

BIBLICAL PROPHECY

Preparing Today For Tomorrow

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY

In a world shattered by terrorism, wars, famines, and natural disasters, people everywhere are greatly concerned about the future...

- ...What lies ahead for this world?
- ...What does the future hold for me as a child of God?
- ...How can I properly prepare to face the future?

The good news is that you do not have to be fearful about the future because God has a divine plan He is working out in this world. Nothing can alter it. Nothing can abort it.

You do not have to be confused about the future because through this study you will receive the keys to understanding biblical prophecy as you study the New Testament book of Revelation. This study is an exciting spiritual journey into the future. On the island of Patmos, John didn't receive a dry, dead, theological explanation of future events. He received a powerful, dynamic, life-changing prophetic revelation. He received a revelation of Christ in all His glory, he saw into the throne room of Heaven, and he received a supernatural unveiling of God's end-time plan. You will receive the same exciting revelation as you study this manual.

In the Introductory Unit, you will learn what prophecy is, how God commissioned His prophets, the source, purpose, and importance of biblical prophecy. You will also learn keys for understanding biblical prophecy. The Introduction To Revelation provides an overview of the book and keys to interpreting it.

The remainder of the study will guide you step-by-step through the book of Revelation. The material is divided into twelve sections that consist of short, easy to understand chapters. You may want to do one section a month during the coming year. You might also want to use the material to teach a weekly Bible study, Sunday school class, or college course, doing one section per week for a twelve week quarter semester.

Each lesson includes a self-test so you can review what you have learned and check your progress. The Appendices include a Prophetic Fast Track with the most frequently asked questions about prophecy, special charts, and outlines on the Old Testament prophetic books that will take you even deeper into the prophecies of God's Word.

Are you ready to begin your spiritual journey into the future? Grab your Bible and let's get started!

OBJECTIVES

Upon conclusion of this study you will be able to:

- Use spiritual keys to unlock the mysteries of Biblical prophecy.
- Provide an overview of the book of Revelation and the end-times.
- Summarize and apply the messages to the churches of Revelation.
- Properly interpret future events including:
 - The rapture.
 - The Tribulation.
 - Important personages in God's end-time plan.
 - Satan's end-time trinity.
 - The seal, trumpet, and vial judgments of Revelation.
 - The final battles.
 - The Millennial reign of Christ.
 - The resurrections.
 - Final judgment.
- Describe Heaven and Hell as they are depicted in the book of Revelation.
- Use the skills you have learned to continue your study of other prophetic books of the Bible.
- Apply what you have learned to prepare yourself and others for the future.

INTRODUCTION SECTION

THE PROPHETIC WORD OF GOD

The word "prophecy" means to speak forth. Bible prophecy includes three basic kinds of speaking forth:

1. A message of inspiration from God.
2. Prediction of future events in God's eternal plan.
3. An interpretation for man of the acts of God.

God commissioned each prophet of the Bible to fulfill a particular role in His plan.

- As interpreters they explained God's acts to men.
- As spokesmen they voiced God's truth. They spoke messages of hope and inspiration.
- As prophets they predicted future events in God's plan through revelation given by the Holy Spirit. The predictions of Bible prophecy are beyond the power of human ability. They include a sufficient number of details to eliminate speculation or guessing.

There are two basic ways in which God spoke through the prophets.

THE SPOKEN WORD:

The method most often used was the spoken word. God would tell the prophet the words to speak. For example, God said to the prophet Jeremiah:

...for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. (Jeremiah 1:7)

ACTED PROPHECIES:

In addition to spoken prophecy, God had the prophets visually act out a message. For example, God told Jeremiah to:

...Make thee bonds and yokes and put them upon thy neck... (Jeremiah 27:2)

These yokes were a visual prophecy of the yokes of bondage which were to come on the people because of their sin. Jeremiah acted out the prophetic message of God.

THE SOURCE OF PROPHECY

The source of Biblical prophecy is God who reveals His message to man through the Holy Spirit:

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10)

God can speak accurately of the future because:

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. (Acts 15:18)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

God raises up true prophets:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

God reveals His future plans to these prophets so they can prepare His people for the future:

Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

Satan imitates true prophecy through false predictions by fortunetellers, witches, and astrologers. These methods are not of God. The Prophet Daniel said:

...The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers shew unto the king.

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days...(Daniel 2:27-28)

True prophecy directs attention to Jesus Christ:

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

The Bible warns of false prophets (Matthew 24:11,24; Mark 13:22). A person called "the False Prophet" will be evident in events at the end of the world (Revelation 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). The Bible reveals several ways to identify false prophets:

- They teach sexual immorality and permissiveness: 2 Peter 2:13
- They try to lead people away from obedience to God's Word: Deuteronomy 13:1-5.
- They make false claims: Matthew 24:23-24
- They deceive people with miraculous signs: Matthew 24:11,24
- They do not prophecy according to the proportion of faith (in right relation to God's Word): Romans 12:6
- False prophets do not have the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives: Matthew 7:15-16; Galatians 5:22-23
- What they prophesy does not come to pass: Deuteronomy 18:20-22

THE PURPOSES OF PROPHECY

The Bible reveals three main purposes for God speaking to men through prophecy:

TO AUTHENTICATE GOD'S MESSAGE:

Fulfilled prophecy proves that God's message is authentic. In Isaiah 41:21-23 God challenges the gods of the heathen nations to prove their power by foretelling future events. They could not do it because they were false gods:

Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and known the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. (Isaiah 41:22)

TO CONFIRM GOD'S MESSENGER:

Prophecy confirms the true messengers of God:

The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him. (*Jeremiah 28:9*)

TO INSTRUCT BELIEVERS:

Believers are to receive instruction from prophecy and take heed (pay attention) to it:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. . . (2 Peter 1:19)

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING PROPHECY

There are four main reasons why it is important to study Bible prophecy:

1. All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for study:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

2. Prophecy brings understanding of past, present, and future events in the plan of God:

...the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. (Revelation 1:19)

3. Understanding of God's future plan prevents deception by Satan:

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold He is in the desert; go not forth: behold He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. (Matthew 24:23-26)

God's future plan has been shared before it happens so we will not be deceived by Satan.

4. There is a special blessing pronounced upon those who study Bible prophecy:

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1:3)

HOW TO UNDERSTAND PROPHECY

Some people are frustrated when they try to study Bible prophecy. Because prophecy is more difficult than other portions of the Bible, they wonder if God really intended for them to understand it. It is possible to understand Bible prophecy. God wanted so much for Daniel to understand prophecy that he sent an angel to explain it to him. The angel said:

...I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. (Daniel 9:22)

Jesus took time to explain Old Testament prophecy to His Disciples:

And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. (Luke 24:44)

When the Disciples asked Jesus about the end of the world, Jesus listed several prophetic signs for which they were to watch. He wanted them to understand future events. Jesus said:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. (Matthew 24:33)

In the introduction to the book of Revelation, it is clear that God wants His people to understand prophecy:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass... (Revelation 1:1)

There are five basic keys which will help you understand and properly interpret Bible prophecy.

ONE: THE BASIC THEME OF PROPHECY:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the basic theme of Bible prophecy. There are many other

subjects of Bible prophecy. For example, there are prophecies of judgment of wicked nations by God. But the underlying theme of all Bible prophecies is that they somehow relate to Jesus and the purpose of God regarding Him:

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself;

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

All Bible prophecy, even when it deals with subjects such as judgment upon nations, relates to the overall plan of God. That plan is to bring all mankind into right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose is to gather in one all things in Christ.

The Bible states that the "spirit" or theme of Bible prophecy is Jesus:

...for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10)

When you study Bible prophecy, consider it in terms of this question: How does this prophecy relate to Jesus Christ (the spirit of prophecy) and God's overall plan concerning Him?

TWO: THE BIBLE INTERPRETS ITSELF:

Another key to understanding is to realize that often the Bible explains its own prophecies. For an example of how the Bible interprets itself read Daniel chapter 2. Here a king by the name of Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream from God. Upon waking he cannot remember the dream. He calls upon the astrologers and magicians to recall and interpret the dream. They cannot do it. Then God uses the prophet Daniel to tell the king what he dreamed and interpret it for him. Daniel describes the dream in verses 31-35. The interpretation of the dream is given in verses 36- 45. This is an example of how, in many passages, the Bible interprets its own prophecies.

The New Testament interprets many of the prophecies of the Old Testament because much of the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. For example, compare this Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament fulfillment:

... and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God. (Hosea 2:23)

Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. (Romans 9:24-26)

Fulfilled prophecy in the New Testament includes many Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.

THREE: THE RULE OF DOUBLE REFERENCE:

Another key to understanding Bible prophecy is the "rule of double reference." This rule for interpreting Bible prophecy states that a prophecy of immediate fulfillment is made as a means of teaching a deeper truth or foretelling an event to be fulfilled farther in the future.

Many times in the Bible a prophecy was fulfilled immediately after it was given, but the same prophecy applied not only to the event which was fulfilled immediately, but also to a second fulfillment farther in the future.

For example, there is a prophecy given in Ezekiel 28:1-19 which is addressed to Ethbaal who was then the king of Tyre. He was a wicked king. He was a type of the Antichrist who will arise during the end of the world. By saying Ethbaal is a "type" we mean that in nature and actions he was like the Antichrist which will come in the future. When God spoke in prophecy through Ezekiel, it was fulfilled in the immediate future in the life of Ethbaal. But there is a future event, as yet unfulfilled, where the same prophecy applies to the evil end-time ruler called the Antichrist.

As you study Bible prophecy remember this rule of double reference. Ask yourself two questions:

1. What did this prophecy mean at the time it was given for the people to whom it was given?
2. Is there a future double reference in this prophecy?

Asking these questions will help you interpret prophecy to the full extent of its meaning.

FOUR: PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE:

The prophets described future events as if they were continuous and in immediate order. For example, Isaiah prophesied:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

When Jesus read from this portion of Isaiah in Luke 4:17-20 He stopped with the phrase "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Then He closed the book and said that these Scriptures were fulfilled in Him that day. By this He meant that He was fulfilling this prophecy. He was the one with God's Spirit upon Him to preach good tidings, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty, and open the prisons.

But it is significant that Jesus stopped reading with the phrase "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He did not read the portion regarding "the day of vengeance of our God" because the day of vengeance had not yet come. Already a gap of over 2,000 years has elapsed since Jesus read this passage and the day of God's vengeance still has not yet come.

Prophetic perspective records events as if they were immediate. Through the revelation of the Holy Spirit Isaiah saw the whole plan of God. He saw Jesus coming to preach, bind up, proclaim liberty, open the prison, proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and bring the vengeance of God.

Isaiah saw the events as you would look at distant ranges of mountains. The valleys in between the mountains are not visible until you climb to the top of the nearest range. Prophetic perspective reveals the whole plan of God from a distance. Sometimes events seem to appear as though they happen immediately in sequence. But as the prophecies are fulfilled there are often valleys of time between them as illustrated by this passage from Isaiah.

FIVE: THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF PROPHECY:

Much Bible prophecy is conditional in nature. This means that God says He will do certain things based on the response of man. If man does not listen to God's message, certain things will happen. If man hears God's message and responds properly to it, then something else will happen.

God said:

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

In much Bible prophecy, the fulfillment is often conditional upon man's response. For a good example of this principle read the book of Jonah. The Prophet Jonah revealed that God would destroy Ninevah in three days if they did not repent, but the destruction never came. The reason was that Ninevah responded properly to the message of God and repented of their sins.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Prophecy in the Old Testament centers on:

1. Prophecy to the people of Israel which was the nation God raised up through which to reveal Himself to the world. During the period of time when Israel was divided into two kingdoms this prophecy is directed to Israel and Judah. An example of prophecy to Israel is the book of Hosea. An example of prophecy to Judah is the book of Joel.
2. Prophecies to the nations surrounding the people of Israel. For example, prophecies are given regarding Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, Edom, etc. An example is the prophecy of Obadiah directed to the nation of Edom.
3. Prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. These are not contained in any one prophetic book. They are scattered throughout the Old Testament. A good example is Isaiah 7:14.
4. Prophecies concerning the entire world, its destiny, future events, the end of the world, and the end of time as we know it. The book of Daniel is an excellent example of this type of prophecy.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

There are many prophecies scattered throughout the New Testament. Most of these deal with future events which are to happen prior to the end of the world. For examples read the prophecies in Matthew chapter 24.

There is only one book in the prophecy division in the New Testament, however. That is the book of Revelation which is the subject of this study. John, a Disciple of Jesus, was given this revelation from God through the Holy Spirit. It is a revelation of Jesus Christ:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. . . (Revelation 1:1)

John was told to. . .

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. (Revelation 1:19)

THE PROPHETIC THEME

In addition to the books of prophecy presented in this manual, there are many other chapters and verses of prophecy scattered throughout God's Word. For example, the very first prophecy recorded in the Bible is in the book of Genesis:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

This verse prophesies the coming of Jesus Christ who, through His death for the sins of man, would crush the enemy, Satan.

It is not possible to list in this manual every prophecy in the Word of God because there are prophecies scattered throughout the entire Bible. Prophecy is not just confined to the books known as books of prophecy. With study and experience you will be able to identify the prophetic theme that runs throughout the entire Bible.

SELF-TEST ON INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1. What does the word prophecy mean? _____
2. What are the three basic kinds of prophecy?

3. God commissioned His prophets as:
Interpreters who _____
Spokesmen who _____
Prophets who _____
4. List two basic ways God spoke through prophets.

5. Who is the source of prophecy? _____
6. List three purposes of prophecy.

7. List four reasons it is important to study prophecy.

8. What are five basic keys that will help you understand prophecy?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
9. What does prophecy in the Old Testament center on? _____

10. What does prophecy in the New Testament center on? _____
(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION

There are three major divisions in the message contained in the Revelation that Christ gave to John. Christ told John...

1. **To write the things which were:** The things he saw, all that was revealed to him through the different visions.
2. **To write the things which are:** Referring to the condition of the churches in Asia Minor at the time.
3. **To write the things which were to come:** The events which would happen in the future as God fulfilled His end-time plan. The literal translation of Revelation 4:1 reads "*things which must be after these things*"--meaning that the things of Revelation chapters 4-22 must be fulfilled after the things revealed pertaining to the churches in Revelation chapters 2-3.

These three divisions provide an important spiritual key to unlocking the meaning of the book of Revelation. It is the major outline of all that follows and will provide the broad framework for our study. Here is a simple outline of the book of Revelation based on this structure. You will want to refer to it frequently as you complete the remainder of the studies:

The word "revelation" means "the uncovering, the unveiling, or the disclosing."

SYMBOLS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Many people question why God used symbols in the Book of Revelation. Why didn't He just put everything He had to say in plain words? There are two main reasons:

First: The style used in Revelation is an example of what is called "apocalyptic literature" which was quite popular from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. It was a style that was well known and understood by both Jews and Gentiles in the first century church. A major feature of apocalyptic literature was the use of symbols. Our difficulty in understanding this book is due to our unfamiliarity with apocalyptic literature as a method of communicating a message.

Second: When Jesus was on earth He often taught by means of parables. The apostles questioned him once concerning this and Jesus explained:

He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew 13:11-15)

The mysteries of God are revealed through parables and symbols, to those who hear with a spiritual ears. They are withheld from so-called "wise and prudent" men (Matthew 11:25).

The rule for understanding symbols in Revelation is simple: Whenever a symbol is used, we look elsewhere in the Bible to learn what that symbol means. For example, in Revelation 1 the vision of Christ in the midst of seven candlesticks is interpreted in verse 20.

RULES FOR INTERPRETING REVELATION

1. Study Revelation “in the Spirit,” not with natural reasoning.
2. Accept that it can be understood just as it is written without changes or additions by man.
3. Accept the meaning of the words as literal unless the text clearly indicates otherwise. Do not change the literal meaning to spiritual or symbolic meanings. Do not seek to find hidden meanings.
4. Always keep in mind the times and circumstances under which the prophet recorded God’s message. Without a knowledge of the historical background, expressions of his time may seem peculiar or difficult to understand.
5. Remember that sometimes events are described as if they were continuous and successive, but the fact is that there may be years between. This is called “the law of prophetic perspective.”
6. Keep in mind the “law of double reference.” In some passages, two distinct meanings are indicated.

