedly. You can never let up on walking the road that leads to eternal life, you can never let up for any length of time, especially during the GREAT DAY of God almighty.

The armies of Satan, the beast, the false prophet and the kings of the East, are gathered together into the place in Hebrew called Armageddon, north west of Jerusalem. It is a large plain, very fitting for a large army to gather together to make war, on an enemy from the sky or clouds over the city of Jerusalem. The result of this battle is given to us in Zechariah 14. We have there that Jesus will melt the skin off their bones and the blood will flow like a river for 183 miles from Armageddon to south of Jerusalem (chapter 14:19-20).

The Hebrew "ar" means mountain or range or plain, while "megiddo" means fortification, castle, stronghold.

Jesus and the saints and the angels HAVE COME! They have descended from the clouds and have taken the victory and have destroyed those who have been destroying the earth.

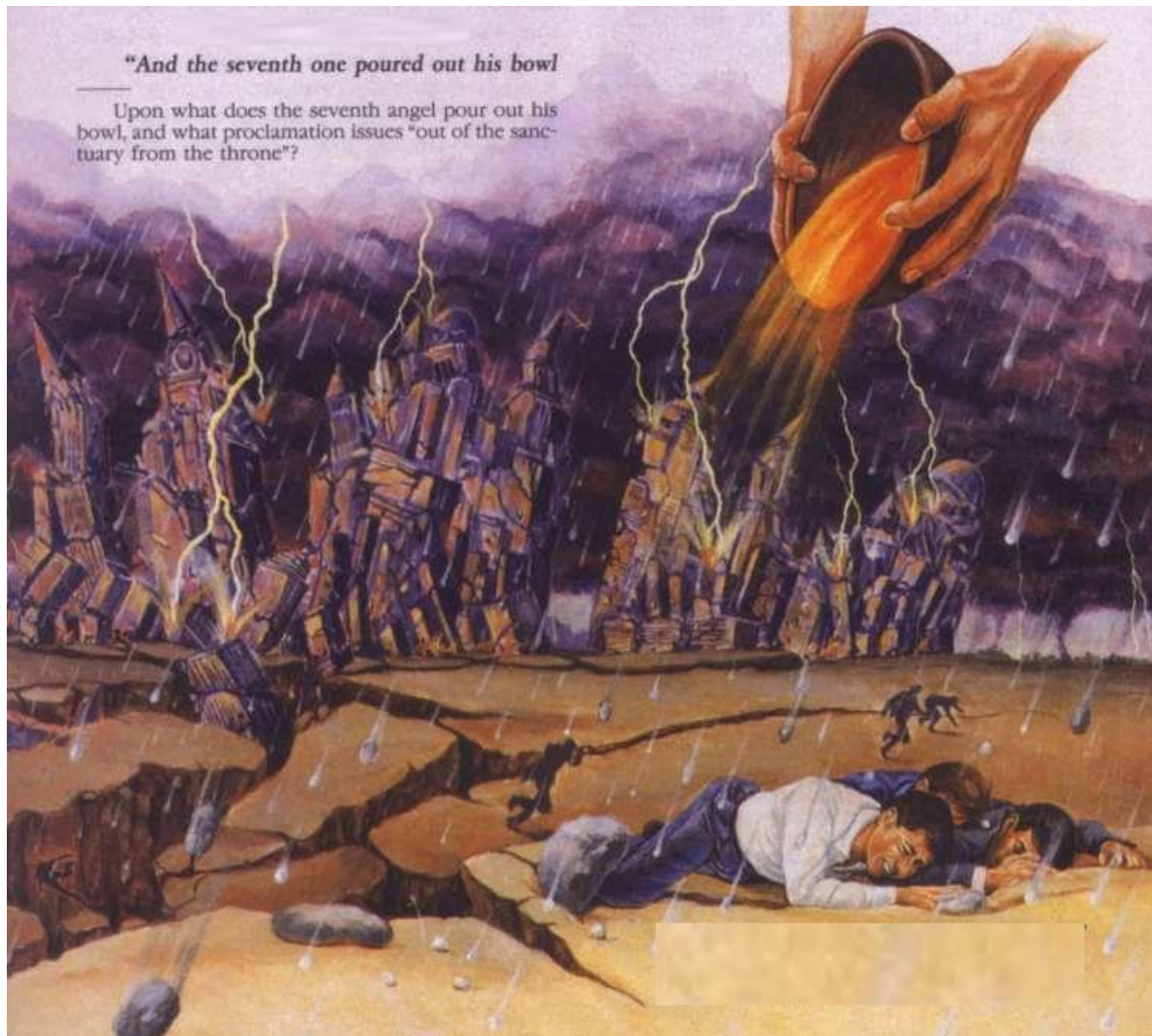
The GREAT BATTLE of the Day of God's wrath, the Day of the Lord, is over, the armies of Satan, both physical and spirit, have been DEFEATED!! But there needs to be ONE MORE FINAL battle witness to the humans of the great end-time Babylon.

The SEVENTH angel pours out his vial into the air, and there comes forth a great voice out of the Temple of heaven, from the very throne of heaven, saying, "IT IS DONE!!" (verse 17). "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a GREAT earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so GREAT!" (verse 18).

It can only be imagined, but then even our minds may not be able to imagine how great this earthquake will be. "The GREAT CITY was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and GREAT Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (verse 19).

The Great City, is that Jerusalem? Some might probably say it is, but then why use words like "the holy city" or just the word "Jerusalem"? Letting the Bible interpret itself we have in chapter 17:18 concerning this Babylon women, the connection with

"the great city" phrase. The Babylon woman whore and "the great city" is referring to the city that has had more influence on the world, over the centuries, as a whole, than any other city in the world - the great city of ROME!



All over the nations of the world, that are still left by this time, their cities fall. I expect this means their major cities. Then God remembers this end-time BABYLON, what is left of her destroyed Empire (for as we shall see in chapter 18, and as it was in chapter 9 and the SIXTH angel TRUMPET, most of this Mystery Babylon the Great, has been devastated by this time, by the time Jesus is descending from the clouds and these seven vials are being poured out), and she is given more punishment. "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (verse 20).

Could this be meaning the small islands in the seas around the Holy Land, or islands any and everywhere? With such a great earthquake as mankind has never experienced, taking place, it could well mean islands (what size of islands is simply not stated) all over the world.

"And there fell upon mankind a GREAT HAIL out of heaven, every hail-stone about the weight of a talent ..." (verse 21).

Great hail ... well nothing like it in the history of man ... about the weight of a "talent"
-- this 75 POUNDS !!⁵

Did all this lead people to REPENTANCE? NOT A BIT! People STILL blasphemed God because of the plague of hail!

In chapter 17 and 18 we again STEP BACK in time, as those two chapters are INSET chapters, to inform us about MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

⁵ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** These hailstones are very likely to be meteors NOT ICE HAIL! Apart from the fifth and sixth trumpets which involve military attacks, all the plagues of the Day of the Lord are consistent with being "symptoms" of [a] large cosmic agent/s threatening the earth.

The red dust that turns the seas red when the mountain of the second trumpet hits an ocean indicates vast quantities of some rusty iron dust such as iron sulphide like all over the surface of Mars.

CHAPTER 19

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 11)

Revelation 17

Let's remember that a "woman" - "her" can most definitely refer to "a church" - Revelation 12 and the "woman" - there is the true Church of God.

Here in Revelation 17, we have "the great whore" - "woman" - "the mother of..."

Obvious this is not "the true Church of God." Let's look at some important phrases connected with the "woman" - this church. She sits on many "waters" - verse 1; (meaning given in verse 15) - many people, nations, and tongues.

The kings of the earth have been in bed with her (verse 2). The inhabitants of the earth have been made "drunk" with her wine (looks kind of nice in the glass) she pours out (verse 2). She is very rich in a physical way (verse 4).

The woman is "drunk with the blood of the saints" - verse 6. She sits on seven mountains (verse 10). The woman is "the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth (verse 18). In chapter 18, this woman, this "her" - is obviously also an "empire" indeed in a literal way as well, certainly at the time of the end she is. It was through her "sorceries" that all nations were deceived (chap.18:23). And once more in "her" was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all (the context is true saints) that were slain while she lived and was in domineering power (chap.18:24).



The Woman Riding the Beast

Add it all up, put it all together, use some common logic, as we look at "woman" church history.

Is this the Church of God, Seventh Day? Did that "church" do the above mentioned things? No, I do not think so. Is it the Baptist "churches" - did they do the above mentioned things in their history? Is this the Pentecostal "churches" - can you match them with the things done in Revelation chapters 17 and 18? Is this the Assemblies of God? Is this the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (the Mormons)? Is this the Jehovah Witnesses? Is this the Presbyterians? How about the chapters 17 and 18 being the Seventh Day Adventist church? Maybe chapter 17 and 18 is speaking about the Lutheran church. I DO NOT THINK SO!

You can go down through all the "Seventh Day" observing churches and all the "Sunday observing" churches in the Yellow Pages, and I do not think you will tie any of them with Revelation 17 and 18

There has been and can ONLY BE ONE church that meets ALL that is mentioned in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. A church that sits on MANY waters, many peoples, nations, and tongues. A church that has political connections with "kings" and other high ranking world leaders. A church that does have WORLDWIDE influence that can and has made the inhabitants of the earth drunk in many ways. A church that has great physical wealth and has had "nations" of physical riches under its control, hence an "empire" that influenced the world and nations in many physical ways, from beliefs, to religion, to philosophies, to government laws, to even war. A church that has in its history the killing "Christians" that differed with it, the blood of saints on its hands, in a very literal way. A church that has in many ways "reigned over the kings of the earth" and done it from having its own very real city within a city. A city that with the head of that church in that city, could decreed, order, have authoritative influence over even kings and governments, to do the "churches" bidding.

In all of the last 2,000 years, since Jesus ascended back to heaven, there has been ONLY ONE "woman" - ONE "church" that can answer to all that is written about it in Revelation 17 and 18. And that ONE church is the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH of the city of Rome!!

It is NOT POSSIBLE that ANY OTHER church could fulfill all that is said about it in those two chapter of Revelation. There is not ANY OTHER church that is large enough, wealthy enough, POWERFUL enough, sitting on many nations and tongues, having kings and governments influenced or directing controlled by it, and that also has a MASSIVE history of KILLING other saints or Christians. There can ONLY BE ONE church that has ever been since Christ, or is today, that answers to all the points given in Revelation 17 and 18. And this church is, I repeat, the Roman Catholic church - the Papacy!