Also keep in mind the following two ways to interpret Revelation:

1. As an individual message to each one of us.
2. As a message to the entire Church.

READING THROUGH REVELATION

In preparation for your study, read through the entire book of Revelation. Don't worry about understanding everything. Just read it to get an overview of the book. As you read, assign each chapter a title that reflects its content. This will provide an abbreviated outline for you to refer to as you study.

Chapter	Title
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____
7	_____
8	_____
9	_____
10	_____
11	_____
12	_____
13	_____
14	_____
15	_____
16	_____
17	_____
18	_____
19	_____
20	_____
21	_____
22	_____

OUTLINE OF THE REVELATION

John is commanded to:

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. (Revelation 1:18)

The Past: "Things which thou hast seen" An Introduction To Revelation 1:1-21

- I. Opening: 1:1-3
 - A. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ: 1:1
 - B. Purpose: To show things which must shortly come to pass: 1:1
 - C. The chain of transmission: 1:1-2
 - D. A blessing is given upon those who read, hear, and keep it: 1:3
- II. Salutation: 1:4-7
 - A. What Christ has done: 1:5-6:
 - 1. He died for us.
 - 2. Washed us from our sins.
 - 3. Made us kings and priests unto God.
 - B. What Christ will do: 1:7
 - C. Who Christ is: 1:8
- III. The theme of Revelation: 1:8
- IV. The author: John 1:9-10
- V. John's vision of the Lord: 1:10-18
 - A. His person: 1:11
 - B. His position: In the midst of the churches: 1:12-13
 - C. His presence: 1:13-16
 - 1. Full length garment.
 - 2. Breastplate of gold.
 - 3. White hair.
 - 4. Eyes of fire.
 - 5. Feet of brass.
 - 6. Voice of any waters.
 - 7. Seven stars in right hand.
 - 8. Two edged sword.
 - 9. Shining countenance.
 - D. John's response: 1:17
 - E. The message: 1:17

- 2. The war in Heaven: 12:7-12
- 3. The war on earth: 12:13-17
- B. Satan and the world: 13:1-18
 - 1. The leopard beast: 13:1-10
 - 2. The two-horned beast: 13:11-14
 - 3. The conflict with the beast: 13:15-14:20
 - (a) Triumph of the 144,000 over the beast, its image, and mark: 14:1-5
 - (b) The Lamb and the 144,000: 14:1-5
 - (c) Proclamation of three angels: 14:6-13
 - (d) The grapes of wrath: 14:14-20.
- IV. Events preceding the vial judgments: 15:1-8
- V. The seven vial judgments: 16:1-21
 - 1. First vial judgment: 16:2 Sores
 - 2. Second vial judgment: 16:3 Sea turns to blood
 - 3. Third vial judgment: 16:4-7 Rivers, springs blood
 - 4. Fourth vial judgment: 16:8-9 Men scorched by sun
 - 5. Fifth vial judgment: 16:10-11 Pain and darkness
 - 6. Sixth vial judgment: 16:12-16 Euphrates dried up; Gather for war
 - 7. Seventh vial judgment: 16:17-21 Earthquake
- VI. Destruction of the world's religious systems: 17:1-18
 - A. The scarlet woman and the scarlet beast: 17:1-6
 - B. The mystery explained: 17:7-18
- VII. Destruction of the world's political and economic systems: 18:1-24
- VIII. Defeat of the enemies of God at Armageddon: 19:1-21
 - A. The celebration in Heaven: 19:1-10
 - B. The confrontation on earth: 19:11-21
 - 1. Christ the victorious warrior and King of kings: 19:11-16
 - 2. The beast, his armies, and the False Prophet are defeated: 19:17-21
- IX. The judgment: 20:4-15
 - A. On Satan: 20:1-3,10
 - B. Judgment unto life: 20:4-6
 - C. The Millennium: 20:6-10
 - D. Satan released to deceive the nations once more but is finally defeated: 20:7-10
 - E. Judgment unto death: 20:11-15

- X. The new heaven and new earth: 21:1-22:5
 - A. Introductory overview: 21:1-8
 - B. The New Jerusalem in detail: 21:9-22:5

- XI. Closing exhortations: 22:6-21
 - A. The time is near, do not seal the book: 22:6-11
 - B. The testimony of Jesus, The Spirit, and the bride: 22:12-17
 - C. Warning and closing prayers: 22:18-21

SELF-TEST ON INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. What are the two main reasons Jesus didn't just put everything He had to say regarding prophecy in plain words?

1. _____
2. _____

2. List six rules for interpreting the book of Revelation.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

3. Is the book of Revelation a message to the entire Church or a message to each individual?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION ONE

AN OPEN REVELATION

God wants you to understand His plan for the future. If you seriously apply yourself to this study, you will never again be confused by prophecy.

Jesus declared to Peter:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

The keys to the Kingdom were first put into Peter's hands because he was called by God to open the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 10:28). But these spiritual keys were not reserved exclusively for him. They are delegated to all of God's people--and that is why you need to know what they are and how to use them.

Quite simply, keys are used to open doors that are locked. This is true in the natural world and it is true also in the spiritual world. God has given us supernatural keys to open doors of spiritual revelation.

Note that Jesus refers to "keys"--meaning more than one and that they are specific keys--"to the kingdom of heaven." Related references reveal that these spiritual keys were given to us for three major purposes:

1. **The keys to the Kingdom of heaven give us command over the enemy, Satan**--We have the authority to bind and lose spiritual powers in both heaven and earth:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

2. **These keys authorize us to exercise discipline and order in the Kingdom of God**--we have the power to admit people to the Kingdom: Matthew 28:18-20. We have the power to expel those who walk contrary to the Word:

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one

should have his father's wife...In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 5:1,4-5)

We have the power to restore those who have truly repented

Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (2 Corinthians 2:6-7)

3. The keys to the Kingdom give us the ability to open or shut the door to knowledge of the Kingdom of God:

Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. (Luke 11:52)

This means that you already have in your hands the keys to knowledge in God's Kingdom! That is why you can understand God's prophetic Word.

Now...let's start putting these keys to use...

CHAPTER ONE THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

John was "*in the Spirit*" when he received this revelation from God:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet...(Revelation 1:10)

The only way you can receive this revelation is to receive it into your spirit. You must go beyond head knowledge. You must allow the Word of God to penetrate your spirit--down deep inside your inner man--and then it will become alive to you.

The Apostle John was given a supernatural revelation which included sights and sounds he had never known before in the natural world. It was difficult for him to describe the experience in terms that people of that day (and our day) would understand. Some of the things he saw were symbolic, others were literal.

You must stop trying to understand the book of Revelation with your natural mind. You can not interpret biblical prophecy that way. It won't work. God's end-time plan was unveiled to His servant, John, while he was in the Spirit. You must receive this understanding by the Spirit of God. Jesus said:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

Jesus was not referring to our natural ears. He was referring to our spiritual ears. The Apostle Paul declared:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

Over the years, there has been much confusion and division in the Church regarding the book of Revelation. Bible scholars who have studied this book for years have depended upon their natural reasoning to interpret the Scriptures or simply rehashed other men's theories. Theologians have set forth so many different speculations and interpretations that many Christians don't know what to believe. One week, they hear a preacher declare one thing and the next week they hear someone else say exactly the opposite.

Many believers avoid the book of Revelation because they think it is too complicated, too full of symbolism, and beyond their understanding--but you already hold the keys to knowledge of God's Kingdom and you can learn how to use them! When you complete this study, you will no longer be confused about the future.

God has placed His Spirit within us so that we can know the things He has given us:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (1 Corinthians 2:12)

God has given us the Holy Spirit to show us things to come:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:27)

CHAPTER TWO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

There are five major reasons it is important for believers to study the book of Revelation:

1. You receive a blessing when you study it:

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1:3)

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

2. It is necessary for spiritual maturity, as it is part of the Word.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

3. It enables you to understand the future and how it relates to the past and present:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. (Revelation 1:1)

4. Prophecy authenticates the Word of God. Fulfilled prophecy authenticates that what the Word says is true:

...but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22)

5. Prophecy affects the way we live. The advent of the end-times motivates us to live holy lives, knowing that we will give an account of all things:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. (2 Peter 3:11)

It motivates us to reach out to a lost and dying world when we realize that time is short:

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (John 9:4)

From the beginning of time, God has had a master plan for the world:

(He) planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and consummate them in Christ (both) things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:10, TAB)

The events that are happening on the earth today and those that will occur in the future are not by chance. They were designed from the beginning of time by a God of purpose and the details were recorded in His Word so His people could know the future, their part in His plan, and their ultimate destinies.

God's purpose for revealing His end-time plan in the book of Revelation is so that you can know what will happen in the future so you can be...

- ...Busy working the works of God (Matthew 25:14-30).
- ...Watching for the coming of Christ (Matthew 24:36-44).
- ...Preparing for the future (Matthew 15:1-13).

God wants to accomplish four major things in your life through this prophetic study on the book of Revelation:

1. You will learn how to accurately interpret biblical prophecy by using the keys to the Kingdom God has placed in your hands.
2. You will be prepared to face the future from a position of knowing. You will no longer be confused, fearful, or doubting.
3. You will be able to face every negative circumstance you may encounter in the future with power and authority because you will know your destiny as a 100% conquering, victorious child of God.
4. You will rise up in these end-times to take your God-given position of power, authority and dominion as we reap together the greatest spiritual harvest this world has ever witnessed.

Now you may be thinking, "I've tried to understand prophecy before, but it was too confusing. Is it really possible for me to know God's end-time plan?" Yes! It is not only possible, but God wants you to have this revelation. That is why He gave it. That is why He had his servant, John, record it in His Word. A revelation is to reveal something, not to conceal it. It is time to use the keys God has given you to unlock the door to the future.

CHAPTER THREE YOU HOLD THE KEYS!

The Isle of Patmos lies about thirty-seven miles west-southwest of Miletus in the Mediterranean Sea. It is about ten miles long and six miles wide at the north end, and consists mainly of volcanic hills and rocky ground. It was an island used by the Romans to exile prisoners.

It was in the year 95 A.D. during the reign of Roman Emperor Domitian that the Apostle John was exiled here for his faith in God. This was no tropical paradise. It was a lonely, deserted, barren place. But it was the Lord's day and despite the fact John was alone and in desperate circumstances, he decided to worship God.

Little did John realize that this worship experience would not only dramatically transform his own life, it would impact generations to come and affect the destiny of the entire world. As John was in the Spirit on this Lord's day, he received...

...The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. (Revelation 1:1-2)

The book of Revelation begins with a bold declaration of its supernatural, divine authorship. God is its source. The word "*revelation*" used here is translated from the Greek word "*apokalupsis*" which means, "an uncovering," or "drawing away of the veil of darkness." The revelation John received on the Isle of Patmos did not come through his natural mind, but it was revealed to him while he was "*in the spirit*." Four times in the book of Revelation John is said to be "*in the spirit*": Revelation 1:9-10; 4:1-2; 17:1-3; and 21:9-10.

Spiritual revelation is not a function of the natural mind because our natural minds do not understand the things of the Spirit:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

That is why we must understand this revelation with our spiritual mind.

John received "*the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him*." Here is the divine order of transmission: God gave the revelation to Jesus and it was sent and signified (made known) to His servant, the Apostle John (Revelation 1:1,4,9; 22:8).

The purpose of this revelation was “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (*Revelation 1:1-2*)--it was given so that His people would know what will happen in the future.

This powerful Revelation came to John in one of the darkest times of his life. Divine revelation often comes in difficult times:

- It was in exile that Jacob saw God at Bethel. (*Genesis 35:1*)
- It was in exile that Moses met God at the burning bush. (*Exodus 3:1-2*)
- It was in exile that Elijah heard the voice of God. (*1 Kings 19:3-9*)
- It was in exile that Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord. (*Ezekiel 1:3*)
- It was in exile that Daniel saw his vision of God. (*Daniel 7:9*)

If you are going through a difficult time in your life you can either succumb to depression or pity, or you--like the Apostle John--can get in the Spirit and begin to worship God.

Reflect for a moment: What might God be trying to birth through you or reveal to you in your darkest hour?

CHAPTER FOUR THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

We learn in this passage that the book of Revelation is the *“revelation of Jesus Christ.”* This book reveals more about Jesus Christ than any other book in the Bible. (Please take time to look up each of these references.) Jesus is described as:

- Jesus Christ: 1:1
- Faithful witness: 1:5
- First begotten of the dead: 1:5
- Prince of kings of the earth: 1:5
- Alpha and Omega: 1:8
- First and the last: 1:17
- Son of man: 1:13
- Son of God: 2:18
- Keeper of David's keys: 3:7
- Keeper of keys of hell and death: 1:18
- Lion of Judah: 5:5
- Root of David: 5:5
- Slain Lamb: 5:6
- Angry Lamb: 6:16-17
- Tender Lamb: 7:17
- Our Lord: 11:8
- Man child: 12:5
- King of saints: 15:3
- Faithful and true: 19:11
- Word of God: 19:13
- King of kings: 19:16
- Lord of lords: 19:16
- Beginning and the end: 22:13
- Bright and morning star: 22:16

The key to understanding the book of Revelation is to realize that it is a revelation about Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:10 declares, *“for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”* This is a tremendous spiritual key to understanding prophecy, the entire Word of God, and the Living Word--Jesus Christ.

When Christ's disciples were walking the Emmaus Road and puzzling over things

Christ had told them, Jesus supernaturally appeared to them and said, *“What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”* (Luke 24:17). The disciples recounted to Him the recent events in Jerusalem, including the death of Jesus and the empty tomb discovered by the women three days later. Then Jesus said to them:

O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

This passage is not only the key to prophecy, it is the key to understanding and interpreting the entire Word of God. Beginning with Moses and the Old Testament prophets right through to the book of Revelation, all of the Scriptures concern the revelation of Jesus Christ and God’s plan of the ages as fulfilled through Him.

CHAPTER FIVE A SEVEN-FOLD BLESSING

The first of a seven-fold blessing is pronounced in Revelation 1:3 and expanded in the remainder of the book. As a child of God, each of these blessings are yours to claim:

- 1. A blessing is pronounced upon those who read, hear, and keep those things written in the book of Revelation:**

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1:3)

This is why it is important for God's people to study and understand this Revelation.

- 2. A blessing is pronounced upon those who die in the Lord:**

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. (Revelation 14:13)

- 3. A blessing is pronounced upon those who are spiritually diligent in keeping themselves from sin:**

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Revelation 16:15)

- 4. A blessing is pronounced on those who partake of the marriage supper of the lamb:**

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:9)

- 5. Those who are part of the first resurrection of the righteous are blessed (1 Thessalonians 4:17):**

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of

*God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
(Revelation 20:6)*

- 6. Those who keep the words of this prophecy--who hold fast these truths and warnings--are blessed:**

Behold, I come quickly: Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

- 7. God's blessings are upon those who do His commandments--those who conform their lives to His Word:**

*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
(Revelation 22:14)*

CHAPTER SIX A VICTORIOUS CHURCH

John opens the book of Revelation by greeting and extending God's grace and peace to the seven churches which were in Asia:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:4-6)

The major theme of Revelation is to present God's people as a victorious Church. The "*seven Spirits which are before His throne*" refer to the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His ministry in the world and in the Church: The Spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.

In Revelation 1:11, John was instructed to write down all that was revealed to him by the Spirit and send it to the seven churches in Asia. These seven churches--Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea--were located in the western part of Asia Minor. The revelations contained in this prophecy were given not only to comfort, strengthen, and encourage believers in the first century A.D. who were going through severe persecution, but also to reveal the great final victory God has planned for us, to prepare us for Christ's coming, and to strengthen believers down through the centuries.

It is evident that the message, warnings, and admonitions contained in this book are not only for the early Church but are also meant for the entire Church throughout the centuries. The major theme of Revelation is Christ's victory, and that of His Church, over Satan--especially in the end-times:

Jesus is revealed as the Victor and Conqueror over death, hell, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all those who worship the Antichrist.

The Church is described as victorious, overcoming the power of Satan, "*by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.*"

The triumphant Church is gathered out of all nations and we see it standing united before the Throne and before the Lamb.

The Church rules and reigns with Christ upon the earth for a thousand years.

CHAPTER SEVEN THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

In John's opening salutation to the seven churches in Asia, he describes Christ as...

The faithful witness. Jesus bore witness to the truth from God: He said, *"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth..."* (John 18:37). The Greek word for witness is *"martyrs"* which means "one who suffers death for allegiance to a cause." Christ is presented here, in verse five, as a model of how to endure--faithful to the truth even unto death (Colossians 1:18)

The firstborn of the dead. As the risen Christ with victory over death--the *"firstborn of the dead"*--He is exalted as the head over the Church and is given a position of authority over all things. *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18).

The prince of the kings of the earth. Because of Christ's faithful witness and His victory over Satan and death, He now has a victorious position of supreme power and authority: *"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come "* (Ephesians 1:21).

John used these three titles to encourage believers who were facing persecution and possible death to remain faithful as Christ was faithful, and in so doing they would also be victorious as He was victorious.

This is how John saw Jesus. How do you see Him? When you are faced with difficulties and trials, do you see Him as a faithful witness? Do you rely on His Word to see you through? Do you see Him in a position of power and authority over every circumstance in your life?

John also describes Jesus as the One who...

...Loved us.

...Has washed us from our sins in His own blood.

...Has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.

The word *"kings"* speaks of authority and the word *"priests"* means that we have open access into God's presence at any time.

How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as weak, struggling, and unable to overcome? Or do you see yourself as greatly loved, a king and priest with access into the throne room of God?

CHAPTER EIGHT JESUS IS COMING!

Right at the beginning of the Revelation, John gives us the divine promise of Christ's return to earth:

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (Revelation 1:7)

This truth is the great hope and expectation of all true believers today and it is the theme of Revelation. The death and resurrection of Christ and the promise of His second coming are the foundation of our hope. They were a great source of strength to the early church and are even more so to us today as we move into the final days of time before Christ's return.

This verse reveals that Jesus will return in the same manner in which He ascended into heaven:

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (Acts 1:9)

As the disciples gazed into the heavens where Christ had gone, two angels announced that He would return in the same way He had ascended. They said:

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1: 11)

This reminded them of what Jesus had taught them, revealing that...

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:29-30)

Over five hundred years earlier, the prophet Daniel saw Christ's second coming in a vision. He said:

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the

clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. (Daniel 7:13-14)

John said that at Christ's second coming every eye would see Him, including those who pierced Him. He said that all the nations of the earth would wail because of Him. This will be a fulfillment of the prophecy given through the prophet Zechariah:

And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for his firstborn. (Zechariah 12:10)

The Jews, who have rejected Christ and refused to accept Him as their Messiah, will then see that Jesus is truly the Messiah. For all those who have rejected His Word, it will be a time of fear, despair, and terror. People will run to hide in the mountains and caves and they will cry out:

Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! (Revelation 6:16)

At Christ's second coming, He will gather His bride to Himself and reward the faithful, but as we will learn further on in our study, He will also bring judgment upon the wicked and will tread *"the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"* (Revelation 19:15).

This is why it is important for us to be ready! This is why we must have an urgency within our spirits to warn those who continue to reject Christ and His Word. Once Christ returns to this earth, there will be no more time for repentance!

CHAPTER NINE THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

Following the words of greeting and encouragement to the churches, John explained how he received his vision:

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, 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. (Revelation 1:8-11)

John identifies with the suffering believers by referring to himself as their "*brother, and companion in tribulation,*" then he describes the place where he received the Revelation--exiled and alone on the Isle of Patmos.

Can't you just visualize John standing there on the Lord's Day--alone, forsaken, cold, and weary? The sound of the howling wind echoes through the rocky mountains. The waves crash upon the deserted jagged shoreline...

...But as John begins to worship God, something supernatural occurs. Suddenly, he hears a voice behind him as loud and clear as a trumpet declaring, "*...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last!*" Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Christ was describing Himself as being the eternal, complete, revelation of God and He was commanding John to write what he would see in a book to be preserved for the Church.

When John turned to see the source of the mighty voice making this declaration, Jesus Christ--in all His power and glory--was unveiled before his eyes. John saw into the realm of the Spirit and he was so overcome at Christ's awesome presence that he was fearful and fell at His feet as though he were dead!

Along with Peter and James, John had previously received a glimpse of Christ's glory when He was transfigured (Matthew 17:1-8). John had seen Christ's face shine as the sun and his raiment white as the light. But now, John saw Jesus in the fullness of His glory and it was totally overwhelming:

Christ was wearing the robe of the High Priest (verse 13). John states He was *"clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."* In the Old Testament, the high priests wore full-length robes with a girdle made of fine linen, embroidered with needlework, secured around their waists. In this vision, Christ had on the robe of a high priest, but the girdle He wore around His chest was made of gold, which denotes the dignity of an important office and signifies His office as our Great High Priest:

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:24-25)

Christ's hair was white like wool (verse 14). Christ's white hair is symbolic of His title--the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Christ is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. When the prophet Daniel had a similar vision, he also described Him as having hair *"like pure wool,"* raiment *"white as snow,"* and eyes *"as a flame of fire"* (Daniel 7:9-14).

Christ's eyes were as a flame of fire (verse 14). This description is also found in Revelation 19:11-12 where Christ is pictured as a judge and Conqueror over the Antichrist and the nations of the earth who have gathered together for the battle of Armageddon. His eyes of fire symbolize perfect discernment.

Christ's feet were like unto fine brass (verse 15). Brass--a strong, purified metal which results from intense heat--denotes the purity and power with which Christ will bring judgment upon the ungodly of the earth.

Christ's voice was as the sound of many waters (verse 15). The voice John first heard in his vision was described as *"a great voice, as the sound of a trumpet,"* loud and clear. In this verse, John describes Christ's voice as *"the sound of many waters"* which is similar to the description given by the prophet in Ezekiel 43:2. His voice is a mighty powerful force.

Out of Christ's mouth proceeded a two-edged sword (verse 16). This sword represents the power and authority of Christ's words by which the world will be judged (Revelation 19:15) and those aligned with Satan and the Antichrist will be defeated.

Christ's countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (verse 16). The powerful light surrounding Christ was so blinding that John compared it to the powerful rays of the sun in all its strength. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul tells us that Christ will destroy the Antichrist with the brightness of His coming. Later on in the book of

Revelation (chapter 22), John tells us that in the New Jerusalem there will be no need of the sun, for the Lord God will be our light.

How do you see Christ? Do you see Him as a babe in the manger? Do you see Him only as He was when He lived upon the earth 2,000 years ago? Or do you see Him as He really is today, seated in power and majesty at His Father's side?

You may have heard about Jesus all your life. You may even be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, but have you really received a revelation of Him--"a drawing away of the veil of darkness"--to see Christ as He really is?

How do you see Christ?

John had never seen Jesus like this before. He was so overcome with the vision of Christ that he...

...fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

When you really catch a vision of Jesus, you, too, will be totally overwhelmed--when you really understand His awesome power and majesty! You will understand that He is the living one who was dead but is now alive for ever and ever.

God's message to you today the same as it was to His Apostle John: Fear not! It is the same message the angel gave to Mary at the annunciation: Fear not! The phrase "fear not" is used over 80 times in the Bible and generally it is to quiet the fears of man in God's presence.

God is also saying to you today--as He did to John--do not fear your desperate circumstances. Do not fear the future. The One who was dead but is now alive is standing right by your side! There is nothing to fear because Jesus has conquered death and Hell. He has power and authority over them. He has absolute power and authority and He wants you to see Him as he really is...high and lifted up, exalted above all things in heaven and in earth.

When you face sickness, disappointments, heartaches, financial problems, and family problems do you see Christ standing beside you as the Great High Priest making intercession for you? Do you see the Mighty Conqueror of death and hell standing ready to give you the victory?

Many believers are living in defeat because their vision of Christ is limited to their

natural mind. God wants to take you beyond the limitations of your natural mind so that you can see Him as He is and really know Him in His fullness of His manifested power.

The Apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesians would receive *"a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him"* (Ephesians 1:17). Paul was not talking about head knowledge, but a revelation deep within their spirits.

Jesus Christ, in His glorified state of majesty and power, is depicted as standing in the midst of His Church:

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:18-20)

The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches in Asia and the stars in Christ's hand represent the angels of the seven churches. It is commonly believed that the angels referred to here are not heavenly beings, but are representative of the pastors and ministers who had authority over the various churches. (We will learn more about these churches, the conditions that existed at the time, the importance of the messages Christ gave them and how they apply to us in the next section of this study).

Before you finish this prophetic study you will receive a new revelation deep within your spirit of the glorified Christ. You will see Him as He is--standing as a conqueror in the midst of His Church. It is only when you see Jesus with your spiritual eyes as He is today, that you will see yourself as John did--as a king and priest unto God (Revelation 1:6). Only when you really see Christ as He is will you be able to overcome the enemy and rise up in power to take your rightful position of authority and dominion upon the earth!

SELF-TEST ON SECTION ONE

1. List the three purposes of spiritual keys.

2. List five reasons why it is important to study the book of Revelation.

3. What four major things does God want to accomplish in your life through this study?

4. What does the word revelation mean? _____

5. True or false: Spiritual revelation is a function of the natural mind and must be interpreted with the carnal, natural mind. The statement is: _____

6. Complete this verse: "... for the testimony of _____ is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

7. List the seven-fold blessing of Revelation.

8. Summarize how John describes Christ in the opening salutation to the seven churches of Asia.

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION TWO

A MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 2-3

INTRODUCTION

In the first section of this study entitled “*The Spirit Of Prophecy*,” we learned that God has placed His Spirit within us to give us supernatural knowledge of things to come:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

In Revelation chapter one, John was commanded to...

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. (Revelation 1:18)

These three divisions provide important spiritual keys to unlocking the meaning of the book of Revelation. It is the major outline of all that follows and provides the broad framework for our studies:

1. **The things which were:** Refers to the things John saw- all that was revealed to him through the different visions.
2. **The things which are:** The condition of the churches in Asia Minor at the time.
3. **The things which were to come:** The events which would happen in the future as God fulfilled His end-time plan.

The last section closed with John’s awesome vision of Jesus Christ, in His glorified state of majesty and power, standing in the midst of His Church:

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:18-20)

The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches in Asia and the stars in Christ's hand represent the angels of the seven churches.

CHAPTER TEN APPLYING THE MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

As we begin our study on the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters 2-3, it is important to realize that there is a four-fold application to this message:

1. **The message applies to the seven churches to which it was originally addressed.** These churches actually existed in Asia at the time of this revelation. It is commonly believed that the angels referred to in John's vision of Christ are not heavenly beings, but are representative of the pastors and ministers who had authority over the various churches addressed in Revelation chapters 2-3. There were other churches in Asia at the time, but those selected are representative of the spiritual conditions existing at the time.
2. **The message can be applied historically.** History reveals that the Church has passed through eras similar to those described in each of these seven churches. Historians recognize the following stages:

Church	Representing...	Dates
Ephesus	The apostolic church	30-100 A.D.
Smyrna	The persecuted church	100-313 A.D.
Pergamos	The state church	313-590 A.D.
Thyatira	The papal church	590-1517 A.D.
Sardis	The reformed church	1517-1790 A.D.
Philadelphia	The missionary church	1790-1900 A.D.
Laodicea	The apostate church	1900-? A.D.

3. **The message can be applied corporately to the Church today.** Although these special messages were written to specific churches in Asia, the same strengths and weaknesses can also be found within the Body of Christ today.
4. **The message can be applied individually.** Ask the Holy Spirit to search your own heart for evidence of the dangers addressed in these messages. How do you measure up individually?

In this study, we will focus our attention upon corporate and individual application of the messages to these churches. Each one of these churches represent a danger that we must avoid corporately and individually in these end-times. In our study, we will provide practical strategies for avoiding these dangers:

- The church at Ephesus: The danger of diminishing love.
- The church at Smyrna: The danger of fearing suffering.
- The church at Pergamos: The danger of doctrinal compromise.
- The church at Thyatira: The danger of moral compromise.
- The church at Sardis: The danger of spiritual death.
- The church at Philadelphia: The danger of failing to advance.
- The church at Laodicea: The danger of lukewarmness.

As you begin this study, ask God to fix these truths deep in your spirit...

...Hear the call of the Spirit warning you against these seven dangers.

...Picture Jesus standing as a mighty conqueror in the midst of His Church.

...Understand that Christ stands ready to reveal Himself to you as He did to John.

It is only when you see Him with your spiritual eyes--as He really is--that you will see yourself as John did--a king and priest unto God (Revelation 1:6).

When you really grasp these truths, you will be able to receive these warnings to the Church into your spirit, rise up to overcome the enemy, and assume your rightful position of authority and dominion upon the earth in these closing days of time.

CHAPTER ELEVEN THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

The time was A.D. 95. The Church of Jesus Christ was only about 66 years old and had experienced tremendous growth in spite of intense persecution. Under the rule of the iron fist of Rome, historical records reveal that over 40,000 Christians were slain. Many were crucified, thrown to wild beasts, and burned to death. In addition to the intense persecution, there were also signs of growing corruption within the Church.

At the time when John wrote the message received from Christ in Revelation 2-3, many believers were weary, afraid, and uncertain about the future.

- Will I be able to endure persecution?
- Will I be strong enough to stand in the face of adversity?
- What is going to happen in the future?

These were probably some of the questions they wrestled with--probably some of the same ones that you may be wrestling with today.

It was to these battle-weary Christians that Jesus unveiled His end-time plan...

...These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks...(Revelation 2:1)

The seven candlesticks in this verse were actually seven separate lamp-stands holding oil-burning lamps representing seven specific churches in Asia. John was commissioned to write what he saw in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:11). The entire Book of Revelation, including the special messages to the seven churches, was dispatched to these churches and a blessing was pronounced upon all those who would read, hear, and keep the words contained in this prophecy (Revelation 1:3).

Jesus wanted believers to know that He knew exactly where they were. He saw their good works--their faithfulness and patience in the face of persecution. He also saw the bad--their compromise, apostasy, indifference, and lukewarmness. He wanted them to know that despite persecution from without and corruption from within, He stood in their midst as a mighty conqueror and that through Him, they, too could overcome.

Christ's purpose in sending these messages to the seven churches was to empower believers to overcome the enemy. His purpose was to raise up His people in victory, to make them strong and mighty conquerors.

If we are honest, we will admit that the Church--in its present condition--is not ready for Christ's return. That is why that Christ is again walking in the midst of His people preparing His Bride for His coming. By His Spirit, He is stirring us out of our complacency. He is revealing and reprovng sin, calling us to repentance, bringing us to a new, stronger position of dedication and commitment, and releasing a fresh anointing of His Spirit upon us.

As Jesus walks in our midst, He knows our individual and corporate strengths and weaknesses. His message today to us is the same as it was to the seven churches in Asia...*"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..."* (Revelation 2:7).

As we study the messages given to each of these churches, open your spirit to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to you. Ask God to reveal any problems that need be dealt with in your life. Yield yourself fully to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to purge anything from your life that is displeasing to Him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

EPHESUS: THE DANGER OF DIMINISHING LOVE

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:1-7)

Ephesus was located in modern-day Turkey and was once considered the wealthiest and greatest city in all Asia, flourishing as an important commercial and export center. It was located on the western coast of Asia Minor with highways connecting it to the most important cities in every direction.

This affluent city also housed one of the "Seven Wonders of the World," the magnificent Temple of Artemis which was built for the goddess Diana. Idol worship was actually an industry in this city. Thousands of priests and priestesses served the goddess Diana in the temple.

The church at Ephesus was over forty years old when Christ directed John to write this message to them. A new generation of believers had arisen who did not have the same fervency of love and devotion as those who first received the Gospel when the church was established.

Believers in this church performed many good works, persevered, patiently endured hardship, and exhibited discernment in identifying false teachers (Revelation 2:2). But Jesus--the One with eyes as a flame of fire--sees beyond the outward appearance to discern the true condition of this church. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows the spiritual climate of every church and each individual within that church.

Within the Church today, we see the outward appearance of a strong, healthy, productive Body. Some of the largest congregations of professing believers exist in the world today and great cathedrals, organizations, and denominations are being raised

up. But our Lord is looking beyond these things, revealing our true condition, and calling us to repentance. Many of us have left our first love. We have replaced our love for God with our work for God.