This is so obviously true that just about all of your "old" (not sure what the new ones have to say) Protestant Bible Commentaries AGREE that chapter 17 is talking about the Papacy, the Church of Rome.

I give you some of the comments of Albert Barnes, from "Notes on the New Testament" - one of the most popular and best-selling Bible Commentaries of all time.

OF THE GREAT WHORE.

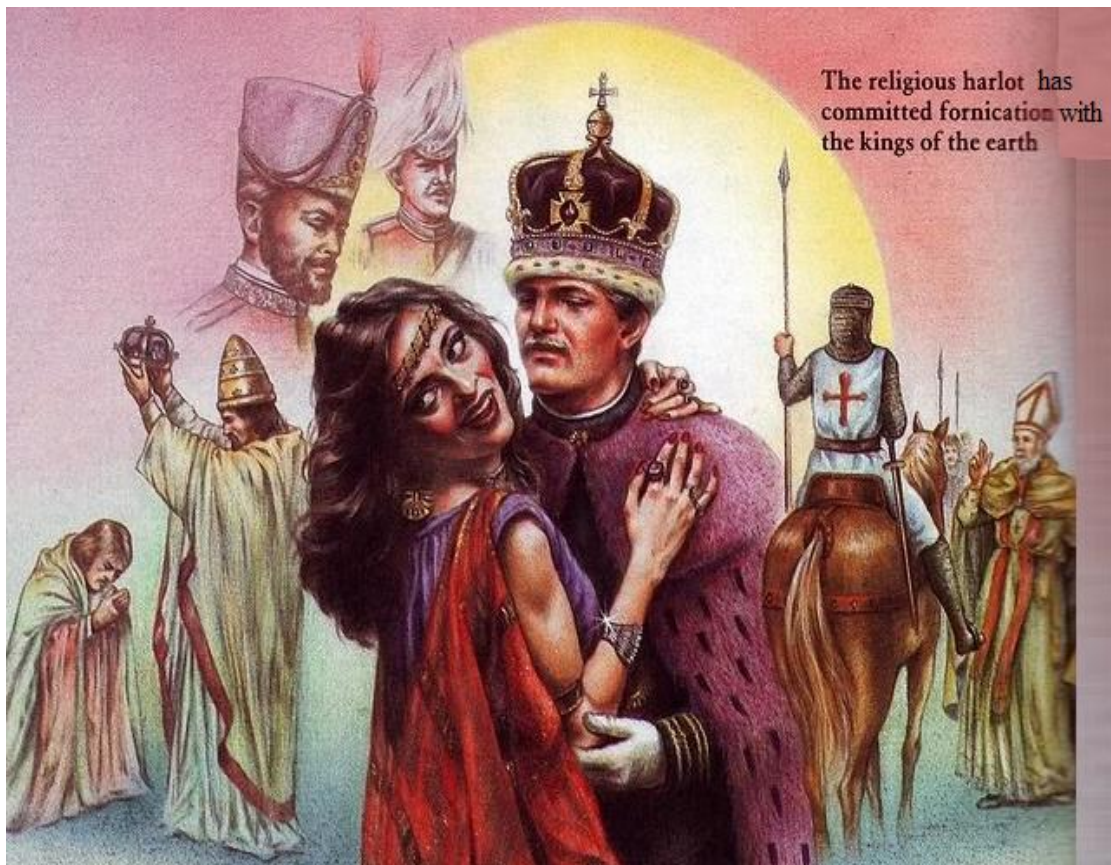
It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to represent a city under the image of a woman ... In verse 18 of this chapter it is expressly said that "this woman is the great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth" - that is, as I supposed, Papal Rome; and design here is to represent it as resembling an abandoned female - fit representative of an apostate, corrupt, unfaithful church...

THAT SITTETH ON MANY WATERS.

An image drawn from either Babylon, situated on the Euphrates ... or Rome, situated on the Tiber. In verse 15, these waters are said to represent the people, multitudes, nations, and tongues over which the government symbolized by the woman, ruled.

WITH WHOM THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION.

Spiritual adultery. The meaning is, that Papal Rome, unfaithful to God, and idolatrous and corrupt, has seduced the rulers of the earth, and led them into the same kind of unfaithfulness, idolatry, and corruption....How true this is history need not be stated. All the princes and kings in the dark ages and for many centuries were, and not a few of them are now, entirely under the influence of Papal Rome.



AND THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BEEN MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION.

The alluring cup which as a harlot she had extended to them....that is, they had been, as it were, intoxicated by the alluring cup she held out to them. What could better describe the influence of Rome on the people of the world, in making them, under these delusions, incapable of sober judgment, and in completely fascinating and controlling all their power....

AND I SAW A WOMAN.

Evidently the same which is referred to in verse 1.

SIT UPON A SCARLET COVERED BEAST....

The word "scarlet" denoted a bright red color - brighter than crimson, which is a red color tinged with blue....The color was obtained from a small insect which was found adhering to the shoots of a species of oak in Spain and Western Asia....It is applicable in the description of Papal Rome, because this is a favorite color there. thus it is used in chapter 12:3, where the same power [the one behind the power - Keith Hunt] is represented under the image of a "red dragon."

It is remarkable that nothing would better represent the favorite color at Rome than this, or the actual appearance of the Pope, the Cardinals, and the Priests in their robes, on some great festival occasion. Those who are familiar with the descriptions given of Papal Rome by travellers, and those who have passed much time in Rome, will see at once the propriety of this description, on the supposition that was intended to refer to the Papacy. I caused this inquiry to be made of an intelligent gentleman who had passed much time in Rome - without his knowing my design - what would strike a stranger on visiting Rome, or what would be likely particularly to arrest the attention as remarkable there; and he unhesitatingly replied, "the scarlet color."

This is the color of the dress of the Cardinals - their hats, and cloaks, and stockings being always of this color. It is the color of the carriages of the Cardinals, the entire body of the carriage being scarlet, and the trappings of the horses the same. On occasion of public festivals and processions, scarlet is suspended from the windows of the houses along which processions pass. the inner color of the cloak of the Pope is scarlet; his carriage is scarlet; the carpet on which he treads is scarlet. A large part of the dress of the body-guard of the Pope is scarlet....[of course today the Papacy does not use carriages and horse, but "scarlet" color is still used. Here Barnes is pointing out that in his day - middle 1800s - scarlet was greatly used by the Papacy - Keith Hunt]..... I conclude, therefore, that if it be admitted that it was intended to represent Papal Rome in the vision, the precise description would have been adopted which is found here.

FULL OF NAMES OF BLASPHEMY.

All covered over with blasphemous titles and names. What could more accurately describe Papal Rome than this?.....

AND I SAW THE WOMAN DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS.....

The meaning here is, that the persecuting power referred to had shed the blood of the saints; and that, in its fury, it had, as it were, drunk the blood of the saints, and had become, by drinking that blood, intoxicated and infuriated. No one need say how applicable this has been to the Papacy.....

AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS....

The meaning is, that the warfare in which so much blood was shed was directed against the saints as such ... and deserved to be called, by way of eminence, martyrs....How applicable this is to the Papacy, let the blood shed in the valleys of Piedmont; the blood shed in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva; the blood shed on St. Bartholomew's day; and the blood shed in the "Inquisition," testify.....

SEVEN HEADS ARE SEVEN MOUNTAINS.

Referring undoubtedly to Rome - the seven-hilled-city....[more that just interesting that Rome is built on seven hills - Keith Hunt / In contrast to the literal city of Babylon in Iraq which is not hilly and found on a plain – Editor: Roger Waite].....There can be no doubt that this refers to Rome - either Pagan, Christian, or Papal. All the circumstances combine in this;

all respectable interpreters agree in this. This would be naturally understood by the symbols used by John, and by the explanations furnished by the angel. See verse 18. "And the woman which you saw is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Every circumstance combines here in leading to the conclusion that Rome is intended. There was no other power or empire on the earth to which this could be properly applied; there was everything in the circumstance of the writer to lead to suppose that this was referred to; there is an utter impossibility now in applying the description to anything else.

The notes of Barnes on these chapters are very extensive and detailed. I have only reproduced a fraction of his notes, in his Bible Commentary.

As Barnes came to conclude, as I have concluded from all the natural and historic evidence, when you take all the facts and all the verses on this "woman" that rides the "beast" - the woman that guides and rules over nations, peoples, and kings, and the woman that has killed the saints, has blood on her hands, there is **ONLY ONE** possibility as to who she is - **THE MIGHTY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - THE PAPACY!!**

She sat on a "beast" - the secular/political/military machine of the Roman Empire, that had seven heads, or seven Holy Roman Empire resurrections. The **SEVENTH** resurrection is **YET TO COME!** It will be the very last religious/political/military power of Rome. Out of this **NOW UNITED** Europe, there will be **TEN** kings or governments that will give their undivided mind and strength and power to this end-time **MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT**. They shall try to **FIGHT** Jesus, the Lamb on His return to earth (verses 10-14).

And these same ten horns will finally come to see that the woman whore, is just that, she is a spiritual whore, she does not represent in any form, Jesus the Christ, she has been a false church, a deceiving church, a corrupt church, a **DECEPTION** that has influenced and made drunk just about all the world in one way or another. After her defeat by Christ and His armies at the battle of Armageddon the people of the beast's kingdom will **HATE** the whore, and turn on her and make her desolate, naked, burn her with fire (verse 16).

The armies of this coalition of the end-time Babylon Holy Roman Empire will be destroyed at Armageddon (Zech.14) but the people of the Empire will still be there in the various countries it ruled. It is they who will turn and start to ransack all the physical buildings etc. that represent the Empire - A mob action reflex. The average person by this time, will have come to see the real enemy was not the Christ from heaven but the very power they had been serving for 42 months. They will turn and hate the whore, and deal with her in no uncertain a way.

We must also note that in this 17th chapter, the woman whore was the **MOTHER OF HARLOTS!** She did have children that came out of her and grew to be women in their individual manner. But all of them have some of the genes we might say, some of the character, some of the things that came from their mother.

Of course Albert Barnes and others would not like to see that. They would hardly admit that all Protestant churches are the harlots from the mother church. Interesting it is, that the Mother has no difficulty in calling the Protestant churches her "wayward" daughters, who need to come back to her.

Let's look at a few things the woman whore has given to the world to make the world drunk on her fornications.

The RC church has given the world the Roman Calendar, and now just about all the world bows to it in some form, great or small. Most of the world recognizes the 1st of January, some fully and completely, others at least in part. When we moved from 1999 to the year 2,000, the first of January, was acknowledged by Eastern countries as well as the Western world. And it is that way every 1st of January now.