Christ told the believers at Ephesus and each of the churches, *"I know thy works."* They were involved in good works and outwardly appeared to be a thriving church. But, something was drastically wrong. Jesus told them, *"I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love"* (Revelation 2:4). Jesus did not say they had "forgotten" their first love or that they had "lost" it, but that they had "left" it. The Greek word used for "left" is *"aphiemi,"* which means "to let go" or "to forsake." This church still loved the Lord, but had lost the fervency and intensity of their first love. They continued doing good works, but their works were no longer motivated and fueled by their love for Christ. They were caught up in a routine of doing things--dead works.

This is one of the most serious spiritual problems in our Church today. Without a passionate love for Christ, our works are worthless. The Apostle Paul said:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, NIV)

There is no substitute for undivided, fervent, undying love for Jesus Christ.

Jesus warned the church at Ephesus to *"repent, and do the first works; or else, I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove the candlestick, out of his place, except thou repent"* (Revelation 2:5). He warned that if they did not repent, judgment would fall. They would no longer be a true light and witness to the world. How many of our churches today are lifeless, dull, and mechanical? How many lack the light and witness of Christ and His power?

The condition in this Church--and in our churches and individual lives--did not happen overnight. It was a gradual process whereby believers left their first love--their passionate bridal love--for Christ. The first love which Christ called the church in Ephesus to return can be compared with the bridal love in a marriage relationship.

A new bride is so in love with her husband that he is the central focus of her life. When she takes her wedding vows, she promises to forsake all others and give herself solely to him. She eagerly anticipates his desires and lovingly tries to meet all his needs. She spends every possible moment with him.

In this bridal love relationship, there is a special intimacy that develops between the bride and her bridegroom. She longs to know everything possible about him. She opens her heart to him, revealing her innermost secrets and desires. While they are apart from one another, she longs for him and eagerly anticipates when she will be with him once again. Because of her love, the bride puts her bridegroom first before all else, including her own needs, desires, and ambitions.

It is this type of pure, fervent, self-sacrificing bridal love for Christ that made the disciples willing to give themselves one hundred percent for the cause of Christ. It was this type of love that burned up their own selfish desires, motivated them to serve Christ with single-hearted devotion, and made them willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ.

It is this type of love that we must have burning within us to enable us to fulfill the purposes of God in these final moments of time before Christ's return. Just as Christ called the church in Ephesus to return to their first love, He is walking among us today calling us to repent and return to our first love.

Here are seven warning signs that signal that a church or individual has left their first love:

- 1. Christ is no longer the central focus of your life.** When the passionate fire of your love for the Lord is burning, you have a deep hunger and thirst within your spirit to know Him better, be more like Him, and to be in His presence. When other desires take preeminence, it is an indication that you have left your first love. David demonstrated this kind of passionate love for God when he cried out, *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry land, where no water is"* (Psalm 63:1).
- 2. You neglect your relationship with the Lord and spend less time in prayer, worship, and the Word.** There are many believers—including pastors and Christian leaders—who are so busy in the work of the Lord that they neglect spending time alone with God, seeking and worshiping Him, and allowing Him to speak to them. "First love" will motivate you to do whatever is necessary to be able to have time alone with the Lord. You will look forward to daily communion with Him where you can pour out your heart and allow Him to speak to you.
- 3. You allow other things--family, friends, your job and your own selfish desires--to come between you and your relationship with God.** A sure sign that you have left your first love is when you continually place your career, family, friends, and plans above your relationship with God. The fervent "first love" Christ expects is to love Him more than anything and anyone else. Jesus said:

Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:37-39, NIV)

4. **There is a loss of intimacy in your relationship with God.** You find it difficult to hear Him when He speaks to you.
5. **You are caught in a cycle of dead works.** Your work for God becomes a drudgery or like a business. Instead of being motivated by love, it is form and ritual.
6. **You are more tolerant of sin.** One of the major signs that a person has left his first love is an indifference towards sin. You are no longer concerned about doing things that displease God.

The true test of love for the Lord is obedience. John wrote, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3)*. Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)*.

7. **You will no longer have a burning passion for the lost.** It was their strong fervent love for Christ that motivated members of the first Church to share the Gospel everywhere they went. Their great love for the lost was manifested to the extent that they were willing to lay down their lives to birth souls into the Kingdom of God.

Take time right now to examine your love relationship with the Lord. Are any of these seven major indicators present?

If so, you must do what Jesus commanded the Ephesian church to do: *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works..." (Revelation 2:5)*. You must:

1. **Remember:** Reflect back on when you first came to know the Lord and your love for Him burned fervently with unbridled passion. Your works were motivated by intense love and devotion to the Lord. Compare your love for the Lord today with what it was then. Has your love grown deeper or has it lost its fervency? Are your works motivated by a passionate love for God or are you doing them merely out of a sense of duty?
2. **Repent:** Ask the Lord to forgive you for leaving your first love.

- 3. Restore:** Restore the good deeds you did at first. Start to do your first works again. Make a new commitment to the basics of prayer, worship, and the Word. Fan the flame of the dying embers of your first love through renewed communion with the Lord. This fervent love is required of all those who belong to the Lord. Jesus called this the first and great commandment:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all they heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. (Matthew 22:37-38)

The church in Ephesus is a solemn reminder of the seriousness of Christ's warning to repent "*or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent*" (Revelation 2:5). A few years later, the Ephesian church ceased to exist.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN SMYRNA: THE DANGER OF FEARING SUFFERING

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2:8-11)

Located about 35 miles north of Ephesus, Smyrna was a rich and beautiful commercial city in Asia Minor and was recognized by Rome as its loyal ally and a center of emperor worship.

In His message to this church, the Lord again commended their good works--*"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty"* (Revelation 2:9). These believers were persecuted and often lost their means of livelihood as a result of their commitment to the Lord. Making a public confession of their faith meant poverty, hunger, imprisonment, and sometimes death.

The word "tribulation" used here paints a picture of a huge rock crushing whatever lies beneath it. The word conveys intense and constant pressure. Can you identify with that? Many of you are experiencing "intense and constant pressure." You aren't forgotten! Jesus sees and knows.

The Word of God is clear, *"...All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus also said, *"...The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also"* (John 15:20).

In His message to believers at Smyrna, Jesus commended them for being spiritually rich. These people knew how to draw upon the deepest resources of the Lord Himself to appropriate the strength needed to persevere during a time of great persecution.

Jesus warned them that *"the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried"* (Revelation 2:10). The meaning of Christ's words to this church that they would have tribulation for "ten days" may have reference to the fact that the early church suffered ten major persecutions under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius,

Severus, Maximum, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. There were also some notable persecutions in the local Smyrna church which lasted “ten days” (a day often means a year in biblical prophecy).

How could these believers face persecution without fear? How can you face tribulation, problems, and persecution without fear? There are three keys given in this passage:

1. **Identify the real enemy.** Don't blame God for your difficulties. Revelation 2:10 reveals the real source of persecution and suffering is Satan.
2. **Do not fear.** Jesus told believers at Smyrna, "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*" (Revelation 2:10). Fear paralyzes. It torments and binds. It renders you ineffective for God. But how could they not fear in the face of such tribulation? How can you not fear the things you are facing?

Because the Conqueror of death, hell, and the grave was standing in the midst of the church with power to sustain and give them victory! "*The Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*" promised them, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10).

Beloved, Christ's message to you today-in the midst your pain, suffering, persecution, and testing-is "Fear not!" No matter what you are facing-sickness, disease, family problems, or even the possibility of death-do not fear because "*God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*" (2 Timothy 1:7).

3. **Remain faithful in difficult times.** God told believers at Smyrna to remain faithful. If you remain faithful--even unto death--you will receive a crown of life and live forever.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN PERGAMOS: THE DANGER OF DOCTRINAL COMPROMISE

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:12-17)

About 60 miles north of Smyrna is Pergamos, which at one time was the official Asian center for the imperial cult. It was also the center of worship for four of the most important pagan cults of the day: Zeus, Athene, Dionysos and Asklepios. The gigantic altar erected to Zeus (100 feet square and 50 feet high) still stands today as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

It is difficult for us to comprehend the severe persecution and opposition faced by believers at Pergamos, but Jesus reassured them: *"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith..." (Revelation 2:13)* They were not forgotten. Jesus recognized their faithfulness despite the satanic environment in which they lived.

In the original Greek, the words, "holdest fast" means "to hold onto desperately with all of one's power." These Christians were holding onto their faith with everything they had and Jesus commended them for their faithfulness.

But the Lord also reproved them for allowing members to remain within their congregation who practiced the *"doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans"* (Revelation 2:14-15). To understand what this means we must look back to the Old Testament.

Take a few minutes to read Numbers 22-24 in your Bible. Balaam was a prophet who compromised God's Word. Balak, king of the Moabites, wanted Balaam to go with him to pronounce a curse upon the Israelites. God clearly told Balaam, *"Thou shalt not go with them"* (Numbers 22:12) but he stubbornly insisted until God allowed him to go

(Numbers 22:15-20). God was angry with Balaam because of his willingness to compromise and make an alliance with Israel's enemies so He sent an angel to let Balaam know that what he was doing was wrong (Numbers 22:32). Balaam refused to accept the warning and continued on his way. Although he did not curse the Israelites, Balaam was responsible for deceiving Israel into compromising with the Moabites by committing fornication with their women and worshiping their god, Baalpeor (Numbers 25:3; 31:16).

In His message to Pergamos, Jesus compares the conduct of some of these believers with the actions of the Israelites who compromised with the Moabites. He also condemned them for allowing the doctrine of the Nicolaitans to remain in their midst. The word "Nicolaitane" comes from two Greek words, one meaning, "to conquer" and the other meaning "the laity." It is symbolic of the development of a priestly order which ruled over the laity in contrast to Christ's command regarding serving one another given in Matthew 23:8-9. The headship of Christ had been set aside in favor of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Jesus issued a stern warning to the church at Pergamos:

Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. (Revelation 2:16, NAS)

Although the majority of the church at Pergamos were not deceived and were not following the doctrine of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans, they were guilty of indifference toward the sin within their church. Although they were victorious in keeping their faith during persecution, they opened the door to spiritual destruction when they compromised with the world.

Compromise is blending two ideas together. The dictionary says it is "to lay open to danger." In spiritual matters, any position of compromise opens you up to danger and corruption. Compromise is rampant throughout the Body of Christ and the Spirit of God is calling us to repent and allow the "sword of the Spirit"--the Word of God--to expose and remove compromise just as a surgeon removes a cancerous growth. God cannot tolerate compromise! He hates it (Revelation 2:15).

Even the smallest compromise opens the doors to additional compromise, which leads to even greater compromise and--eventually--spiritual death.

If you have compromised with sin in any area of your life, you must do what Jesus told believers at Pergamos:

1. **Repent:** Repent of your sin of doctrinal compromise. When you truly repent, God promises:

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. (Isaiah 29:24)

- 2. Listen what God is saying:** The believers at Pergamos were admonished to hear what the Spirit was saying to them. You, too, must reject false prophets and teachers and listen only to the Spirit Judge every doctrine on the basis of God's Word:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

- 3. Immerse yourself in God's Word:** You must become spiritually mature and move from the "milk" to the "meat" of the Word so you will be able to recognize doctrinal compromise:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (Isaiah 28:9)

- 4. Walk in obedience to the Word:** Jesus said,

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17)

God promises these believers that He will give them hidden manna (deep things of the Word of God) and eventually a white stone with a new name written on it. Many believe this will be a name of Christ that will be meaningful individually to the person who receives it. What is Christ to you personally? What name do you think will be on your stone?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN THYATIRA: THE DANGER OF MORAL COMPROMISE

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 2:18-29)

The city of Thyatira was a vital commerce and trade center located about 40 miles southeast of Pergamos. Jesus commended the church here at Thyatira for its good works. He said: *"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first"* (Revelation 2:19).

But once again, Jesus sees beyond this outward display of good works and exposes a stronghold of Satan right in the midst of the church. The church of Pergamos was allowing a woman who called herself a prophetess to teach others that it was all right to mix pagan religions with Christianity. She was teaching and seducing people to commit fornication and compromise morally. Throughout the Old Testament this union of that which is holy with that which is impure is considered by God as spiritual adultery. It was an abomination in His sight!

This false teacher is referred to as Jezebel, which may or may not have actually been her name, but certainly refers to her spirit. The name comes from an actual woman named Jezebel in the Old Testament who was the wife of King Ahab. She was an idolatrous woman with unscrupulous methods, stopping short of nothing to increase her power.

Jesus warned the church of Thyatira of coming judgment to this false teacher and all those who commit spiritual adultery by moral compromise. This “Jezebel” was given time to repent, but refused (Revelation 2:21). Now, those who had been deceived by her teaching were given a choice—repent or face certain judgment.

In the Church today, most believers are not tempted to worship pagan idols of wood or stone, but they worship other idols...

- ...The idols of material possessions.
- ...The idols of recreation and entertainment.
- ...The idols of career and selfish ambition.

Many Christians are not aware that they are worshiping idols. Some are so full of pride and self-deception that their spiritual eyes are blinded from seeing the areas where they have refused to let Jesus reign as Lord of their lives.

Many believers today have compromised morally. They no longer hold high standards of integrity. If you are guilty of moral compromise—spiritual adultery—then you must do what Jesus told these believers to do:

- Repent and then hold fast!
- Hold on to your integrity.
- Guard your Godly standards.
- Don’t fall prey to moral compromise.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN SARDIS: THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL DEATH

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3:1-6)

Sardis is located 33 miles south east of Thyatira. It was the capital of Lydia and was once a portrait of strength, fertility, and wealth. Idolatry and immorality were its reputation.

The church at Sardis had a name--a good reputation--and it appeared to be alive. But in reality, there was nothing but inward deadness. Their deadness was at least partially due to some type of defilement because the Word says there were only a few which had not been defiled (Revelation 3:4).

These people desperately needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The mention of the "seven Spirits of God" is a reference to the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit found in Isaiah 11:2: "*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*"

This church needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit in these areas. If you are dead spiritually, you need these ministries also:

- The Spirit of the Lord: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to seek for the spirit of the Lord to move in their midst.
- The Spirit of wisdom: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to seek the wisdom of God.
- The Spirit of understanding: A lifeless dying church or individual need a true understanding of their condition so they can correct it.

- The Spirit of counsel: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to heed the counsel of God.
- The Spirit of might: A lifeless dying church or individual needs new strength to enter into its lifeless body.
- The Spirit of knowledge: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to flow in renewed revelation knowledge.
- The Spirit of fear of the Lord: A lifeless dying church or individual needs to have their fear of the Lord rekindled.

If you feel dead spiritually or your church is dying corporately, then you must follow the five-fold plan that the Spirit gave to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3:3:

1. **Be watchful:** The Amplified Bible says to *“Rouse yourself and keep awake.”* It is time for us to wake up, become alert to the signs of the time, and be active for God as never before.
2. **Strengthen:** Take hold of the things that remain and are ready to die in your life and strengthen them through prayer and the Word.
3. **Remember:** Reflect back on the promises of God-what you have received and heard in times past.
4. **Hold Fast:** Hold fast to your faith and God’s Word.
5. **Repent:** Repent, so you will be ready for the return of Christ and not caught unawares.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN PHILADELPHIA: THE DANGER OF FAILING TO ADVANCE

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3:7-13)

The city of Philadelphia lay 25 miles south east of Sardis on an 800-foot rise. To this church--which Christ says has a little strength--the Lord comes to open an avenue of opportunity that no force in Hell can shut. "Possessing the key of David" means that He has the authority to open this supernatural door.

The reference to those who "say they are Jews and are not" refers to all who reject Jesus Christ. Romans 2:28-29 explains what constitutes a true Jew:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29)

God promises these believers that He will keep them from the hour of temptation which will come upon all the world. Note that the event spoken of...

- ...Is a definite time period--the hour.
- ...It is a period of trial.
- ...It was future from the time of John's writing.
- ...It was to be world-wide.
- ...The promise (in Greek) was to "keep thee out of" the hour.

These facts make it evident that it refers to the Great Tribulation described in Matthew 24:15-22 which is the subject of Section Six in this study of prophetic books.