The RC church gave the world Christ-mass. In some form or other just about all nations give this season some acknowledgement, either religiously or the "celebrations" of that material festivity.

Most of the Western world, even many "churches" observe Halloween, originally, from the RC church as "All Saints Day."

The RC church conquered Britain and most Christian countries with Easter in place of Passover (I have a few in-depth studies on that on my website).

The RC church in giving us the Roman calendar had an easier way then to give us many pagan festivals, as well as how we regulate the hours of the day. So we have the day beginning in the middle of the night at 12 midnight.

Those are a few of the "made all nations drunk on the wine of her fornications" theology and adoptions from the pagan nations.

We must not forget of course the many false theological teachings it has made "Christian nations" drunk on, that she adopted and has passed on to her harlot daughters. Probably one of the most serious falsehoods was and is the teaching of sinners burning in a hell-fire for eternity, being in pain, screaming and burning but never dying. This teaching passed on into the Protestant churches and was used to bring "fire and brimstone" sermons to "get people saved."

The most serious falsehood this woman church gave and passed on was the adoption of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the fourth commandment, which plainly states it is the 7th day of the week that is the Sabbath of God. And also that change was connected with adding the false pagan festivals of the year and throwing out God's festivals.

So, putting it all together, as Albert Barnes said, there is just NO OTHER force or influence that can have had such a wide impact on the world, with nations, peoples, languages, kings, governments, and a so-called "Christian" religion of the masses, than the Roman Catholic church, the Papacy.

She is the BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION that will yet, ONE MORE TIME, ride the Roman political/military Empire of Europe. Prophecy is marching on. The scene is taking shape in Europe. It will come to pass, only time is needed and God can give lots of time, if He so decides.

I am 65 years old as I write these last end chapters of the New Testament Bible Story. If God grants me a long life like my father is having (he's now 87), will all this take place in my life time? Maybe, it certainly could, if God desires it. Then He may

not desire it and this prophecy of the book of Revelation may not be fulfilled in my life time. But I do guarantee you that IT WILL COME TO PASS, as I've expounded to you so far. If you have eyes to see and hears to hear, you can see it all taking shape in Europe, with the RC church, with the people of the West, and with the nations of the East.

The good news is that MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT AND HER EMPIRE WILL FALL, and will be no more. And that brings us to Revelation chapter 18.

CHAPTER 20

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 12)

Revelation 18

Let's use the same common sense logic in this chapter as we did in chapter 17. We will notice some key verses.

This Babylon has influenced kings, governments, all nations in an overall sense of the word "all" and have been made drunk by the wine of her wrongs, spiritual fornications. And "merchants" of the earth have grown rich through her. So we are dealing right away with MORE than just a "church" and its theology.

She sits as a queen, and thinks she is correct, and will see no sorrow. She is going to suffer death in one day, quick and deliberate death. Kings or government authorities will bewail her, when the smoke of her burning is seen. They will need to be far off, but will lament her destruction as it comes so fast (verses 2-10).



Babylon the Great has fallen!

The MERCHANTS of the earth will weep over her death, because it's the end of her trading and economy. Again, much more than just a "theology church" (verse 11). Notice the END of verse 13 ... no more "slaves" (margin has "bodies") and lives of people ... Oh, indeed we are back into person's lives being handled. Merchants who were "made rich by her" shall stand off and weep and wail, at her torment of destruction. They will say, "Alas, alas, the GREAT CITY, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. For in one hour so great riches is come to naught" (verses 15-17a).

All the shipmasters, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What was like unto this great city!" (verse 17b-18).

This is going to be such a massive and LARGE destruction that people working in the ship industry will see from afar the smoke of her burning. Those merchants that do their trading via the movement of ships will weep and cry because their riches are now over and finished (verse 19).

This is way more than just a "theological church" of some religion.

This great city or power called Babylon will be thrown down with VIOLENCE! (verse 21).

She will be a power that did proclaim the "bridegroom" and the "bride - Jesus as the bridegroom, and the "church" as the bride of Christ, but it was DECEPTION and all (certainly a very large part) of the nations were deceived by her gospel.

And once more notice verse 24. In her was found the BLOOD OF THE PROPHETS, and of SAINTS, and of all that were slain upon earth (in the context of "Christianity").

She is guilty of killing God's true prophets and saints! This is no mere "church theology" religious group. It is THAT, yes indeed, BUT this account GOES WAY BEYOND, some nice quiet little "religious" church.

This chapter is talking about AN EMPIRE! A massive political / trading POWER in the world, that makes merchants RICH and wealthy - literally! A power that deals in all kinds of merchant goods, even slaves and the lives of people. It is a world power that kills God's prophets and saints!

Let's look at the world scene. Now granted, what I'm about to say could be argued, if you perhaps think Jesus will not return for another five hundred years, things would be drastically different by then, on the world scene. But if you believe Jesus' return is not hundreds of years away, then....

Could South America, very high in Roman Catholic religion, be the global power to be this Babylon here spoken about? VERY UNLIKELY indeed.

Could the African continent be this global power - even more unlikely I would say.

Could this global power be Russia, a hundred years or so back, Roman Catholicism was very prominent in Russia. I guess you could argue given enough time, maybe Russia is the Babylon on Revelation 18. Could this mighty power of this chapter be China? They have right now a red hot industry as of 2007, but they are not and never did have the history of worldwide Christian deception, and mass killings of the saints of God.

What about the Arab nations, could they be this Babylon of Revelation? Once more I guess if you argue and answer with "a few hundred years or so before Jesus returns" - you might be able to think the Arab nations will be this power of Revelation.

But finally what about Europe? With what we have seen from Revelation chapter 17, this chapter would flow right along, as an extension or further expounding of chapter 17 and Europe being this end-time economical and deceptive "christian" power, that has in its history killed the saints of God, and put forth teachings, and customs and practices, that have indeed covered much of the earth in DECEPTIONS.

Europe has finally come together, after many centuries of certain nations and leaders of those nations WANTING to bring Europe together by FORCE of warfare, and did NOT succeed. But "economical" reasons have persuaded them to hook up-arms and walk together. And it so happens that most of those countries are predominately Roman Catholic.

I submit to you, that of all the "powers" in the world - the United European Empire best fits the description and the future prophecy (taking all the centuries of the past into consideration) of Revelation 18.

And so the reality at the end of the day is that this prophecy of Revelation 17 and 18, is the BABYLON POWER OF EUROPE with THE WOMAN "CHURCH" - THE BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM, riding this last end-time political / economical / religious system.

She will come to power relatively quickly, and be so great on the world scene it will take your breath away. She will be the world's greatest trading and economical power that will do wonders in making some people very wealthy.

This end-time Babylon will be the "king of the north" in Daniel 11, who will come and destroy the "king of the south" - the Arab confederacy. It will then march into the Holy Land, and take Jerusalem - Daniel 11:40-45. THEN there shall be a time of trouble as never was on the earth - Daniel 12:1. It is the same time Jesus spoke about (Matt.24:24) and Jeremiah wrote about (Jer.30:7). The GREAT TRIBULATION will begin.

The Western world will come under the heel of this end-time, 7th resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. It will deal in slavery and the lives of people. It will kill many of the saints of God for one more time, before Jesus returns. Some of the Lord's people will have to flee to the wilderness. The two witnesses of God will preach in the city of Jerusalem.

Then into the Day of the Lord, this power will try to conquer the people of the East (the 5th trumpet of Revelation 9). But it will not succeed, just as it did not succeed before in World War 1 and 2. The power to the East will counter attack (the 6th trumpet of Revelation 9) and THAT POWER TO THE EAST will be God's hammer to SMASH, BLAST, and bring DESTRUCTION on Europe.

And so we are back in Revelation 18, at the time of this Babylon Mystery Religion Empire being DESTROYED, and the merchants of the earth wailing and weeping over her.

Chapter 17 and 18 are chapters that "clue us in" on this mighty end-time Beast power and tell us about her destruction in the blowing of the 6th trumpet. These "clue us in" INSET chapters have taken us back to the 6th trumpet.

The 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation are CONNECTED - they are two parts of the WHOLE. And chapter 17th is proved by history to be the Roman Catholic church - a woman whore - riding the empire or Beast, which had SEVEN heads or resurrections (the 7th yet to come in full reality) in history called the Holy Roman Empire. Every one of those resurrections was in Europe. The 7th and final resurrection will be in the same geographical area of the planet - Europe!

It's ALREADY THERE, but the woman / beast has not yet reached full maturity, but it will, in God's time plan, He can hold it back from maturing for as long as He wishes, according to how long He wants the church of Jesus Christ to do its work, before He closes the door on their teaching and preaching of His word, to the nations of the world.

The worldwide INTERNET is of the greatest tools to proclaim the full Gospel, but when the woman rides the Beast for one last time, and as I have been VERY PLAIN as to who this woman is, you can be assured my website and others will disappear off into outer-space, and there will be a time of SILENCE, for the last 42 months of this age, except for the two witnesses in Jerusalem.

There is one more important voice that comes from heaven saying, "COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE, THAT YOU BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YOU RECEIVE NOT HER PLAGUES!" (verse 4).