These believers at Philadelphia who have only a “little strength” have nevertheless kept God’s Word and not denied His name. God promises that they will become pillars in the temple of God (Revelation 3:12). This church may have been small in number or in material resources, but God was going to make them strong.

They are promised an open door. In Scripture, an open door refers to Christ (John 10:7), an opening to preach the Gospel (Acts 5:19-20), and the rapture of the Church (Revelation 4:1). Each of these may be interpreted as the “open door” promised to this church, even as each can be applied to the Church today.

In these end-times, God is opening many tremendous doors of opportunity and there is always an inherent danger of failing to advance at Christ’s command. You may feel like you have only a little strength, but God can make you a strong and mighty pillar in His Kingdom--a spiritual warrior who is able to walk through every door He opens.

What is holding you back from fulfilling God’s call on your life?

...Fear?

...Your finances?

...Your health?

...Relationships with others?

God has set before you an open door that no man can shut. All the demons in Hell cannot shut it. All you must do is walk through those doors in the almighty power of God!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN LAODICEA: THE DANGER OF LUKEWARMNESS

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (Revelation 3:14-18)

Traveling 45 miles southeast from Philadelphia, one would arrive at the fortified city of Laodicea where several major roads converge. Medicine, production of eye ointment, wool distribution, manufacturing, and banking brought fame to this city.

It is interesting to note how Christ related His message to these qualities of the city in verses 17-18. The people of Laodicea felt they needed nothing. They boasted of their riches, yet they were spiritually poor. Although they were famous for their eye salve, they were spiritually blind. They were known for their fine wool, but they were spiritually naked.

How do you know if you are lukewarm? Ask yourself these questions:

- ...Are you committed to evangelism and missions?
- ...Are you committed to living a holy life?
- ...Are you committed to your local church fellowship?
- ...Are you committed to spending time in prayer, worship, and the Word?
- ...Are you committed to other believers in the Body of Christ?
- ...Are you actively supporting God's work with your finances?

The people at Laodicea were spiritually lukewarm and Christ said their condition must be remedied. He commanded them to do three things which we also must do if we want to eradicate our lukewarmness.

1. **“Buy of me gold, tried in the fire.”** Gold is refined by the fire. Let the Word of God refine you spiritually and burn out lukewarmness in your life:

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Psalms 12:6)

2. **“Buy of me white raiment.”** Allow God to change you by making a renewed commitment to righteous living:

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

3. **“Anoint your eyes so you can see.”** Receive the powerful revelation of God through Jesus Christ which will open your blinded eyes and effect true change in your life:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

CHAPTER NINETEEN THE FINAL CALL

In the closing appeal of these messages to the churches, Jesus issues a final call:

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3:19-22)

Because Christ loves us, He rebukes us. Because He cares He warns us of specific dangers in these closing days of time:

- The danger of diminishing love (Represented by the church at Ephesus)
- The danger of fearing suffering (Represented by the church at Smyrna)
- The danger of doctrinal compromise (Represented by the church at Pergamos)
- The danger of moral compromise (Represented by the church at Thyatira)
- The danger of spiritual death (Represented by the church at Sardis)
- The danger of failing to advance (Represented by the church at Philadelphia)
- The danger of lukewarmness (Represented by the church at Laodicea)

In this closing passage we see a picture of...

- ...The positioned Christ, standing and waiting--symbolizing His readiness to enter our individual lives and corporate church fellowships to correct every deficiency.
- ...The persistent Christ, who seeks us. He doesn't give up. He keeps on knocking.
- ...The pleading Christ, continually speaking to us, wooing us to a more intimate relationship with Him.
- ...The penetrating Christ, who-as we open the door of our lives to Him-enters in.
- ...The passionate Christ, enjoying sweet fellowship and communion with us, preparing and equipping us for His soon return.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TWO

1. What are the three divisions of Revelation that provide a general outline of the book?

The things which _____

The things which _____

The things which _____

2. List the four-fold application of the study of the seven churches.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

3. A major danger was mentioned in this study regarding each church in Asia. Complete the following chart:

1. Ephesus: The danger of _____

2. Smyrna: The danger of _____

3. Pergamos: The danger of _____

4. Thyatira: The danger of _____

5. Sardis: The danger of _____

6. Philadelphia: The danger of _____

7. Laodicea: The danger of _____

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION THREE

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

Revelation 4:1

INTRODUCTION

“Millions Missing”--these are the headlines that will be emblazoned across the front pages of newspapers around the world someday soon when one of the most dramatic, exciting, and catastrophic events in history occurs: The rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ.

There is much discussion and speculation going on today about the future and the possible end of the world. Some people believe the world will perish by famine, during an alien invasion, or a nuclear war. Others believe biological terrorism or cyber-devastation will cause its demise. Some claim we will simply perish by being engulfed in our own toxic pollution.

But those of us who know Jesus Christ are not expecting any of these factors to cause the end of time as we know it. True believers are anticipating the appearance of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven coming with power and great glory.

The Bible is clear--Jesus Christ is returning for His Church--but theologians have debated various aspects of the rapture for years and haven't come to an agreement. Some people believe there will not be a rapture. For most conservative scholars, however, the question isn't whether or not the rapture will occur, but when it will happen.

You are probably thinking, “If scholars can't agree, then how can I ever expect to understand the rapture?” You may have even given up trying to understand the rapture and adopted a “wait and see” attitude...“I'll just wait and see whether Christ returns before the Tribulation or not--then I'll know for sure.”

Don't become confused. God wrote the Bible for all His followers, not just for scholars. The purpose of prophecy is to reveal, not to conceal the future. You may question, “But how can I know what is right when one theologian says one thing and another says something different?”

Here's how: You go to the Word of God and take what it says as the final answer. You may not know Greek or have a seminary education, but if you are a true believer you have the Holy Spirit to help you understand the truths of God's Word. Examine every argument of man in light of what is revealed in the Bible.

In this section, we are going to do just that. We will examine everything God's Word teaches about the rapture. We will study all the relevant scriptures so you will never again be confused...

...You will understand exactly what the rapture is.

...You will know the signs preceding the rapture.

...You will have the evidence necessary to refute positions contrary to scripture.

So...grab your Bible and let's get started!

CHAPTER TWENTY WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

Although the word “rapture” is not used in the Bible itself, the term describes an event that is detailed in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

This passage details three major points concerning the rapture:

1. The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:

(Note: The "trump of God" that sounds at the time of the rapture is not the same as the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15. It signals a single event—the rapture of the Church. The seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15 heralds many events which occur over a period of time (Revelation 10:7). One is a trumpet of blessing, the other is a trumpet of "woe" (Revelation 8:13; 12:12); one is before the saints are caught up, the other is after they are already in heaven; one is before the seven seals and first six trumpets (Revelation 6:1-9:21), the other is after them.)

2. The dead who were believers at the time of their death will be resurrected and rise first.
3. Believers who remain on earth will be caught up with them in the air to go to heaven.

The rapture is a New Testament doctrine that was given to the Apostle Paul as a special revelation:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

This passage adds to our knowledge of the rapture the facts that:

1. The event will occur in the "twinkling (blinking) of an eye."
2. Our corruptible bodies will be changed to incorruptible ones.
3. We will win the final victory over sin and death.

The rapture is not to be confused with the second coming of Christ which occurs at the end of the Tribulation period. As we will learn later in our studies, the return of Christ after the Tribulation is for the purpose of a final battle and executing judgment on the earth. He returns at that time with myriads of saints who were taken in the rapture. The rapture must first take place before Christ can come back to earth with His saints.

At the second coming (not the rapture), Christ actually stands upon the earth. It says in Zechariah 14:4 that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. At the rapture, He appears in the air and we are caught up to meet Him. When Christ meets the saints in the air (what we call the rapture) He takes them back to heaven and presents them to the Father where they remain while the Tribulation is running its course on earth. As we will learn in future sections of this study, this is clear from the facts that the saints are judged, given their rewards, and partake of the marriage supper in heaven prior to Christ's return for the final battles on earth.

There are two Greek words used in most of passages referring to Christ meeting the saints in the air (the rapture):

1. *Parousia* means "personal coming or appearance" and it is used of both the rapture and the second coming of Christ. At the rapture, Christ appears personally in the air to meet the saints, while at the second advent He appears to mankind on earth with His saints. This word is generally translated "coming" and that is why the rapture and the revelation are both called "the coming of the Lord." But remember: They are

two different comings and for two different purposes. In this study, when we refer to "rapture" we are talking about Jesus returning **for** the saints. When we refer to "second coming," we are talking about when Jesus returns **with** the saints to execute final judgment on the earth.

2. *Phaneros*, which means "to shine, be apparent, manifest, or be seen," is used in 1 John 2:28; 3:2; 1 Peter 5:4; Colossians 3:4. The English translation is "appear" and means that Christ is to appear to the saints at the rapture and will not appear to the world until His second coming.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS IMPORTANT

There are ten important reasons why you need to know about the rapture:

1. God doesn't want you to be ignorant concerning the rapture:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep...(1 Thessalonians 4:13)

2. Knowing about the rapture gives you hope:

...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

3. It provides comfort:

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

4. It takes away the sting of death:

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (1 Corinthians 15:55)

5. It assures you of final victory:

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

6. It helps you be steadfast, unmoveable, and abounding in God's work:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...(1 Corinthians 15:58)

7. It assures you that your labor for the Lord is not in vain:

...forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

8. Understanding the end-times affects the way you live:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons

ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:11-12)

9. If you know the facts, you won't be taken in by scoffers in the last days:

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (2 Peter 3:3-4)

10. You can prepare for it:

The one and only necessary requirement to be ready for the rapture-whether dead or alive-is to be "in Christ" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:23). Being "in Christ" means that one is a "*new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Those that are in Christ have been truly born-again and have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:19-24).

The rapture will include Old Testament and New Testament saints as well as those down through history who died "in the Lord" as born-again believers. The rapture will also include believers "in the Lord" who are alive and remain on earth at the time of the event.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO VARIOUS VIEWS ABOUT THE RAPTURE

There are five common views being expounded today regarding the rapture. We are not going to spend a great deal of time discussing these, but here are some facts to help you refute the four positions that are not biblical:

1. There will be no rapture: There are some believers who think there will not be a rapture. They support a position which is sometimes called the “kingdom now” belief or “dominion theology.” This view holds that the Church will become so victorious on earth that we will usher in the Millennial Kingdom and there will be no rapture.

This position is not scriptural because the Apostle Paul declared:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:13)

Just peruse the headlines of your local newspaper, and it is easy to see that things are growing worse, not better.

This view must also be rejected on the basis of what Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 which, as we have seen, clearly describes the rapture. This passage details exactly how Christ will return, what happens to those dead in Christ, and what happens to those who are alive. We are caught up to meet Him in the air--we are raptured.

It is also evident from Acts 1:11 that the Lord will return in the same manner that He departed from this world:

...This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)

Considered together, these scriptures clearly refute the “no rapture” position.

2. There will be a partial rapture. There is a certain school of thought that claims some believers who are more righteous will go in the rapture, while other believers will remain behind. This view implies that salvation depends on our works, which is contrary to the Word of God:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

We are saved--from sin, from death, and saved out of this world at the time of Christ's return--all by faith.

The Bible teaches that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). The Word also teaches that when we come to the Lord we are all baptized into one Body:

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

To suggest that part of the Body must remain while the rest is raptured is contrary to scripture.

Let's be clear on this, however: The Bible is not talking about those who profess to know God but who do not really know Him. It is not talking about those who call themselves "Christians" and continue to live ungodly lives. It is describing the rapture of all true born-again believers.

For sure--there will be people left behind on this earth, but it will be those who have rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 it says that believers "*who are alive and remain*" will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. It doesn't say "some of us" or "part of us." The partial rapture theory is a divisive position that is not only unscriptural, but fosters fear and anxiety in the hearts of God's people. If you are depending on being "good enough" to go in the rapture, forget it. You won't make it. We will be raptured on the basis of the blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that alone!

We will consider the next two schools of thought together:

- 3. The rapture will occur mid-way through the Tribulation.**
- 4. The rapture will occur at the end of the Tribulation.**

There has been much discussion regarding these two positions down through church history. Entire denominations have split and new organizations emerged on the basis of this issue.

The verse often used to justify these positions is John 16:33 which states, "*In the world you will have tribulation.*" In Scripture, the word "tribulation" is used in two different ways:

First, it is used to describe any severe trial that comes upon you in your walk with the Lord. We all go through this type of tribulation. This is what Jesus meant when He said "*In the world you will have tribulation.*"

Second, the word is used to describe a specific seven-year period when the

wrath of God will be poured out upon the earth. The Bible is quite clear that this judgment will fall upon those who have rejected Jesus Christ and the gospel.

The purpose of the Tribulation is to punish those who have rejected the Word of God:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

The Bible assures that there is no “condemnation (judgment) to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1), so how could true believers possibly go through the Tribulation?

There are many other verses that proponents of these views use to support their beliefs, but instead of rehashing all their points let’s learn a simple way to dispel both of these positions. Jesus clearly stated regarding His next return to earth:

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:13)

When we get even deeper into this study and incorporate prophecies in the book of Daniel, you will see how the scriptures clearly define the time-table for the seven years known as the Great Tribulation. The Prophet Daniel describes a time midway through this Tribulation period when the Temple in Jerusalem will be defiled by the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). Jesus gives a name to this event--the “abomination of desolation” (Matthew 24:15).

We will do an intense study of the Tribulation in Section Six of this study, but for now--here is a simple chart that summarizes the biblical teaching regarding its time-table:

Start of the Tribulation	Abomination of Desolation	Return of Christ Rev. 19:11-21 2 Thessalonians 2:8
3 ½ years before	Dan. 9:27; 12:7;	3 ½ years after Rev. 12:14
Or	Or	
42 months before	Rev. 13:5	42 months after

From the prophecies in the scriptures listed on the chart above, we can know that the abomination of desolation occurs exactly midway through the Tribulation-3 ½ years or 42 months after the beginning and 3 ½ years or 42 months before the end of it.

If the Tribulation is seven years long and we can know the exact time-table of the abomination of desolation described in scripture, then what prevents us from knowing exactly when Jesus will return? Nothing.

When the abomination of desolation occurred, people who believed in a mid-Tribulation or post-Tribulation rapture would know exactly when it was going to happen, and that is contrary to scripture. They could continue to live ungodly lives and then repent right before the time was up.

Jesus said that no one knows the time of His return. That is why these two positions--mid-Tribulation rapture and post-Tribulation rapture--cannot be correct on the basis of Scripture.

5. The rapture will occur prior to the seven years of the Tribulation: This position states that the rapture will occur prior to the seven years of Tribulation. This is the true, scriptural position. Let's see why...

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCES FOR A PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

There are ten key scriptural evidences that reveal the rapture will occur prior to the Tribulation. If you put these deep in your spirit, you will never again be confused about the timing of the rapture.

1. God's wrath cannot be outpoured on the earth until the Church is removed. The Bible states:

For the mystery of lawlessness (that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority) is already at work in the world, (but it is) restrained only until he who restrains is taken out of the way. (2 Thessalonians 2:7 TAB)

The Holy Spirit, through the Church, is the force restraining evil in the world today. When the Lord appears in the clouds of heaven to remove us from earth, that restraint will be removed.

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus said, "*Ye are the salt of the earth.*" When believers are suddenly removed, the earth will be plunged into spiritual darkness and the Antichrist will then be free to control the world.

If the Antichrist came to power with the Church still on earth, how could he operate with us here? After all--God has given us power over all of the power of the enemy. In Revelation 11:3, the two witnesses give the Antichrist enough problems (we will learn more about them later). If the rapture occurs after the Tribulation, then it would mean that the Church lost its power during its final seven years on earth. That is not the picture we see in scripture. Jesus returns for a strong and powerful Church, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).

2. From Revelation chapter 4 on, we see the saints in Heaven, already robed and crowned. In Revelation 4:4, John wrote:

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. (Revelation 4:4)

These elders are seated, robed, and crowned. They clearly symbolize the Church,

for in Ephesians 2:6 we read that God has *“made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* According to 2 Timothy 4:8, a crown of righteousness is laid up for believers to be given to them *“on that day”*--meaning at the time believers go to be with the Lord in the rapture.