Do YOU love God's Word, do you fear and tremble in the right way, before the Almighty? Do you desire to DO HIS WILL and live His commandments. The Eternal wants to give you eternal LIFE with Him, but you must be willing to see the deceptions of Babylon and COME OUT OF HER! - THE WOMAN THAT RIDES THE BEAST

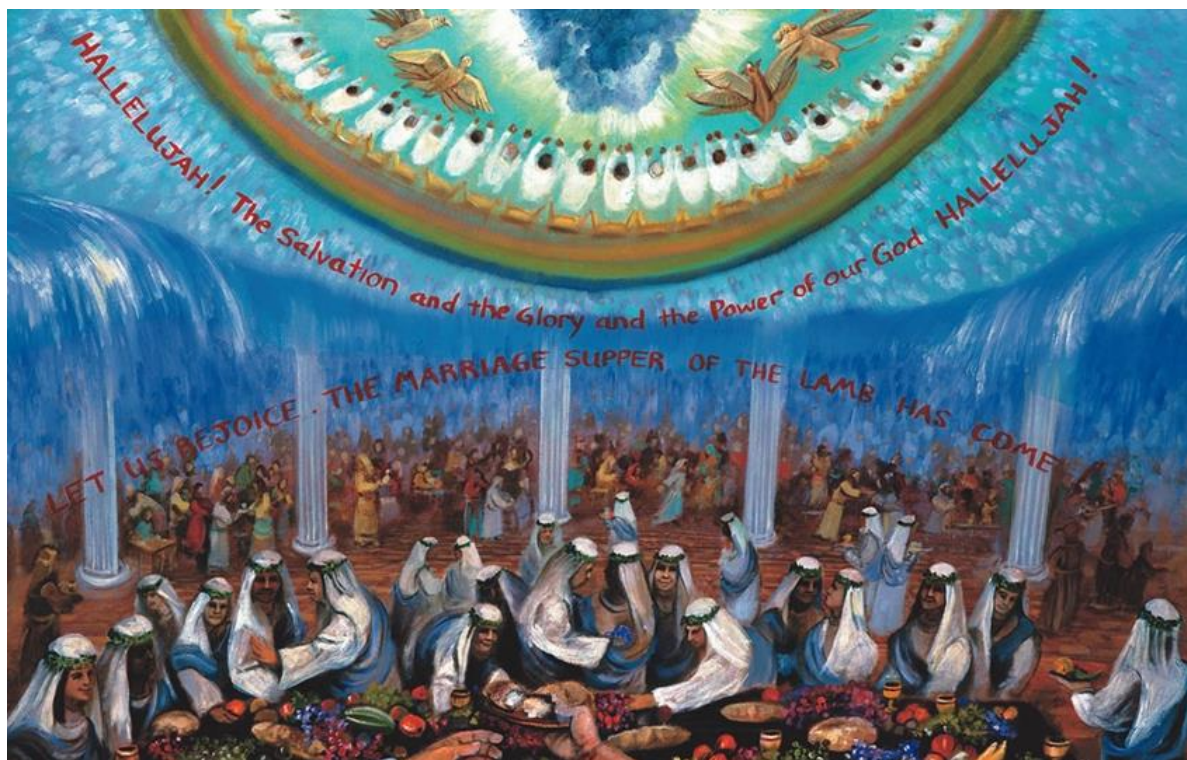
If you need IN-DEPTH proof and reading material, the Roman Catholic church being the "woman that rides the beast" at the time of the end, then you need to read "A Woman Rides the Beast" by Dave Hunt (no relation to me). This large, (over 500 pages) book was published in 1994, by Harvest House Publications. It may still be in print, or Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.com may have copies, or your local Public Library may carry it. The book is LOADED with facts and histories to prove the "woman whore" of Revelation is the Roman Catholic church.

Revelation 19

Now, in chapter 19 we are brought forward again to the very coming of Christ IN THE CLOUDS with His army, to battle, and have "the supper of the great God" (verse 17).

John hears the voice of "much people" (Green in his English/Greek Interlinear translates "a voice of a crowd") - not human people for humans do not go to heaven at death - saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: True and righteous are His judgments: for He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand." And again they said: "Alleluia" and her smoke rose up for ever and ever, and the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, "Amen; Alleluia" (verses 1-4).

John hears another voice coming out of the throne area, saying: "Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great." He hears as it were the voice of a multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunders, saying: "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent REIGNETH. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the MARRIAGE of the LAMB is come, and His WIFE has made herself ready" (verses 5-7).



Here we are in the time frame and scene of Jesus coming for His bride the true church of God, and the marriage feast is taking place. What a BLESSED AND WONDERFUL time that will be. Finally the saints of all ages are resurrected or if alive at Jesus' coming, CHANGED from mortal to immortal, from human to divine, from corruption to incorruption. It is the time of what Paul was inspired to tell us about in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It is the last trumpet sound, the RESURRECTION takes place, the angels gather together the saints from the four corner of the earth (Matthew 24:30,31). It is the time of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The angels will gather the saints and lead them to Christ in the CLOUDS, in the AIR of this planet. The BRIDEGROOM and the BRIDE shall be together, the marriage of the Lamb to His bride has come! What GLORY, what SPLENDOR, the angels sing, a display of fireworks like no other display blazes away. The HAPPINESS, the JOY, the PRAISES, the SINGING, the heavenly choir thunders out the news and the approval. At last the time has now come for Jesus the Christ, with His bride and the angels, to TAKE RULERSHIP over the nations of the earth.

Jesus' bride, the Church of God, all of them, each individual is dressed in CLEAN, WHITE, linen, which represents RIGHTEOUSNESS! (verse 8).

They will be BLAMELESS before Christ and God the Father. No sin will be found in them. No sins will be mentioned, they are clean and white, pure and holy. You need

to read my study (if you have not done so) called "The Truth about Judgment Day" and understand it correctly.

John says he was told: "Write, BLESSED are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. These things are the true sayings of God" (verse 9).

John falls at the angels' feet to worship him, but is told not to do so, for the angels are like his fellow servants and brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus; all are to worship only God. And the testimony of Jesus Christ is the "spirit of prophecy." Those in Christ, at the time of the end of this age, will KNOW the prophecy of Jesus, they will understand, the truth of the matter will be shown to them, they are the ELECT that cannot be deceived. They will know the prophecy of Jesus, they will know who the true servants of God are and who the false teachers are.

John sees heaven open, and behold a white horse and He that sat upon it was called FAITHFUL and TRUE. He is coming in RIGHTEOUSNESS to JUDGE and make WAR!!



"And the armies in Heaven followed Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev 19:14).

This is not the little Lord Jesus in a manger in a stable, this is not the bloody and battered Lord shedding His blood on the cross. This is the MIGHTY, the POWERFUL, the ONE who can make RIGHTEOUS WAR, who can JUDGE with righteousness the nations and the people of the earth. He is the ONE who can perfectly decide who are to be DESTROYED of those on earth who are destroying the earth.

His eyes are as a FLAME of FIRE; on His head are MANY CROWNS (He is King of kings); and He has a name that no human knows, only He Himself. He is clothed with a tunic dipped in blood (He will now spill the blood of the armies of the world

who come to fight Him); and His name is called "The WORD OF GOD." He is the very living word of God, the PERFECT ONE!

Oh yes, He has His armies also, just like the world and the Beast power and the people from the East, will have their armies, so Jesus will come with His mighty armies of saints and angels. What a scene, the armies of the Lord will ride white horses, be clothed in white raiment, clean and white (verses 11-14).

Put yourself in the mind-eye picture, can you imagine the scene? It is the battle of the ages. It is the battle like no other battle. It is the battle to STOP men from destroying the earth. It is the time as Jesus said, that unless those days were CUT SHORT, no flesh would be saved alive, the people of the earth would indeed obliterate themselves from off this planet.

But the days will be cut short. Jesus will come with His army. At the command of His voice (a sharp two edged sword) He will SHOUT the battle CRY! His army will come down from the clouds with a mighty thunderous shout, the heavens will be ablaze, the lightnings flashing here and there. What the world (and especially the human armies at the place called Armageddon, led by Satan, by the "beast" leader and, the "false prophet") will believe is the forces from another planet, an invasion from outer space, will in fact be the GLORIOUS, POWERFUL, MIGHTY, SPECTACULAR, JUDGE of the nations, Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, coming to RULE with a ROD of iron, and to tread out the winepress of the fierceness and WRATH of ALMIGHTY GOD!!

The prophecy of Zechariah 14 will be! It has now come to pass, it is now a reality in our New Testament Bible Story.

Jesus has come. On His vesture and on His thigh is the name KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The armies of the Beast power in the Holy Land, and the armies of the Eastern powers, from the other side of the Euphrates, will have collected themselves together at the plain called Armageddon. They will have their state-of-the-art space age rockets and tanks, and their fast nuclear-weaponed planes and all the latest war machines that man has invented, to that time in history. They will be ready to DO BATTLE!

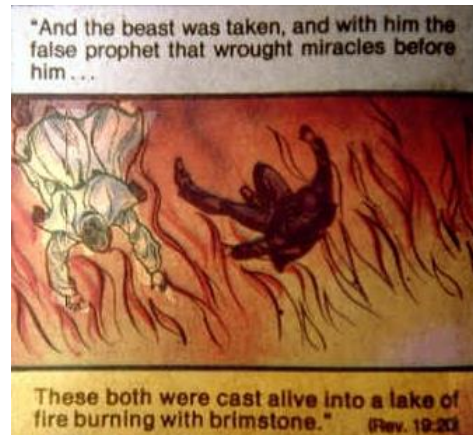
But it will be NO CONTEST! Jesus will say the word, and all the people of the armies there to fight Him, all their flesh shall MELT off their bones. The blood will flow from Armageddon like a river for 183 miles, going south, passing Jerusalem, and on down to the land below. Indeed the time has then come in Revelation 19 that was foretold long ago by Zechariah - chapter 14 (verses 14-16).

We still step back a little in time. God wants to give emphasis! An angel standing in the sun, cries out: "COME YE FOULS OF THE AIR, GATHER TOGETHER FOR THE SUPPER OF THE GREAT GOD, That you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and they that sit on them. the flesh of all, both small and great, free and slaves."

Yes, that GREAT WAR of the end of the age has come. The rubber is going to hit the road. The acid test has come. The beast man and the kings of the earth, and their armies are gathered together (verses 17-19).

The BATTLE is under way! THE BEAST MAN IS TAKEN, TOGETHER WITH THE "FALSE PROPHET", who wrought miracles. Yes, Satan will have his miracle working man on earth also, just as God will have His two miracle working men - the two witnesses in Jerusalem.

Jesus will take these two evil men - the beast man and the false prophet, and they will face capital PUNISHMENT. They will both be THROWN INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE - they are now DEAD, dead as a door nail!



The armies of these two end-time evil men will be slain. He who sits on the white horse - Jesus the Christ, will speak the word and the armies of mankind will be slain. The fowls of the air will have their feast of the supper of the Great God (verses 20-21).

It only remains now for the Devil, for Satan to be chained, and God's promised ONE THOUSAND YEARS of the age of RESTITUTION will commence. The AGE TO COME, is about to start!

CHAPTER 21

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 13)

Revelation 20

John sees an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. The angel lays hands on the Devil, on Satan, and BINDS HIM UP for ONE THOUSAND YEARS! Satan is put into the bottomless pit, he is shut up, and sealed from coming out on to the earth. He will not be allowed to DECEIVE the nations and peoples of the earth, UNTIL the thousand years are finished, then yes, God will allow him to come out and once more deceive SOME, but only for a very short season, a very short time (verses 1-3).

What a blessing for the people of the earth, to have NO Satan around for one thousand years. We often do not realize the horrible work and depths of Satan. When it is all known, I think we will be somewhat shocked at HOW CLEVER, HOW CUNNING, HOW DECEPTIVE HE CAN BE, as he often comes as an angel of "light."



Satan is bound in the bottomless pit

Most of the world, the people who have lived in any age, have been BLINDED - they will be shocked when they are raised to life again, and really come to understand the depths of the deceptive work of Satan. The Devil really does come OFTEN as an angel of light. There are, as I write to finish off this New Testament Bible Story, OVER ONE BILLION, yes, that is with a big "B" - Billion Roman Catholics in the world. To them their Catholic "universal" church is pleasant, nice, caring, warm, comfortable, and they believe theologically correct (even if some do disagree with the ruling on "birth control" and "sex only for reproduction") on the salvation points of theology.

Then you have all the hundreds of thousands in all the other "Christian" denominations around the world. Most of the members in those church denominations are blinded, they just simply do not know, or they are not concerned with real study of the Scriptures. They are in a "comfortable pew" and like it so. It is their spiritual leaders that are mainly at fault. Most of those spiritual leaders do go to "theological school" and study for four years or more. They have encountered the

truth BUT just will not teach it! Satan does a number on all these one billion and hundreds of millions that go under the name of "Christ."

I subscribe to a "Christian Book" club. Every month you have this magazine coming with all kinds of very fine writers (as far as English "prose" goes) - articulate, educated, and have all the "stuff" needed to sell books to the Christian community. I have nothing against the "prose" of English. Jesse, who has her Website on my website of mine, was a much better English "prose" writer than me, she had a way of writing much like all these Christian book writers out there, with ONE EXCEPTION - the MOST important one - Jesse KNEW AND LIVED the truth of God's word. So, what am I saying, about those "Christian religious writers" of some fame, or not? To put it bluntly (and I think you know by now I do at times put things very bluntly) - they ARE DECEPTIVE teachers, who have and are NOT teaching the theological truth of God's word. But they come to you as "angels of light."

Satan is using them to deceive well over a BILLION Christians on this earth! You think I'm exaggerating. Well just ask any of them about the FOURTH commandment in Exodus 20.

Then you have the Islamic faith. I believe they say there are about one BILLION of Islam faith believers in the world at present. They are deceived also.

You have other faiths of the Eastern world, different religious faiths in China, India, Japan. They are all deceived!

And what about all the hundreds of millions, who just simply do not believe in God, period! They just do not think God exists, or do not think about if He exists or not. The creation around then TESTIFIES to the existence of the Almighty, but they choose not to think about it. They are deceived also.

All this DECEPTION, and the one behind it all is Satan the Devil. Think of the LIBERATING EFFECT this world will feel when Satan is chained up and CANNOT go around deceiving in any of his many disguises. It will be ASTOUNDING and a liberating experience for those people who do live through to see the coming of Christ and who feel the effect the world will be under when the Devil is chained up, and cannot do any of his dirty work in the lives of individual people and governments of nations.

John sees, what all true Christians down the ages have yearned for, have waited for, and looked forward to seeing. Thrones are there, individuals sitting on them, having judgment. They are the lives and people of God from all ages. They have refused to have anything to do with BABYLON the great. They have been willing to LIVE and to DIE if necessary, for the truths of the Lord. They were the ELECT and CHOSEN, of God. Now they sit on thrones and REIGN with Jesus Christ for a THOUSAND YEARS!!

They have been the relatively SMALL FLOCK, the VERY LITTLE flock as Jesus once put it, but to them God the Father, is PLEASED to give them the Kingdom.

All the prophets of old have written about the AGE TO COME (as Paul once termed it) - NOW it is here! Now the saints with Jesus, with Enoch, with Abraham, with

Moses, with David, with all the well-known and not known, true Children of the Father, shall reign and rule the nations of this earth for a thousand years.

And by the way, this is a literal thousand years, otherwise if not there would have been no need to have gotten so specific in saying "a thousand years." The book of Revelation, when saying "forty two months" means 42 months, not a week, or two years, or 15 months, it means 42 months. So when John writes one thousand years, it means just that, ONE THOUSAND YEARS! (verses 4-6).

If you have not already done so, please read my study on the millennium (which means "thousand") called "Armageddon and the Age to Come" for some details in the Scriptures concerning that age yet ahead of us.

Jesus said in John chapter 5, that ALL in the graves would be raised (John 5:25-29). Here in verse 5 is an important verse that breaks up into some detail, what Jesus said in the gospel of John. It is an example of a Bible study key - get all the verses on any particular subject. This verse here shows clearly that ONLY the "saints" of God will be in what here is called "the first resurrection." Those NOT in the first resurrection, are not raised to life UNTIL AFTER the thousand years. Now, that is pretty plain and simple to understand. Those that are not classified by God as worthy to be in the first resurrection, for whatever reasons the Father has, will not rise in a resurrection until AFTER the thousand years.

BUT THEY WILL RISE IN A RESURRECTION, that is important to know and to remember. More about that resurrection a little later.

When the thousand years are expired Satan is to be loosed out of his prison. He will go out to once more DECEIVE the nations which are in the four quarters of the year. Gog and Magog (the Russian / Chinese part of the planet) is especially named, for reasons we are not told about. But nations in all four quarters are included. They will be gathered to battle, and the number is not small at all, like the sands of the sea.

This army goes up and surrounds the camp or home of "saints", and the beloved city. This seems to indicate the saints are ones in the physical flesh, not yet made immortal, who live in the beloved city, which is pretty certain to be the Holy City - Jerusalem.

You may have many questions about this, well so do I. We are given no more details anywhere in the Bible concerning this battle. The "why" is the big question. I'm sure God will have very good reasons for allowing all this to happen, we will just have to wait until Jesus comes to receive the answers to our questions. All we can do for now is read it and believe it will take place as written.

It is a swift victory for God, for fire comes down from heaven and devours this huge army.

I will say this, this battle has NOTHING to do with that mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Both are at the opposite ends of the one thousand years. As I will write (God willing on all the Old Testament prophetic books) on those chapters in the future going through the OT prophetic books, I will just leave it for now, as I've stated. (verses 4 - 10)

The Devil is this time dealt with in another manner, he is thrown into the lake of fire that the beast "man" and the false prophet were thrown into a thousand years earlier. It would seem that fire is burning continually during the thousand years. You will read about this fire in Isaiah 66:15-24, which is also a chapter on the age to come. Some capital punishment may exist in the millennium, for those who do not desire to have control over their fleshly minds (we can still be carnal without the help of Satan) and who will still want to do wicked things and transgress against the Lord.

The Devil will see his handy work go up in smoke once more. He will indeed be tormented about it all for ever and ever (Greek means "ages of the ages." He now begins to see there is no victory for him, he's smashing his head against a brick wall, and his fate is possibly what Jude alluded to in saying, "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13).

Satan will know that soon there will be no more humans he can influence, deceive, possess, or control. His time is just about up, and the thought of not being able to have humans to manipulate, and lead into sins, must give him nightmares at the thoughts of it all coming to pass. He indeed will have terrible mental torment over it all (verses 7-10). Not being able to deceive and influence and even control, would be one of the greatest punishments he and his demons could possibly be punished with.

Verse 10 tells us that Satan will be tormented for as the Greek reads: "for ages of the ages." As Satan is made of spirit, physical fire and brimstone cannot kill him. Of course God can say the word and he is no longer, but we see from Jude and from this verse that it is very likely he will be punished forever in the blackness of darkness.⁶

The White Throne Judgment

John sees a great white throne. He that sits upon it, His face makes the earth and heaven seem as if not there. Obviously it is as the next verses tell us the sea and death and hell (margin is "the grave") gave up the dead.

From verse 5 we know this is the SECOND resurrection! The insignificant and the kings, the famous, all great or small, from young to old, were raised up to life again. The "books" - in Greek "the biblios" - from where we derive the word "Bible" from - was opened. And another book - "the book of life" was opened. These dead, now raised to life, were judged by what is written in the "biblios" according to how they lived, their attitude of mind. The sea gave up the dead, and the grave gave up the dead, all the dead, and they were judged according to how they lived, how they thought, their very attitude of mind.

I have written in detail about this passage and all the teaching of the rest of the Bible as to being called and chosen, and the hundreds of millions down through the ages, that have not been offered salvation in their lifetime, who died knowing not the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the only way to salvation. Those studies are called, "The Great White Throne Judgment" and "Called and Chosen - When" and also "The Truth about Judgment Day."

⁶ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** My views on this topic are found on page 248 of volume 3 of this New Testament Bible Story.

Indeed there have been millions in past ages that lived and died not having the Bible, and not knowing Jesus, the only name under heaven whereby you can be saved (Acts 4:12).

This resurrection is not some millions standing at attention while some judge (God) brings out a TV screen and has two columns, the right hand one listing all the "good" deeds and the left hand column listing all the "bad" deeds. And another book on the judges right hand where the names of those to be saved will be entered. Then the two columns of good and bad are added up to see which out numbers the other. If there is more good deeds than bad one, their name is entered into the book of life, and they pass through a door that gives them entry into the eternal Kingdom of God.

Some of you may laugh at such a scene. But SERIOUSLY, SOME CHURCHES TEACH SUCH A DOCTRINE!

Now, do you know WHY this idea that some hold is CRAZY, and off the wall? Because if it was a true teaching of God, then SOME would obtain salvation BY WORKS!!

You may not know this, but the SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS - DO HAVE such a teaching, it is called "The INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT."

Maybe other "Christian" churches have something similar. It's a processing line, to investigate all your sins and good deeds, add them up, see which comes out on top, then depending which there is more of, you are either written in the book of life or you are cast into eternal hell fire, where you shout and scream for eternity in pain from the fire.

I TELL YOU FRIENDS, BRETHREN, ALL THIS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST FALSE DECEPTIONS PERPETRATED BY SATAN THE DEVIL!!

NOT ONE SINGLE PERSON, **EVER** IS GOING TO OBTAIN SALVATION, ETERNAL LIFE **THROUGH WORKS** It is one of the clearest teachings in the Bible as we have seen in this New Testament Bible Story, that you are SAVED ONLY BY **GRACE** (Ephesians 2:8-10). If you are in any doubt about that you need to study my study called "Saved by Grace."

A lot of "churches" teach you that you are saved by grace, the SDA church does, BUT THEN they come up with some CRAZY, UNSCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE, about SOME being able to EARN their way to salvation and into the book of life BY WORKS, by someone (usually God the Father or Jesus) standing as judge, opening the Bible and investigating to see if you have more good works than bad, and then that decides if you're going to hell fire for eternity or into God's Kingdom for eternity.

I'm telling you with plain talk, SUCH A TEACHING is not only AGAINST everything the Bible teaches on obtaining salvation, but such a teaching is FROM SATAN HIMSELF!