3. The Tribulation is judgment on those who have rejected God and His Word. As we learned, the Bible clearly indicates that the purpose of the Tribulation is to punish those who have rejected the Lord and His Word, *“taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Since there is no *“condemnation (judgment) to those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 8:1), true believers cannot possibly go through the Tribulation.

4. Christ’s Bride accompanies Him back to earth for the final battle. In Luke 12:36 the Word states that when Christ returns, He will be returning from a wedding. In Revelation 19:7-8, we read about the marriage supper of the Lamb, the wedding to which Luke refers. To fully understand this, we must understand the customs surrounding a Jewish marriage.

According to Jewish custom, the first part of the marriage occurred when the contract was drawn up. The marriage contract often including a dowry. This parallels the act of faith that occurs when we trust Jesus to be our Savior. The dowry is His life, which was used to purchase us from sin. In the Jewish custom, before leaving his future bride’s home, the groom would tell her, *“I go to prepare a place for you. I will return again to get you.”*

During the time the bride waited, she prepared for his return. She went through purification ceremonies and often kept a light burning in the window in case her bridegroom returned in the middle of the night unexpectedly. As the Bride of Christ awaiting His return, we should be preparing ourselves. Our lights should be brightly shining in the darkness of this world as we anticipate His return.

No engraved invitations were sent out for the actual wedding ceremony because the groom’s father was the one who scheduled the date. The ceremony could not proceed until it had his approval. When everything was ready and the time came for the wedding to take place, the groom returned to the bride’s house unannounced, she came out to meet him, and they both went to his father’s house. This is symbolic of the rapture of the Church when Jesus returns for us and we go with Him to the Father’s house.

The bride and groom returned to his father's house amid great rejoicing and invited all of their friends to a festive wedding supper. The marriage supper of the Bride of Christ will take place in heaven while the Tribulation is underway on earth.

When Jesus returns again to earth, He comes with His bride, a mighty army "clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Revelation 19:14). In Revelation 19:8 we are told the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. If the saints of God are returning with Christ to wage war on the Antichrist, then they had to join up with Him sometime previously.

5. The "time of Jacob's trouble." In a number of places, the Bible refers to the Tribulation as a time of trouble for the Jews. Every time you see the phrase "Jacob's trouble," it pertains to the descendants of Jacob. The Church is not mentioned. In Jeremiah 30:7 it says that this time of trouble will come just before the Lord returns to battle and save His people.

6. The Millennium population. If Christ were to come back after the Tribulation to rapture all the saints and slay all the ungodly, who would them be left to populate the Millennium, that period of 1,000 years of peace on earth? Only the pre-Tribulation rapture view can solve this dilemma.

The Church is raptured before the Tribulation, a vast number of souls are saved during the seven years of Tribulation, and those who make it through the Tribulation will go into the Millennium, while the unsaved are cast into Hell. (You will learn more about this as you go deeper into the Revelation in the remaining sections of this study.)

7. The end of the Church age is recorded in Revelation. In Revelation 4:1, the Spirit tells John "come up hither." After this command to "come up hither," the Church is not mentioned in scripture at all. If the Church were to be on earth during the Tribulation, it surely would be mentioned. The word "church" is used nineteen times in Revelation chapters 1-3. Why the continued use in these chapters and not once afterwards if the Church is still on the earth?

8. The examples of Noah and Lot. Jesus compares the last days to the times of Noah and Lot:

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.(Luke 17:28)

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24:37-39)

In both of these biblical accounts, God removed His people before judgment was poured out on the earth.

9. The Tribulation will primarily concern Israel and the nations. Israel and the nations are dealt with in Revelation chapters 6-19. The remnant on earth during the Tribulation spoken of in Revelation 12:17 is Jewish. The Church or any part of the Church is never spoken of as a remnant, as in the case with Israel. The Battle of Armageddon and the second advent Revelation 14:14-20; 19:11-21) are not for the deliverance of the Church but of Israel.

10. God promises to keep us from the hour. Revelation 3:10 declares to the Philadelphian Church, which is symbolic of the final church age:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation (testing), which shall come upon all the world, to try (test) them that dwell upon the earth. (Revelation 3:10, TAB)

What could be clearer than that? It doesn't say "take out" or "keep out." It doesn't say He will "keep us in the midst of it." It clearly says, "keep thee from." The reason? Because the Church has already demonstrated patience in testing (Revelation 3:8,10). God is saying, "You have already passed the test. I will spare you from the really big one to come!"

In Luke 21:34-36 we have the promise of Jesus that some will be *"accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."* Who can be these worthy ones referred to, if not the living saints who are on earth just before these things come to pass?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR REASONS FOR THE RAPTURE

God is a God of purpose, design, and objectivity. He doesn't do things just to be doing them. The reasons for His rapture of the Church may be summed up in seven major purposes:

1. To fulfill Christ's promise to return and receive the saints to Himself:

John 14:1-3; Ephesians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 2: 1.

2. To resurrect the dead "in Christ" from among the wicked dead:

1 Corinthians 15:21-23, 51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Philippians 3:11, 20, 21; Revelation 20:4-6.

3. To take the saints to heaven where they will receive judgment for works done in the body; receive their rewards; and partake of the marriage supper:

John 14:1-3; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 19:1-11.

4. To change our mortal, corruptible bodies to immortal, incorruptible bodies:

1 Corinthians 15:21-23,51-58; Philippians 3:20-21.

5. To present the saints to God the Father so we can be forever with Him:

1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:13-17.

6. To enable us to escape the Tribulation: Luke 21:34-36; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Revelation 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

7. To remove the power Holy Spirit which is hindering the spirit of lawlessness, thus permitting the revelation of the Antichrist and the fulfillment of final prophecies: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS OF THE TIME

Although we know that Jesus will return prior to the Tribulation, no one knows the exact time. He said, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"* (Matthew 24:36).

God does want you to know the signs of His coming, however. One day, Christ's disciples asked Him, *"...tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matthew 24:3). In His answer, Jesus reveals the major signs that will signal His second coming. We know that these passages refer to the second coming because His message is directed to the Jews and He speaks specifically to Israel in this passage.

While these events point to the second coming, they also provide signs of an eminent rapture. The first few signs are called the "beginning of sorrows." We are seeing the "beginning of sorrows" right now and there will be an increase in the intensity of these "sorrows" right up to and including the Tribulation.

In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 Jesus outlined ten major things that will happen before His second coming. Since the rapture occurs before His second coming to execute judgment upon the earth, then these signs also let us know the rapture is near:

1. False Christs and false prophets will arise and there will be strong deception: Matthew 24:5,11,24-26; Mark 13:5-6, 21-22; Luke 21:8.
2. There will be wars and rumors of wars: Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9.
3. There will be great famines, pestilence, and earthquakes on earth: Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11.
4. There will be persecution, offenses, and betrayals: Matthew 24:9-10; Mark 13:9-11; Luke 21:12-19.
5. There will be great signs in the heavens: Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25.

6. There will be a great, unprecedented Tribulation: Matthew 24:21.
7. Iniquity will abound and the love of many will wax cold: Matthew 24:12.
8. Conditions similar to the days of Noah and Lot will exist: Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:28.
9. There will be fearful sights and signs on earth-so great men will die from fear: Luke 21:26.
10. The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all nations before the end will come: Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10.

The time of the fulfillment of all these things is during one generation at the end of this age. This is clear in the following passages:

1. It is clearly taught in Matthew 24:34: *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*
2. Jesus said the end-time would be like the days of Noah--this was one generation only (Matthew 24:37-39; Genesis 7:1).
3. The phrase *"this generation"* is used sixteen times in the New Testament and each time it is used has reference to one particular generation.
4. It is clearly taught in the parable of the fig tree:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24:32-34)

The fig tree is used in scripture as a symbol of the nation of Israel. In this prophetic parable, Jesus declares that when the fig tree buds, that generation shall not pass away before the end comes. The Jewish people "budded" again in 1948 when they became the nation of Israel. We are living in that generation which will not pass away until these signs are fulfilled!

In addition to the parable of the fig tree, Jesus uses two more parables to describe the end-times.

The goodman of the house:

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (Matthew 24:42-43)

The unfaithful servant:

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:44-51)

Thus we have three important parables that conclude the teaching in Matthew 24:

1. The parable of the fig-tree illustrates the nearness of Christ's coming.
2. The parable of the goodman of the house emphasizes the importance of being prepared for Christ's return.
3. The parable of the slothful servant encourages us to be faithful in view of His eminent return.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX THE TIME TO PREPARE

God is unveiling His end-time plan to you in this prophetic study for a specific purpose. He wants you to be strengthened, to prepare for His return, and be motivated into action. This is the Church's greatest hour! Now is the time to prepare for the rapture!

When you hear of terrorism, wars, earthquakes, famines, and deadly diseases, Jesus said, "Fear not". When you suffer persecution for your commitment to God and your high moral standards, Don't be discouraged! Don't be surprised when persecution comes for the sake of the Gospel--expect it! Be ready for it! Some of you--right now--are facing persecution because of the Gospel. Do not be discouraged or afraid. Rejoice because the power and anointing of God is upon you!

Whatever you do in these closing days of time, don't retreat! Do not water down or compromise the message God has given you. Do not hold back in fear of what man will do or say to you. Do not be a men-pleaser. Shout the Gospel from the housetop, regardless of the opposition or danger you may face.

...It's time for you to watch and pray!

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:36)

...It's time to take heed!

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. (Luke 21:34)

...It's time to be diligent, to be sure that your life is spotless and blameless before God!

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (2 Peter 3:4)

...It's time to persevere, to remain steadfast, immovable, unshakable grounded in the Word!

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. (2 Peter 3:17)

...It's time to grow in the knowledge of Christ!

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18)

...It's time to look up and rejoice because your redemption is nigh.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28)

Knowing these things are coming to pass, you need to increase your spiritual efforts. Increase your worship. Increase your intercession for the lost. Increase your efforts in witnessing. Expand your vision--reach out in new areas of ministry.

Remember--what we are seeing come to pass in the world today is not the end. It is only the beginning of the end. The false christs are not the end. Terrorism is not the end. The wars and rumors of wars are not the end. The end will come when...

"... this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Now is the time to prepare yourself for the rapture. Get ready! Don't lose hope! Strengthen your faith! Look up! Watch! Pray!

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come...He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:17,20)

SELF-TEST ON SECTION THREE

1. Using your Bible, summarize what 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 teaches about the rapture.

2. Using your Bible, summarize what 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 teaches about the rapture.

3. List nine reasons why you need to know about the rapture.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. List the five common views about the timing of the rapture.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. List the ten scriptural evidences for a pre-Tribulation rapture.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. List the seven major purposes of God in rapturing the Church.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

7. Using your Bible, identify the ten major things that will happen before Christ returns to earth. See Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION FOUR

THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS

Revelation 4-7

INTRODUCTION

As we learned in the previous three sections of this study, the structure of the book of Revelation is summarized in chapter 1 verse 19 where the Apostle John is commanded to *“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”*

In chapter one, John writes what he sees in the supernatural vision God gave him—*“things which thou hast seen.”* In chapters two and three, he shares messages from the Spirit to the churches—things which are.

In the previous section of this study, *“The Rapture Of The Church,”* we dealt with the first portion of Revelation 4:1 where John is commanded to *“come up hither.”* John’s ascension into heaven is symbolic of the rapture of the Church. This verse is key to understanding Revelation, for the command to “come up hither” signifies the rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ and it marks a transition in the book. Everything that follows are *“the things which shall be hereafter,”* events that occur after the rapture of the Church from earth to Heaven.

As we enter this door to the future, prepare to receive a powerful revelation within your spirit—to see as John did—that the world is not out of control. The future of this world is not determined by major political powers. It is not decided by men or nations. Satan is not directing world events and—let’s make it even more personal—Satan is not in control of the circumstances in your life!

The all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the Universe is on His throne directing the course of world events. He is in full control. He has a plan. He has a purpose. He has an objective. He has a timetable. Nothing is left to chance! This is true for the world, and it is also true for your personal, individual life.

God's end-time plan and timetable was recorded by John in the book of Revelation and, as we continue our spiritual journey through this prophecy, the details of this plan and its timetable will be clearly unfolded.

In the midst of the fear and uncertainty that plagues our world today, God wants to reveal Himself to you in a new dimension. He wants you to see Him as Isaiah did, sitting upon His throne *“high and lifted up”* (Isaiah 6:1). He wants you to see Him as

John did, in all His beauty and majesty in the position of Supreme Authority, holding the seven-sealed book, containing His end-time plan, in His right hand.

God wants you to know that He is not distant or far removed from you. He assured the churches in Asia that He was in control and would enable them to be victorious--regardless of the trials and persecution they faced--and He wants you to know that regardless of the trials you are facing He has a purpose, plan, and objective for your life.

Now let us return to the Isle of Patmos where Christ has just finished revealing the messages to the churches and has commanded John, *“Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (Revelation 4:1).*

First, we will enter the throne room of God (Revelation 4 and 5). Next, we will see the beginning of the end as a book with seven mysterious seals is opened (chapters 6-7).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN IN THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD

Immediately after the command to “*come up hither,*” John is caught up in the spirit into heaven through an open door, into the very throne room of God:

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Revelation 4:2-5)

Through a series of visions, John is about to be given a preview of events which are going to occur on earth before Christ's return. Before he sees these things, however, John is given a glimpse of God sitting on His throne in control--in a position of supreme power and authority directing the course of these events.

There are no words adequate in our human vocabulary to describe the throne room of God. Encircling God's throne, John saw a rainbow which glowed like an emerald. The rainbow was established as a symbol of God's covenant with man after the flood. It appears here to remind of His unfailing covenant. Emerald green is symbolic of life. The brightly colored hues of the rainbow--emerald green, sapphire blue, fiery red--were all reflected in what appeared to John to be a crystal sea of glass spread out before the throne.

In front of the throne were seven lamps of fire representing the seven Spirits of God (see comments on Revelation 1:4). As John stood there, flashes of lightning shot out from the throne and he heard the roar of thunder.

John's gaze turned from the throne to an even more glorious sight, the One seated on the throne. John did not see a form with a face, arms, and legs. He saw a brilliant light reflecting colors which he compared to precious jewels. John said: “*And there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian*” (Revelation 4:2, NIV). The jasper and carnelian were the first and last stones in the breastplate of the High Priest. This is symbolic of Jesus being the Alpha and Omega, the first and last.

The ancient jasper stone was like crystal and comparable to a sparkling diamond. People sometimes ask, “What color is God?”--meaning, what race is He? God is not

black, or white, or brown, because He is not a man as we are. He is a spirit. John saw Him as a diamond, a stone which reflects all colors. The carnelian ("sardine stone" in the King James Version) is a blood red stone, representing the blood of Jesus Christ.

The elders which John saw around the throne are clothed in white raiment and have crowns of gold on their heads. The original Greek word for "crown" is "*phanos*" which was a victor's crown given in recognition of winning races, athletic games, or wars. The crowns that the 24 elders were wearing are the same type of crown that Christ promised to the faithful. He said: "*Be thou faithful to death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10). It is the crown which James said is promised to all believers who endure trials and temptations:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (James 1:12)

It is the same crown we will receive when Christ returns:

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Peter 5:4).

The white robes worn by the elders are representative of the righteousness of those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... (Revelation 7:9)

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19:8)

Clothed in robes of righteousness and wearing crowns of glory, the 24 elders are seated in an exalted position before the throne of God.

Exactly who these 24 elders are is not clearly defined in the Word. However, it is possible that they are the 12 apostles and 12 of the Old Testament patriarchs who serve as representatives of the Church triumphant.

As we look closely at the 24 elders, we see their main duty is to minister as priests unto God. They are continually before the Lord, seated on their thrones offering praise and thanksgiving (Revelation 4:11; 5:9-10; 11:17-18) and offer up the prayers of the saints as sacrifices (Revelation 5:8).

In a prominent place around the throne, John saw four "beasts."

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Revelation 4:6-11)

The original Greek word for "beasts" is more accurately translated "living creatures." What John saw was actually an exalted order of angelic beings--cherubim. These living creatures appeared to Ezekiel in a vision by the river Chebar and he identified them as cherubim who served God (Ezekiel 10:20-22). Isaiah saw similar living creatures in a vision above God's throne and referred to them as seraphim (Isaiah 6:2-3).