In MANY studies on my website, you are given the TRUTH about salvation, and the truth about being "called" and "chosen" and THE ONLY way to eternal life. I show you the MANY passages that give the truth, that ALL ARE IN SPIRITUAL

BLINDNESS, UNTIL God decides to call you and REMOVE that spiritual blindness. I show you that He does NOT call everyone in this physical lifetime.

Romans chapter 9 through 11 is ONE of the many passages to ABSOLUTELY PROVE this fact of the Bible and the plan of salvation as GOD HAS PLANNED it FOR EVERY SINGLE PERSON EVER CONCEIVED AND / OR BORN.

GOD HAS A PLAN OF SALVATION, we saw in the letters of Peter, that the Eternal WOULD LIKE TO SEE EVERYONE COME TO REPENTANCE! He does not want anyone to PERISH! He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that whoever believes on Him, should NOT PERISH, but have eternal life (the famous John 3:16).

But UNTIL BLINDNESS is removed YOU CANNOT even start on being called and chosen, and walking the road that leads to eternal life. Until you KNOW Jesus, the ONLY name by which you can be saved, you AIN'T EVEN OUT OF THE DUG-OUT, you ain't even on FIRST base! And MILLIONS down through the ages HAVE NEVER LEFT THE DUG-OUT!

These verses in Revelation 20:11-13 are not talking about some investigative judgment, or people standing in a line to see if they are going to be saved or not by looking at the tally of their works in the light of the Bible.

You have TWO choices, either these verses ARE talking about some "standing in line to be investigated" as to whether they get eternal life, OR these are people for the first time HAVING SALVATION OFFERED to them.

The LATTER is by far the BEST and the MOST LOVING, from a God who just did NOT call and offer salvation to millions who once lived on this earth. If you choose the first, then I can see why millions think Christianity is garbage and God is a monster. Some of the teachings from Catholicism and Protestantism have been garbage and did make God out to be a monster, who loves to fry people for all eternity in some hell fire.

If you have not seen it before, are you getting now to see why the Lord proclaims in STRONG language that the majority of so-called Christianity is MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT? It will be DESTROYED, and TRUTH will reign supreme one day!

These verses show MILLIONS of people coming up in a physical RESURRECTION, who were never called or chosen in their physical life-time. The Bible will be opened to them, they will UNDERSTAND IT! The book of LIFE will be opened to them, they will be CALLED to salvation. They will COME TO KNOW Jesus, the only door to God's eternal Kingdom. They will NEED TO REPENT!

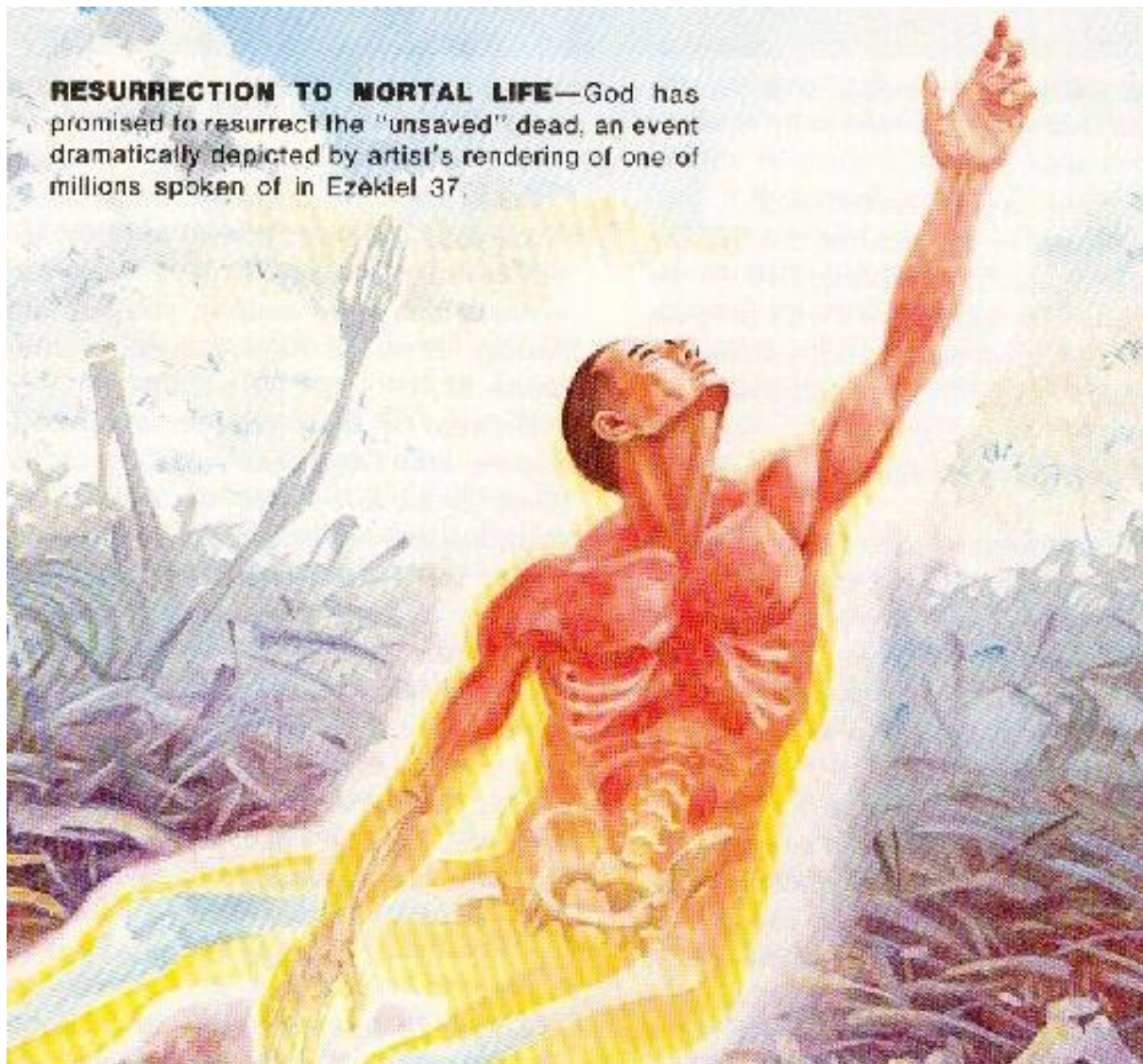
They will need to accept Jesus as their PERSONAL SAVIOR! They will need to CHANGE their life (they will come up with the mind-set they had all their life and died with) - GET IN HARMONY WITH WANTING TO LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF GOD (Matthew 4:4) WANTING TO LIVE WITH THE FAITH OF CHRIST (Galatians 2:20) IN THEM. They will NEED TO CHANGE THEIR MIND-SET, and HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST IN THEM (Philippians 2:5).

ALL THAT WE HAVE STUDIED CONCERNING SALVATION IN THE WRITINGS OF PAUL, JAMES, PETER, JOHN, AND THE GOSPELS OF CHRIST, they will need TO SET THEIR MINDS WITH THIS NEW MAN IN CHRIST, JUST AS WE ARE DOING, JUST AS THOSE WHO WENT BEFORE US HAD TO DO.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BE SAVED, AND THAT IS BY GRACE, BUT WE MUST CHANGE THE WAY WE THINK AND ACT, AND MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE BIBLE.

EVERY SINGLE PERSON WILL BE SAVED EXACTLY THE SAME WAY. And those coming up in this resurrection of Revelation 20:11-13, will be saved just like we are saved today.

This is a WONDERFUL passage of Scripture that gives HOPE for the MILLIONS who were never given salvation in their life time, who never had the BLINDNESS removed, who never KNEW Jesus the Christ. This is not some "second chance" doctrine that some say we teach. This is a FIRST CHANCE!!



And let me tell you, this explanation of Revelation 20:11-13 IS A WHOLE LOT KINDER, LOVING, AND GOOD NEWS, than the SILLY ideas of what the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches HAVE taught AND MAYBE still TEACH!

I have put much of what I just said in BOLD LETTERS. I want you to REALLY get the point, of the truth of God as opposed to false teaching.

The length of time for this white throne judgment period is NOT given. The one some have used in Isaiah (Isa.65:20 - a hundred years) may have nothing to do with this period and resurrection of Revelation 20, but to do with the relatively new earth and heavens of the 1,000 years age. The context in Isaiah would relate to the millennium age.

If you truly LOVE God, you should be REJOICING - PRAISING GOD - for the TRUTHS you are learning through this New Testament Bible Study. As a young man, yes I was SHOCKED at some of the things I was discovering about all the Christianity I had followed from age 6 to 18. BUT at the same time, I can remember SHOUTING FOR JOY at the truths God was revealing to me in His Word.

Jesus PROMISED His true followers, "You shall KNOW the TRUTH, and the truth will set you FREE."

It takes the HEART, it takes HUMILITY, to takes a HUNGER and THIRST after RIGHTEOUSNESS yes, it takes all of that, but I guarantee if you have it, YOU WILL FIND THE TRUTH, AND YOU WILL BE SET FREE!

So it is all done. Everyone now has had a chance for salvation. It only remains for those who REJECTED it, who would not humble themselves, who would not REPENT, to be rewarded with DEATH, not eternal life in hell fire, but DEATH, complete destruction of body and mind. "And death and hell (the grave) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the SECOND death. And whoever was not found in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire" (verses 14-15).

Now a righteous, sinless eternity, in a new universe headquarters can begin.

CHAPTER 22

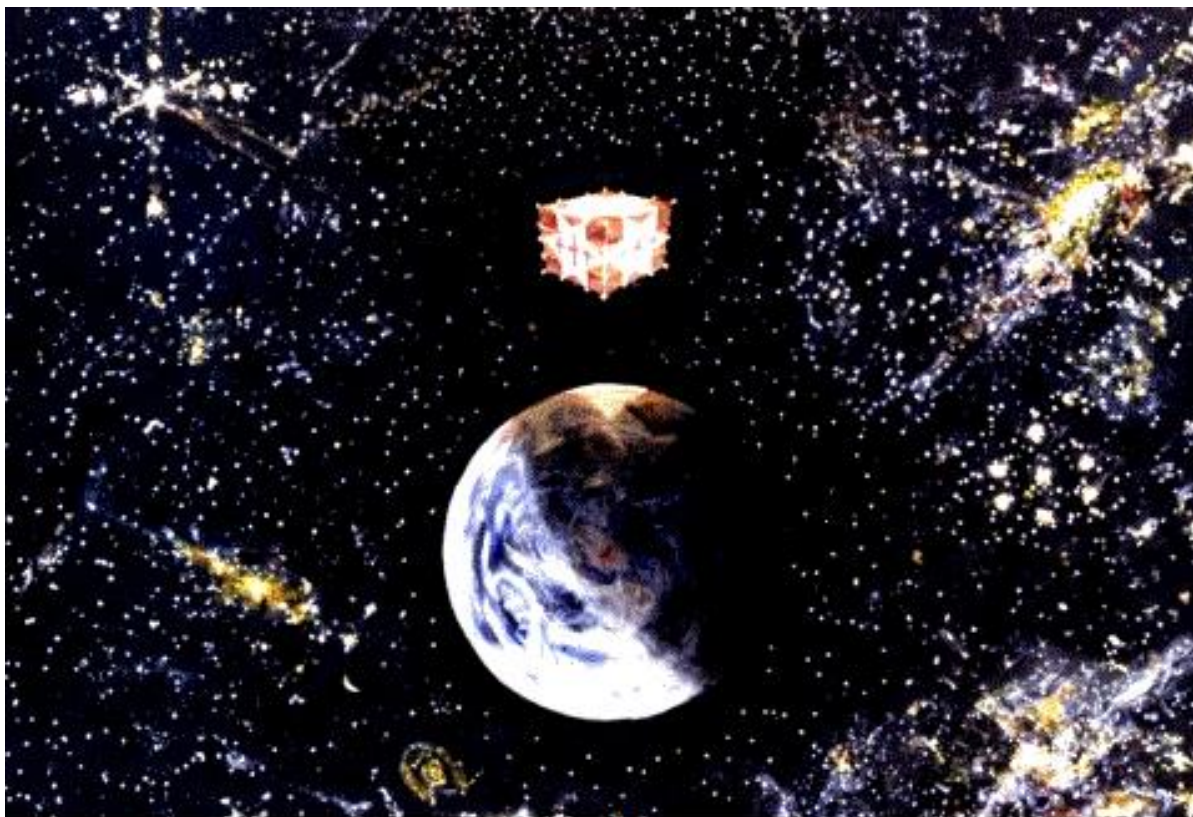
THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 14)

Revelation 21

The plan of salvation for human kind is OVER! It is all finally finished. Satan the Devil and all his host of demons are cast away. No sin, no evil, no wickedness, no impurity, no deception, no falsehoods, no death, will ever be. It is all finished and glorious eternity lies ahead for the Family of God and the righteous angels.

John sees a NEW heaven and a NEW earth, and there is no more sea.

Here is what John sees: "And I John saw the HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, coming DOWN from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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 shall be their God." (verses 2,3).



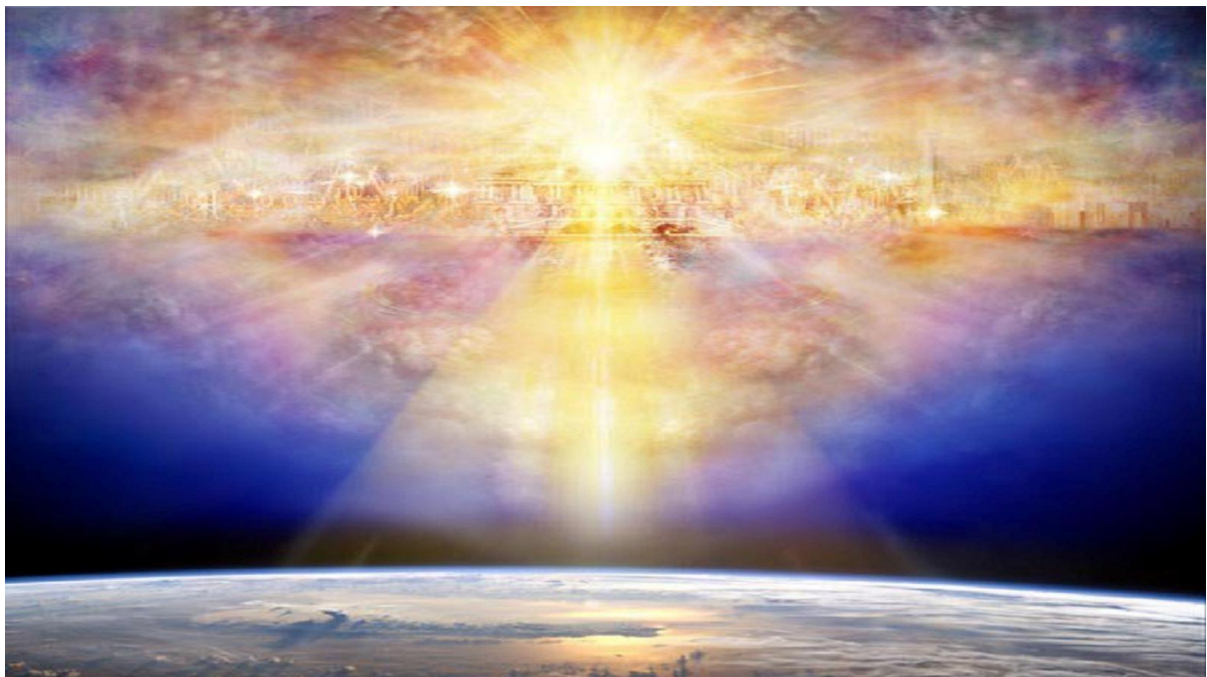
"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband" (Rev. 21:2).

Now, how about that! You've probably been told all your life that it is YOU who will GO to be with God in heaven. The truth of the matter, from all the evidence of the WHOLE Bible is just the OPPOSITE! When anyone dies they go into the ground,

they return to dust, for from dust they are made. It is true, the "spirit in man" goes to God in heaven (Eccl.12:7) but the spirit in man does not see, hear, talk, think, walk, play on a harp, or DO ANYTHING, by its self, without a body.

This is proved very simply by human experience. If your physical eyes go blind, the "spirit in man" does not take over and see for you. The spirit in man is the CD, it records your personality and your character, but is not functional without the rest of you. God does take your DNA CD character / personality disc on your death, and does bring it up to heaven for the future RESURRECTION, when you will also have a NEW GLORIFIED "spirit" body, and so we are back in Paul's famous resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15.

The truth is WE are NOT going to heaven - Heaven and God ARE COMING TO US!



How Satan has twisted things up-side-down and in-side-out through false Babylon Mystery religion dressed in the "Christian" cloak.

The voice in heaven that John hears goes on to say: "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" (verse 4).

What a GLORIOUS TIME, what a WONDERFUL eternity for us humans who were once subject to all the above. It is ALL FINALLY GONE! All that has been so many times our enemy, is vanquished, and destroyed, never to be again.

The HE that sits on the throne says: "Behold I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW" And He tells John to "Write, for these words ARE TRUE and FAITHFUL" (verse 5). And He further said, "It IS DONE! I AM the Alpha and Omega, the BEGINNING and the END (eternal). I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life FREELY. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my SON!" (verses 5-7).

Do you REALLY UNDERSTAND that, do you really BELIEVE it? The purpose you were created for, that God created mankind, was not to make them into the "angel" kind - NO, it was to make them into the God kind! Into the very SONS and DAUGHTERS of God the Father. Popular Christianity talks about being sons and daughters of God, but with such phrases, do they REALLY understand what it means. If they do, they do not tell their audience. But the truth of it all IS found in your Bible. God the Father and Jesus your Elder Brother, WANT YOU TO KNOW THIS TRUTH! It's all over the New Testament as covered in this New Testament Bible Story. If you have not yet discovered it by reading the New Testament, then you can also see it all expounded for you in my study called "A Christian's Destiny."

The One sitting on the throne, goes on to say: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (verse 8).

In other words from the New Testament, God is saying UNREPENTANT SINNERS shall be destroyed in the lake of fire, they shall not have eternal life.

The New Jerusalem

And there came one of the angels who had the seven vials of the seven last plagues, and said to John, "Come with me, and I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. John is carried away to a high mountain and is shown the HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD (verses 9 and 10).

The Holy City with is PURE GLORIOUS SPENDOUR, is representative of the pure, clean, glorious righteousness, of the saints, who are the Lamb's wife, as we had seen back in chapter 19:7,8.



The city has the glory of God, I guess so, for God has lived in it for the eternity past? We are not told. It has a clear as crystal look.

It has a wall, great and high, with TWELVE gates, and at the gates, twelve angels, and names on the gates, the names each of the TWELVE tribes of Israel. Three gates to each side, north, south, east, and west.

The wall foundations were TWELVE, in each foundation, the name of one of the TWELVE apostles of the Lamb (verses 11-14).

Does God use NUMBERS? I think He does! We have a study of God's use of numbers on my website. I will add more to it when I can.

Think about how important God's plan was to Him, for the TWELVE TRIBES of Israel (what He would do through them) and the TWELVE APOSTLES (the work through them also) - they will be imprinted on the Holy City for ALL eternity!

The angel that talks with John, had a golden reed to measure the city, the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. The city lies FOUR SQUARE. The length and the breadth and the height are EQUAL. It is an astounding 1,500 miles. Each side then was 1,500 miles and the height was also 1,500 miles.

An AMAZING CITY, but can we expect any less from a God that is also AMAZING? No, we cannot. It is fitting that our heavenly Father would have such a MAGNIFICENT CITY to live in, we should expect no less. The wall is 144 cubits, as man measure a cubit. We cannot be exactly sure of that height, for cubits were different in different ages. No big deal, after being told the city is 1,500 miles in any direction, what a wall's height is we can wait to see that.

John has to put what he sees in human terms so we can have some idea in our mind's eye. The wall was like jasper; the city like pure gold, like unto clear glass. The foundations of the wall are filled or decorated with all kinds of precious stones.

We are told what likeness were the TWELVE foundations. I leave that for the reader to look up, if they desire in a good Bible Dictionary. Needless to say it would be "out of this world" - the pun is of course quite real.

The TWELVE GATES were twelve Pearls. Each gate one whole pearl: and the streets of the city - pure gold, again as transparent glass (verses 15-21).

This is SOME CITY, the like of course has never been seen on earth before. It is the city headquarters of the Great Eternal God.

This section of Revelation is to be taken literally, there is nothing wrong with God living in such a GLORIOUS CITY, and wanting to bring it to the NEW earth. Those who try to teach and say that God cannot be defined in such a natural way, as indeed having form and shape, a spirit body, who can live in a spirit city ... well are they going to be in for a shock, when they see their "spiritual NOTHING God" shows Himself to be SOMETHING, not NOTHING.

Ah, yes, could it be anything else, the City has NO temple, FOR the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Jesus) ARE THE TEMPLE of the city! There was at one time a Temple in that City, for Moses was told to build the Tabernacle according to what was in heaven. But NOW, all has been completed for salvation, and the Temple of heaven is needed no more (verse 22).

This heavenly city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the GLORY of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (verse 23). Oh, I guess so, what more light could there be than God the Father and Jesus His Son, they are PERFECT GLORIOUS LIGHT!

Verse 24 is very interesting. The nations (Greek can be "peoples") of them who are saved walk in the light of the city, and "kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

It would seem from this verse, that the sons of God will inhabit all over, this new earth, and will from time to time come with their glory (resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians 15) into the city. Not all of God's children will live inside the city. We get a small glimpse into that new age, by this verse.

The whole universe is out there, trillions of light years in distance. God's children will explore it, maybe watch over it, keep it, and so be living in different parts of the universe, and certainly, in different parts of this earth. For as we have seen, God's people of various glory and positions of responsibility, shall come to the city and walk in its light. Eternity is not going to be "playing a harp and gazing on Jesus' face all the time."

Eternity will be INTERESTING and FUN, and we just do not know a millionth of what it will all be, only these verses gives us a little clue.

The GATES of this city will not be shut at all. There will be NO NIGHT there. And again we are told the peoples (God's children) will bring their glory and honor into it.

We are told (telling us if we want to be there to come into this city) that no one can be there who is defiled, or works abominations, or is a liar, but only they whose names are written in the book of life (verses 26,27).

We saw in the epistles of John who was a liar. He who says "I know Him, and KEEPETH NOT HIS COMMANDMENTS, is a liar, and the TRUTH is NOT in him" (1 John 2:4). Pretty simple indeed, the simplicity that is in Christ, is that simple, a child can understand it. It is not the PhDs of theology, it is not all those who are super good at English prose and write all those "Christian books" by the dozens out there.

It is THOSE who KEEP the COMMANDMENTS of God, are yes, saved by grace, but still have the mind-set, the attitude, to OBEY God, who want to do His will, follow His way of life, and I will say it once more, for you Roman Catholic, and all you Protestant people in the world, serving God, includes the FOURTH commandment of the big Ten!

Revelation 22

John sees a wonderful pure river, as clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, on either side of the river there was the tree of life. Trees that bare TWELVE fruits, and yielded her fruit by the month; and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the peoples.

This is I'm sure very real! Do you get the picture of the world that God lives in? It is not drab, just a kind of "nothing." It is in God's realm of living, just as diverse and interesting, just as much pleasing and fun, as ours is. Why our physical world and things in it, were created very much after the type of world God lives in.

These trees represent "LIFE" and "HEALING" - they will always REMIND us through eternity what the Father did with physical human kind - He gave them LIFE and HEALING - salvation - GLORY as He has, but not as BRIGHT as He and Jesus His first born Son have (read carefully 1 Corinthians 15 - there will be different glory and brightness, as pleases the Father, when we are resurrected or changed from mortal to immortal). (verses 1-2).



"And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1).

There will never be any more curse of any kind. The THRONE of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and God's children, shall serve Him. They SHALL SEE HIS FACE, and His name shall be in their foreheads (verse 3,4).

We as His children shall always look up to the Father, He will always be the one we serve and respect, just as the Son Jesus does, did respect and follow when on earth and still respects and follows today and forever more. It will be a WONDERFUL FAMILY relationship for all eternity. And we are given the absolute PROMISE that when this time of Revelation 21 and 22 is here, we SHALL SEE THE FATHER'S FACE!

This is not a God of NOTHINGNESS, as some deceived nutty minded "teachers of theology" preach. God the Father is a REAL PERSON, with FORM AND SHAPE, and one day His true faithful children WILL SEE HIS FACE. Moses asked God to show Himself to him, in the glory form. God replied to Moses, that he would show Himself, but Moses could only see God's back-parts, as no physical human man could look upon God and live. This HAPPENED, this took place my friends, it was a REALITY.

When we are glorified we SHALL be able to look upon the face of God. Oh, what wonderful reality, you just have to read it and as a child, BELIEVE IT! Yes children can understand the clear things of God, the simple to understand things, are written just that simply, so children can read the Bible and understand some of the very basics of what the Father WANTS you to understand! Let the "wise" in their own minds, get confused, get mixed up, come up with all kinds of silly and crazy doctrines about the Bible and God, let them alone, they are BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND, as Jesus cried out to them in His time on earth.

ONE DAY, if you are faithful to God, if you love Him with all your heart, mind, and life, if you will but DO HIS WILL, humble yourself, hunger and thirst for righteousness, YOU WILL SEE THE VERY FACE OF GOD. Do tears of joy fill your eyes as you read these words in this chapter? They do mine! Here we are, us

physical weak in the flesh, sinners, saved only by the love and grace of God, through the love and service of Jesus the Christ, and we can be one day given the HONOR to look upon the very face of the MOST HOLY AND PERFECT ONE, the One we can even now call FATHER.

This should make us willing to GIVE UP ANYTHING we need to give up, to be the true children of God. Jesus did say that to LOVE HIM, we must be willing to give up, if we have too, our mother, our father, our brothers, our sisters, our job, our friends, our WHATEVER, to serve Him in spirit and in truth.



If we are willing to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, holy, acceptable unto Him (Romans 12:1) we shall LIVE WITH HIM AND SEE HIS FACE!!

Also, do not miss it, we shall HAVE GOD'S VERY NAME in our foreheads, in our VERY BEING! There literally will be called Enoch God, Abraham God, Moses God, David God, Paul God, Peter God, John God and whatever our first name is now.

We shall have God's name, it will be our surname. If you have not done so, please read my study "A Christian's Destiny" and learn the wonderful truth of why God created human beings.

There will BE NO NIGHT THERE in that great heavenly city. No need for candles, neither the sun, FOR THE LORD GOD GIVES THE LIGHT, and we shall reign WITH Him for ever and ever (verses 3-5).

The angel told John that all these things ARE FAITHFUL AND ARE TRUE.

The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to John to show him and us the things which "must shortly be." Obviously such phrases as "must shortly be" does not mean to God what to us in our time frame, means to us. As I've said, two thousand years to God, in the frame of eternity past and eternity future, is but the millionth of the blink of an eye, to try and put it in some kind of language that our minds can imperfectly recognize (verse 6).

Jesus cries out to us of any age since this book was written down by John, "BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY: BLESSED IS HE THAT KEEPS THE SAYING OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK" (verse 7).

There are SAYINGS, there are sentences, in this book, that we need to KEEP! Have you seen some of them? Let me give you one - Chapter 14:12. and we'll be given it again in a few verses from this one.

When John heard all these things, his reaction was to fall down and worship at the angels' feet. He was told NOT to do so, because the angel was but a servant of the Lord, just as John was and all children of the Most High. John was to WORSHIP GOD! That is our calling also, it has never changed since man was upon this earth (verses 8,9).

The angel said to John, SEAL NOT THE SAYINGS OF THIS PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still (verse 10,11).

The time is short brethren, the prophecy of this book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ CAN BE UNDERSTOOD. I understand it! And I have expounded its truth to YOU, SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND IT!

When all these things come to pass, as they will, whoever is alive when they do, will have A VERY SHORT TIME, before Jesus comes in glory to reign on earth. He that is HOLY at that time, when this prophecy is taking place, had better continue to be HOLY.

Jesus again cries out: "Behold, I COME QUICKLY; and my reward is with Me, to give every man according to as his work shall be. I AM the Alpha and Omega, the BEGINNING and the END, the FIRST and the LAST (the Eternal One). BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY. The ones who will not make it to enter the city, will be sinners who will not REPENT and the LIARS (verses 12-15 - my paraphrase).

Jesus continues: "I Jesus have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the BRIGHT and MORNING STAR. The spirit and bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the WATER OF LIFE FREELY" (verses 16,17).

Yes, salvation is yours my friend, it is FREE! You are saved by GRACE, but that does not mean, as Jesus has just stated, that you DO NOT have to keep God's

commandments. The teaching that tells you that grace ABOLISHES the commandments of God, is a LIE, it is a cunning DECEPTION of Satan the Devil who would like to see YOU killed in the lake of fire which is the second death.

Jesus continues: "For I testify unto every person that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall ADD unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. and if any person shall TAKE AWAY from the words of the book of this prophecy, 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. HE that testifies to these things says, SURELY I COME QUICKLY" (verses 18-20). The above words are all the words that Jesus concluded with in this book of this prophecy. John after hearing them said: "AMEN - so be it. Even so come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (verses 20,21).

It's impossible to get around it. The last words of Jesus in this book, at the time of the close of the first century A.D. when false teachers had already come into the Church of God, and were perverting the Gospel of Christ. They were turning the grace of God into a license to sin! They were already leaving the faith once delivered to the saints. They were already wanting to get away from being called or being associated with the Jews.

Just about anything that was thought of as "Jewish" like the 7th day weekly Sabbath, and the Festivals of Leviticus 23, was being changed or "done away with" in the theology of these new false teachers.

It was already under way to adopt Easter instead of Passover in the church at Rome. By the end of the second century A.D. Easter had come to stay.

Sunday observance was being kept more and more in the Christian world, it would finally be officially law by the time of Constantine in 321 A.D.

The observance of Christ-mass would soon be adopted by the growing powerful Roman church, and so faster and faster was the rise of MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT. And so it is that through that MOTHER of HARLOTS, Satan has DECEIVED THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN WORLD (and many other deceptions for the other parts of the world), only the very ELECT will not be deceived!

WHAT A BIBLE STORY IS THE NEW TESTAMENT. I had no time limit on doing all of this study on the New Testament. It was not until November of 2007 that I decided to look back and see when I started this study.

I was surprised to see I started it in November of 2000. It has taken me SEVEN years to the month to bring it to completion. Interesting when you know how God uses numbers, and how number SEVEN is completion.

But numbers aside, the main thing is that all of this study has HELPED, INSPIRED, EDIFIED, ENCOURAGED, CORRECTED, and brought YOU personally to a CLOSER WALK WITH GOD.

It has been a wonderful experience for me. I thank the Lord for giving me the INSPIRATION I needed and the TIME I needed to finish this work of the New Testament Bible Story. I pray the Lord will give me the time to now start and finish expounding to you all the prophetic books of the Old Testament, as they relate to today and beyond, for the nations of Israel, Judah, and the whole world.

As the apostle John finished so I use his words: "THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.