The living creatures in Revelation are described as a lion, a calf (or lamb), a man, and a flying eagle. John is using earthly words to express heavenly things he is seeing. As we learned in Section One of this study, Jesus Christ is the theme of all biblical prophecy, so each of these creature reflect His attributes:

- He is called the lion of the tribe of Judah--a victor.
- He is the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world--our Savior.
 - He took on the form of man--deity made flesh.
- He is like a flying eagle--the high places are His habitation.

These four "beasts" are symbolic of the revelation of Jesus in the Gospels:

Lion (king of beasts):	In Matthew He is called the King of the Jews
Ox (beast of burden):	In Mark He is called a servant.
Man (human):	In Luke He is called the Son of Man.
Eagle (rules the sky):	In John He is called God.

In John's vision, these highly exalted angelic beings are pictured as leaders of worship who do not rest. They offer up praise day and night unto God, saying: "*Holy,*

holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (Revelation 4:8, NIV).

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT A POWERFUL KEY TO VICTORY

God has a specific purpose for giving us this glimpse into His throne room, but most believers overlook it because they concentrate only on trying to understand details about the living creatures and the elders.

In this passage, God reveals a tremendous spiritual key to building our relationship with Him, living in victory, and enduring to the end as an overcomer. The key is worship. Worship of God and the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is a priority in Heaven and God wants it to be top priority in our lives also.

All too often, Christians associate the book of Revelation with the judgments of God that are poured out upon the earth. There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials which represent God's judgment, but there are also seven powerful scenes of worship in heaven, which illustrate the tremendous value God places upon our worship. (We will look at these in detail as we progress through the book of Revelation.) Through these powerful scenes of worship in Revelation, God reveals our true calling. Yes--we are called to preach, teach, go, and give. But above all is our highest calling as ministers and priests unto God.

God's sole purpose for creating man was that we would love and worship Him. We were created to bring pleasure to God. God said of the nation of Israel: *"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise" (Isaiah 43:21)*. Under the New Covenant, we are God's spiritual Israel and Christ has redeemed us and made us priests unto God:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:9)

As priests unto God, it is important that we minister to others--praying for the sick, witnessing, teaching, interceding--but more importantly, we must first minister to God. This is our highest calling, and we must make it our first priority. God wants us to break out of our old, ritualistic form of worship into a new, vibrant, life-giving worship that involves all of our beings- our spirits, our minds, our bodies--every aspect of our lives.

The word "minister" means, "to be in attendance upon, to wait before, to receive orders." Ministering to the Lord involves waiting in God's presence in times of prayer and praise. It is here, during these times of waiting upon the Lord and basking in His presence that your strength will be renewed, you will receive your marching orders, and you will be empowered to minister to others.

We are living in God's great end-time harvest. We know that God's judgments are coming upon this earth. Already we see signs--prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes--which let us know that Christ's coming is near.

In the midst of all that is happening today in our world--in the midst of all the seemingly impossible problems and situations you face--there is an important key revealed here in the book of Revelation which will enable you to stand victorious over every obstacle or problem. That key is worship.

Close your eyes right now and picture yourself standing before God's throne as John did in this vision. Think about God's unlimited power, His faithfulness, His righteousness, His unsurpassed love, and His forgiveness. Then begin to worship Him. As you worship, you will see Him as John saw Him: High and lifted up over every circumstance of your life. He is on the throne. He is still in control.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS

Throughout the ages, God has always revealed His plans before they took place:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

As John stands before God's throne, his attention is drawn to a scroll in God's right hand:

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. (Revelation 5:1-3)

God is about to reveal the future to John, but the prophecies are written in a book sealed with seven seals. Why is the scroll sealed? What is the meaning of the seals? Who is going to break the seals and open the scroll?

The number seven is the number God uses symbolically in His Word to denote completeness. The scroll was completely sealed. No one could read or understand it until it was opened. In Bible days, a seal was a device--often made of wax--with a name or design on it. When the wax hardened, it bore the impression of the seal.

Seals were used for different purposes: To protect books and other documents so they could not be tampered with, as a proof of authority and power, and as an official mark of ownership

For thousands of years, God's end-time plan remained a mystery. God revealed a portion of it to His prophet, Daniel, but told him...

...Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. (Daniel 12:9)

Now, in the book of Revelation, God is revealing the details of His plan to us. The veil is being lifted so we can know the things which must shortly come to pass.

CHAPTER THIRTY THE SEARCH FOR ONE WHO IS WORTHY

John waits patiently for the book to be opened, but God does not break the seals. Instead, He calls for a Mediator. A challenge is made throughout Heaven, earth, and under the earth for someone who is worthy to break the seals and open the book to reveal God's plan.

A mighty angel appears on the scene and proclaims in a loud voice that echoes throughout all of creation: "*Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?*" (Revelation 5:2, NIV).

It is a futile search. No one can be found who can open the book and read its contents. This news is too much for the prophet to bear. He has been summoned into the throne room to be shown things which are to come to pass, but unless the seals are broken God's plan will not be revealed. The disappointment causes John to break down and weep uncontrollably.

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:5-14)

As John stands there weeping, one of the 24 elders steps forward to comfort him. He tells John: "... Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5).

The word "*prevailed*" in this verse means "to overcome or to conquer." John stops weeping because there is hope. There is a Conqueror--the Lion of the tribe of Judah--who can open the scroll. The tribe of Judah was one of the twelve of Israel. God promised the Messiah would come from that tribe whose symbol was a lion. Hence, Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah. As the Lamb of God, Christ was led to the slaughter and sacrificed. As the Lion, He is revealed as the One who conquered Satan and won the victory over sin, death, and hell. As the mighty Conqueror, the Lion of the tribe of Judah alone has the right to open the book and break the seals.

Then John saw before the throne of God "*a Lamb as if it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*" (Revelation 5:6).

John uses symbols to describe Christ's divine attributes as the Lamb of God. Throughout the Bible, horns were symbols used to represent power and the number seven is God's number of completeness. In this vision, Christ is pictured as a Lamb that was slain with seven horns (representing complete power) and seven eyes (representing perfect vision which leads to perfect knowledge). These eyes are identified as the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Can you imagine the excitement and glory of the moment when the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah steps forward? All eyes in Heaven are focused intently upon Him. The Cherubim, the elders, and thousands upon thousands of angels surrounding the throne all watch in holy reverence and anticipation. God's great end-time plan is about to be revealed.

As Jesus Christ, the Lamb, takes the scroll from the right hand of God, John witnesses one of the most glorious scenes of worship ever recorded. Tremendous waves of worship and praise sweep through heaven. The Cherubim and the elders fall on their faces before the Lamb and worship Him with a new song for His work of redemption. All of creation joins this heavenly host in worshiping the Lamb. Throughout heaven and earth their voices swell as they sing:

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor glory and power, for ever and ever.(Revelation 5:13, NIV)

The song the elders and the Cherubim sing is a new song because Christ established a new covenant through His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus was the Lamb "*slain from the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8). Even before the world was spoken into existence, God planned to give His only begotten Son as the perfect sacrifice to redeem man out of Satan's deadly grip. When man sinned, his fellowship with God was completely severed. There was no way he could reach God and he

became a slave to Satan. Christ came to earth to reconcile man back to God. He was the perfect sacrifice without spot or blemish.

The elders and angelic beings fell on their faces before the Lamb and cry out, *"Thou art worthy to take the scroll and open the seals."* Thousands upon thousands of angels cry out, *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."* All of creation joins in worship saying, *"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."*

As they worship they declare the worthiness of God to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise. This should be the seven-fold focus of our worship.

This spectacular worship scene ended as the cherubim cry "Amen" and once again the elders fell on their faces in worship of the Lamb. Then Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, boldly stepped forward and took the book with seven seals which contained God's end-time plan.

Before we look at each of these seven seals to determine what they are and their significance in our lives today, there is an important, powerful truth we must grasp. In Revelation 5:8, John saw the prayers of the saints mingled with worship being lifted up. The elders and cherubim each had golden vials *"full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints."*

The prayers of the saints have a significant role in the unfolding of God's end-time plan. Before the seals are broken, our prayers are offered up to God as incense. Again, in chapter 8 before the trumpet judgments are released, the angel first offers the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar:

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. (Revelation 8:3-4)

In these verses, the angels were not released until the prayers of God's people were lifted up in golden bowls with the "incense" of praise. Jesus taught us to pray, *"Thy Kingdom come."* Before the Kingdom of God can be set up on this earth, it must be set up in the hearts of men. The Gospel must be preached to every creature and this will only be accomplished through the intercessory prayer of God's people.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK IS OPENED

John has been caught up in the Spirit where he has been given a glimpse of the beauties of heaven. He has seen God seated on His throne controlling the universe and the Lamb of God who has redeemed us. He has witnessed a great scene of worship.

All of these sights were shown to John for a purpose--to prepare him for what is yet to be revealed. Can you imagine the terror and hopelessness that would have gripped him if he had been shown only the judgments of God? Can you imagine what believers of that day, who were already facing intense persecution, would have thought when the Book of Revelation was read to them if all they heard about were wars, famines, death, the rise of the Antichrist, and God's wrath outpoured?

The purpose of prophecy is to prepare, not to scare. That is why God ushered John into His throne room first and revealed that He is in control. There is nothing to fear.

As we continue our spiritual journey through the book of Revelation and learn of things that are going to come upon the earth, remember that God wants you to be prepared, not scared. Yes, judgment is coming upon the earth. But remember what we learned: True believers are already in the presence of the Lord before judgment begins!

As we look at the judgments of God, it may be hard for you to understand why such a loving God would bring these things upon the earth. God is a God of love. It is His will that no man should perish but that all men everywhere should be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

But God is also a God of wrath. He said, "*My spirit shall not always strive with man*" (*Genesis 6:3*). Since man's rebellion in the Garden of Eden thousands of year ago, God's Spirit has been pleading and striving with man to turn from his wicked ways and serve Him.

Even in the judgments of God, we can see His mercy revealed right up to the very end. The four seals are a warning from God of the judgments to come. The six trumpets are a final appeal for mankind to repent. Then finally, because of their refusal, God's wrath is poured out through the sounding of the seven trumpets.

Up to this point in John's vision, he had witnessed the beauties of heaven. The scene in Heaven changes dramatically now as Christ, the Lamb of God, begins to break the seven seals. As they are opened, the seals reveal end-time events that will occur

prior to Christ's second coming. We will look at each one of these in terms of the symbol that is used to describe the judgment and what the symbol represents.

THE FIRST SEAL:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1-2)

The symbol used: A rider on a white horse.

What it represents: It represents the false christs that Jesus told His disciples would be a sign of His coming:

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Matthew 24:5)

THE SECOND SEAL:

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:3-4)

The symbol used: A rider on a red horse.

What it represents: This rider on the red horse is symbolic of war. Jesus warned His disciples that in the end-times there would be wars and rumors of wars:

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (Matthew 24:6)

Almost since the beginning of time, the world has been plagued by wars. The world cries out for peace but there cannot be any lasting peace until Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom on earth.

THE THIRD SEAL:

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. (Revelation 6:5-6)

The symbol used: A rider on a black horse.

What it represents: This rider represents famine and pestilence. Jesus warned His disciples of these things:

...there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (Matthew 24:7)

As the black horse charges forward, John hears a loud voice from among the four cherubim. The voice announces greatly inflated prices of commodities--ten to twelve times what they should have been. This reveals that a time of great scarcity is coming upon the earth. It will require a day's wage to buy even the basic necessities of life.

In recent years we have witnessed the results of regional famines in places like Mozambique and Ethiopia where hundreds of thousands of people died from hunger. Images of a devastated landscape, starving children, and hordes of people fighting over what few provisions exist have flashed across our television screens. But this end-time famine will be a worldwide famine of tremendous magnitude. There has never been anything comparable to it in history.

THE FOURTH SEAL:

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7-8)

The symbol used: A pale, sickly green horse and rider.

What it represents: This horse and its rider are symbolic of the wave of death that will sweep across the face of the earth, killing one-fourth of earth's population through war, famine, and plagues.

Just think about this! If this fourth seal were opened today with our world population of six billion, that would mean 1.5 billion people would die. That is almost six times the population of the United States!

THE FIFTH SEAL:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9-11)

The symbol used: An altar with souls of believers who had given their lives for the Gospel.

What it represents: The altar and souls represent the persecution and martyrdom of the saints. At the time of this vision, many believers had been slain for the cause of Christ. In John's vision, these martyrs were crying out to God in a loud voice wanting to know how long it would be until Christ would pour out His wrath upon the wicked and avenge their blood.

These martyrs were given white robes (representing righteousness) and were told to wait until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed was completed. There will be another, final martyrdom of believers who turn to God during the Tribulation:

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another...For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Portions of Matthew 24:9-10; 21-22)

The word "tribulation" means "affliction, anguish, persecution, trouble." It refers to a time of great suffering and persecution that will come upon the earth known as the Great Tribulation. It will be a period during which Satan and the Antichrist will execute a reign of terror upon earth. We will learn more about this in Section Six in this prophetic study.

In the next chapter, John is given a glimpse of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and people who have come out of the Great Tribulation. They are clothed in white, and are in God's presence where they offer up sacrifices of worship and praise continually unto Him (Revelation 7:10-14).

What a consolation it must have been to John and other Christians who were being persecuted to have God's end-time plan revealed to permit them to see the victory and triumph that belonged to them! They were being persecuted, tortured, and slain, but they were not defeated! Regardless of what you are facing in your life right now, regardless of the difficulties you may encounter in the future...your final victory is assured!

THE SIXTH SEAL:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:12-17)

The symbols used: Supernatural signs in heaven and earth.

What they represent: These signs signal that the great Day of the Lord is at hand.

Many people confuse the time referred to as "the Great Tribulation" with the "Day of the Lord." Here is a simple way to keep these events straight in your mind:

...The time of the great Tribulation is instigated by Satan who is fighting against God's people.

...The "Day of the Lord" is when God's wrath is poured out upon the wicked.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH SEALS

Six seals have been opened. One remains. Before the seventh seal is opened, however, something very significant occurs. In Revelation 7:1-17, John reveals how he sees four angels standing at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds of the earth, preventing them from blowing on the land, sea or trees:

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. (Revelation 7:1)

These four winds are symbolic of the judgments of God that will cover the whole earth when the seventh seal is opened. The angels are ready to release these judgments, when another angel comes from the east:

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Revelation 7:2-3)

The seal John sees the angel carrying is the "seal of the living God." It is an official mark of ownership that identifies the servants of God and ensures their protection and security. This seal is placed upon 144,000 people identifying the redeemed who are the true servants of God. The purpose of this sealing is to protect the servants of God living upon the earth when the trumpet judgments are released. For example, in Revelation 9:14 when the fifth trumpet sounds and the bottomless pit is opened and a plague of locusts is released upon the earth, they are not allowed to hurt those who have the seal of God in their foreheads!

John records that there are 144,000 people sealed from the tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8). Some people believe this represents a remnant of Messianic Jews who will be saved from every tribe of the nation of Israel. Others believe these verses are symbolic of God's spiritual Israel. These people are representative of those redeemed from every tribe and nation, both Jew and Gentile, who are now the spiritual Israel of God. We know that, under the New Covenant, we are God's spiritual Israel:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29)

In the letter to the faithful Church in Philadelphia, Jesus promised to write the Name of God upon all those who overcome. He said, *"...and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and, I Will write upon him my new name"* (Revelation 3:12).

In Revelation 22, we see the redeemed in the heavenly New Jerusalem with God's Name written in their foreheads, *"...and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads"* (Revelation 22:3-4). In chapter 14, verses 1-5, we again see the 144,000--representing the redeemed and with the seal of God in their foreheads--standing before the throne singing a new song, the song of the redeemed.

In each of these references, we see that the 144,000 who are sealed are representative of all faithful believers--both Jew and Gentile--who are saved and kept during the Tribulation before the great Day of the Lord when Christ returns to pour out His wrath upon the wicked.

1. The 144,000 are redeemed from among men (Revelation 14:3). These have been bought with a great price, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
2. The 144,000 are "virgins" (Revelation 14:4). This description is symbolic of spiritual faithfulness and purity to Christ. The Church throughout the New Testament is often referred to as the "Bride of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).
3. The 144,000 are followers of the Lamb (Revelation 14:4). They have kept His Word and followed His example.
4. The 144,000 are first-fruits unto God and the Lamb (Revelation 14:4). Jesus...

...Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (James 1:18)

Whatever the identity of the 144,000, they are supernaturally protected by God for a divine purpose. Just as God's protection was upon the Israelites protecting them from the terrible plagues He sent upon the Egyptians, God will protect those who are sealed during the Great Tribulation. God protected His people from the plagues that fell on Egypt, including the final plague of death from which they were delivered by the blood of the lamb. Not only did God have a plan for delivering them out of Egypt, He protected them supernaturally while they were in Egypt. God drew a line between His people living in the land of Goshen and the Egyptians in their land (Exodus 8:22). God's seal of protection was upon His people. They overcame by the blood of the lamb!

God has put a difference between you and the world. It is the bloodline of His Son, Jesus Christ. The blood of the lamb is your protection.

In Revelation 7:9-18, John records a second vision during this intermission between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. John saw the victorious, triumphant, redeemed saints of God gathered around the throne. This is one of the most glorious sights ever recorded:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 7:9-12)

Stretched out as far as the eye could see, John saw vast multitudes so great that it was impossible for them to be numbered. The redeemed of all nations, every tribe, and every tongue were wearing white robes and holding palms in their hands. They stood before the throne of God worshiping and praising God and the Lamb for their salvation. The palms in their hands represent the victories they have won.

As the redeemed worship and praise God for their salvation and deliverance, a multitude of angels, the elders, and living creatures join in worshiping God with a seven-fold praise: Blessing! Glory! Wisdom! Thanksgiving! Honour! Power! Might! (Revelation 7:12).

As John beheld this great victory celebration of the redeemed, one of elders came near and asked him "*These in white robes-who are they, where did they come from?*" (Revelation 7:13, NIV). John answered, "*Sir, you know.*" (Revelation 7:14, NIV).

Then the elder explains more about is great multitude:

...And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:14-17)

This scene is one of the most beautiful in the Bible. It describes the final victory of the servants of God, their eternal relationship with Christ, and the glories of Heaven as they serve Him forever around His throne.

This vision of John ends with Christ, the Lamb Who becomes our Shepherd, leading us to the water of life. *"For the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd, and He will guide them to the springs of the waters of Life; and God will wipe every tear away from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17, TAB).*

This is the victory that awaits us as we remain faithful to Christ and endure to the end. In the book of Revelation, God has given us this glorious picture of the final victory that belongs to us. Rejoice in the knowledge that, regardless of the persecution, turmoil, and trials you go through, you will persevere. You will be victorious and you will stand before Him at His throne with that great number of the redeemed!

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE THE SEVENTH SEAL

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Revelation 8:1-6)

The symbols used: Seven angels with seven trumpets.

What they represent: The seventh seal opens a revelation so mighty that there is silence in heaven for half an hour. The seventh seal reveals seven angels with trumpets.

...What will the angels do with these trumpets?

...When will they sound?

...What will happen as these trumpets sound?

Before these trumpets sound, the prayers of the saints are offered upon the golden altar:

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. (Revelation 8:3)

The prayers of God's people release the angels to sound the seven trumpets that unleash the judgments of God upon the wicked. The judgments heralded by these trumpets will be detailed in the next section of this study entitled, "*The Seven Trumpets.*"

The following chart summarize the seven seals you have learned about in this section:

Seal	Reference	What it is	What it represents
1	Rev. 6:2	Rider on a white horse	False Christs
2	Rev. 6:3-4	Rider on a red horse	War
3	Rev. 6:5-6	Rider on a black horse	Famine/pestilence
4	Rev. 6:7-8	Rider on a pale horse	Death
5	Rev. 6:9-11	Altar with souls	Cry of the martyred
6	Rev. 6:12-17	Signs in heaven/earth	Great day of Lord is at hand
7	Rev. 8:1-6	Seven angels with trumpets	Seven more judgments are about to be poured out.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION FOUR

1. Summarize what John saw in the throne room of God.

2. Describe the four beasts John saw in the throne room and briefly note what they represent.

1. A _____ representing _____ in the Gospel of _____.

2. A _____ representing _____ in the Gospel of _____.

3. A _____ representing _____ in the Gospel of _____.

4. A _____ representing _____ in the Gospel of _____.

3. Who was worthy to open the book with seven seals? _____

4. What caused the angels to be released? _____

5. Complete the following chart:

The Seal	What It Is	What It Represents
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____
6	_____	_____
7	_____	_____

6. What happens between the sixth and seventh seals? _____

7. Summarize what you learned about the 144,000 who are sealed.

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION FIVE THE SEVEN TRUMPETS Revelation chapters 8-11

INTRODUCTION

“The beginning of sorrows”--that is what Jesus called the end-time signs we have studied so far as we have progressed chapter-by-chapter through the book of Revelation.

As we learned in our previous studies, the structure of this prophetic book is summarized in Revelation 1:19 where the Apostle John is commanded to *“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”*

In Section One of this study, we analyzed the supernatural vision God gave John--*“things which thou hast seen.”* Section Two focused on the messages from the Spirit to the churches--the things which are. In Section Three of this study we dealt with the first portion of Revelation 4:1 where John is commanded to *“come up hither”*--a key verse in understanding Revelation. As we learned, the command to *“come up hither”* signifies the rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ and it marks a transition in the book. All that follows are *“the things which shall be hereafter”*--events that occur after the rapture of the Church from earth to Heaven.

In our last study, we actually entered the throne room of God (Revelation chapters 4-5) and witnessed the beginning of the end as a book with seven mysterious seals was opened by Jesus (chapters 6-7). The following chart summarizes the events which will occur when these seals are opened:

Seal	Reference	What it is	What it represents
1	Rev. 6:2	Rider on a white horse	False christs
2	Rev. 6:3-4	Rider on a red horse	War
3	Rev. 6:5-6	Rider on a black horse	Famine/pestilence
4	Rev. 6:7-8	Rider on a pale horse	Death
5	Rev. 6:9-11	Altar with souls	Cry of the martyred
6	Rev. 6:12-17	Signs in heaven/earth	Great day of Lord is at hand
7	Rev. 8:1-6	Seven angels with trumpets	Seven more judgments are about to be poured out

This section, *The Seven Trumpets*, is an intense analysis of the events which occur when the seven trumpets of God’s judgment begin to sound. It all begins with Jesus opening the seventh seal...

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Revelation 8:1-6)

When Christ opens the seventh seal, there is absolute silence in heaven for about a half an hour. No earthquakes, no thunder, no lightning, no voices, no praise and worship--just total silence.

Just before a tornado strikes, there is a tremendous hush. The air is motionless. There is no movement anywhere, not even the rustling of leaves. During this silence, it seems as if the wind, rain, and elements of nature are gathering momentum before their fury is unleashed.

This is similar to the silence John witnessed in this tremendous vision. For a period of about half an hour there was a solemn, breathless silence as God prepared to pour out His judgments upon the earth.

Can you imagine the thoughts that must have flooded John's mind during this time? What will the opening of this seventh seal reveal? Will there be more fearful-looking horsemen riding forth to bring judgment upon the earth? Will the earth be destroyed? What will be the final events signaling the end?

Sometime during this profound silence, seven angels assemble before God and each of them are given a trumpet. Then another angel comes and stands at the altar, having a golden censer and incense symbolizing the prayers of the saints. Many times the word "angel" will be used for a man, since it means "messenger." Other times it is used for the angels in heaven. This particular reference says, "*And another angel came and stood at the altar*" to minister. This would seem to indicate that this angel is Christ in His present ministry as our high priest "*...even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*" (Hebrews 6:20). The censer is always mentioned in connection with the high priest (Leviticus 16:12).

As the prayers of the saints ascend before God filling heaven with a sweet-smelling aroma, the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it down upon the earth (Revelation 8:4-5).

Suddenly, the silence in heaven is shattered. Voices sound, lightning flashes, thunder crashes, the earth shakes, and the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets.

It is important for us to understand the tremendous significance of the prayers of God's people and how prayer is vitally linked with God's end-time plan. In these verses--right before God's judgments are poured out upon the wicked--the prayers of God's people are offered to God on the golden altar before His throne. The prayers ascend unto God, along with the incense, and become a sweet-smelling savor in His nostrils.

You will remember that in Revelation chapter 5, before Christ opened the seven seals that the elders and cherubim also lifted golden vials full of odors symbolizing the prayers of the saints. In both of these crucial times in the unfolding of God's end-time plan, the prayers of God's people ascend before His throne and activate the process.

Beloved, our prayers here on earth in behalf of the lost, our cries to God regarding the wickedness and immorality surrounding us, our intercession for God's intervention against the evil forces unleashed on the world today are not forgotten. They ascend before God as sweet-smelling incense in His nostrils.

In response to these prayers of the saints, the angel (Jesus Christ) takes the censer, fills it with fire, and casts it down to the earth. The prayers of God's people release the seven angels to sound their trumpets that unleash the judgments of God upon the wicked.

Right now, throughout the world, God is pouring out the last great anointing which is the end-time prayer anointing. He is bringing us to a new strategic level of warfare prayer. Through this strategic level of prayer, the people of God will be used mightily in this end-time to push back the enemy in the nations, to tear down the strongholds blinding the hearts and minds of the lost, and to release those who are bound by Satan's power.

God has given to us--His Church--His power of attorney. We are His delegated authority upon the earth. As we enter into this new level of warfare prayer and begin to pray with authority, God will release His power to fulfill His end-time plan. In response to the prayers of God's people, we will see the greatest demonstration in history of His mighty power--miracles of salvation, healing, deliverance, and restoration--greater than we have ever known!

So, from our study of Scripture it is clear that the seven trumpets...

...Sound after the rapture (Revelation 4:1).

...Sound in response to the accumulated prayers of God's people (Revelation 8:3-5).

...Bring God's judgment upon the earth (Revelation 8:5).

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE THE SOUNDING OF THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

The awesome silence in Heaven is shattered as the first four of seven trumpets begin to sound in succession...

THE FIRST TRUMPET:

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. (Revelation 8:7)

When the first angel sounds his trumpet...

...Hail and fire mixed with blood is hurled upon the earth.

...One-third of the trees are destroyed.

...All of the green grass is destroyed.

This fierce storm will cause utter chaos on earth. The storm will look like hail mingled with blood. The reddish color may be a mixture of sand or pollution blown up into the clouds by some of the fiercest winds ever witnessed.

Think of the utter devastation when plants and food supplies for both man and animal are destroyed and fertile lands become barren as a result of the destruction of the trees.

THE SECOND TRUMPET:

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:8-9)

When the second angel sounds his trumpet...

...Something like a huge mountain of fire is thrown into the sea. The exact nature of the mountain is not specified. It could be something supernatural that God creates. It does not say a burning mountain, but something like a burning mountain. It could be a nuclear missile, an erupting volcano, or a burning meteor. Whatever it is, it will be big and blazing.

...One-third of the sea is turned to blood. "Blood" signifies that the water has turned red. We must always remember that John speaks in the language of appearance—he did not run a microscopic analysis of the water. A similar event occurred in Egypt with the first plague (Exodus 7:14-25).

...One-third of the living creatures in the sea die.

...One-third of the ships are destroyed. It is possible that this occurs as a result of the tidal effect of the mountain striking the water.

Imagine the ensuing shortage of sea life for food, the devastation to the fishing industry, and the interruption of shipping commerce and trade!

It is interesting to note that this particular judgment was predicted by the prophet Zephaniah centuries ago:

I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling-blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. (Zephaniah 1:2-3)

THE THIRD TRUMPET:

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. (Revelation 8:10-11)

When the third angel sounds his trumpet, a great star called "wormwood" falls from the sky like a blazing torch and one-third of the rivers and springs of water are contaminated.

Wormwood is the name of a very bitter herb. It became a symbol of idolatry because of its bitterness. Idolatry is a bitter taste for God to swallow; therefore He gives the idolater the bitterness of wormwood judgment:

And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. (Jeremiah 9:13-15)

Can you imagine the chaos and ensuing panic that will result when there is a shortage of water?

THE FOURTH TRUMPET:

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. (Revelation 8:12)

When the fourth angel sounds his trumpet...

...One-third of the sun is darkened.

...One-third of the moon is darkened.

...One-third of the stars turn dark.

...One-third of the day and night are without light.

Some kind of unusual eclipse will occur in the heavens. Whatever it is, it is a judgment of God. He will be behind it and it will strike fear in the godly of this world. God has had enough!

Even in our wildest imaginations, we cannot picture the horrifying scenes that John witnessed as these first four trumpets sounded. He saw the very powers of heaven shaken by Almighty God!

The rapture itself, which we previously studied about in Section Three of this study, will cause tremendous economic devastation on the earth. Think about it--thousands of properties will be in foreclosure because Christians who were making payments on these loans are raptured. Many businesses will no longer have CEO's or management personnel--they went in the rapture. There will be a shortage of essential personnel--doctors, nurses, fire-fighters, law enforcement officers--thousands of them, gone in the rapture. Farmers, truckers, teachers, lawyers, stock brokers--devastation and confusion will result in every segment of society through the disappearance of multitudes in the rapture.

But now, can you even imagine the added devastation as the water supply and greenery of the entire earth are affected? Many people will die. The ocean--the fishing and shipping industries--will also be severely impacted.

The terrifying blasts of these first four trumpets are not a figment of John's imagination. They are a reality. Jesus prophesied that they would happen. As frightening and awesome as they sound, the worst is still to come. Three more trumpets are yet to sound.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX THE FIFTH TRUMPET, THE FIRST WOE

Can't you just imagine John standing there, his face pale, an ashen white? A terrible, sinking sensation has gripped him, as God has unveiled His end-time plan revealing four of the judgments that one day will come upon the earth. As John stands there trembling at the sights he has just witnessed, he tries to prepare himself for the sounding of the next trumpet. What fearful judgments are yet to come?

Anxiously, his eyes dart from one end of the heavens to the other...

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 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! (Revelation 8:13)

As the angel flies in midair, a loud warning is given. Three "woes" are pronounced upon those living upon the earth. These three "woes" are pronounced by reason of the judgments that will occur at the sounding of the remaining three trumpets.

As we will see, the three woes of the last three trumpets are:

1. A plague of demon locusts: Revelation 9:1-12
2. The plague of demonic horsemen: Revelation 9:13-21
3. The casting out of Satan to earth: Revelation 11:15-13:18

The blasts of the trumpets in the book of Revelation are startling as they announce God's judgments that are coming upon the earth. They strike terror in the hearts of the wicked. But remember: To the Christian these trumpets are a sound of victory and triumph over evil. The purpose of prophecy is given so we will be ready for what happens in the future. When these trumpets sound, believers will already be raptured and in the presence of the Lord. The trumpets will be the glorious signal that God is preparing to deal with sin and evil according to His divine plan and in answer to the prayers of His people down through the centuries.

Today, however, we have an awesome responsibility. It is our duty to take our positions as strong, mature, and fully-equipped Christian soldiers to sound an alarm--to warn our co-workers, unsaved loved ones, friends, and neighbors that the time is at hand. It is time to prepare for Christ's coming! It is time to sound an alarm!

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a

great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. (Revelation 9:1-12)

The fifth angel lifts his trumpet to his lips and blows. The loud blast of the trumpet echoes through the heavens. The first thing John sees is a star falling to the earth. This star is not an actual star, but is symbolic of a person.

The key to the bottomless pit is given to the "star." This "star" is a divine agent, possibly an angelic being, who has been dispatched to the earth on a special mission. He has been authorized to unlock the bottomless pit. Undoubtedly, this is an angel of God because Christ has the key to the underworld:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:18)

Later on, in Revelation 11:7, John sees the Antichrist ascend out of this same pit. In Revelation 20:1-3, John watches as an angel descends from heaven, binds Satan in chains, and casts him into the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

In Revelation 9:2, as this angel opens the bottomless pit, smoke billows forth like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The smoke is so thick that the sun and sky are darkened by it. Out of this dense smoke comes a swarm of what John describes as locust. Throughout the Old Testament, locusts were symbolic of destruction. Bred in the desert, they invaded cultivated areas in their search for food. They often traveled in

columns 100 feet deep (the equivalent width of an eight-lane freeway), and up to four miles in length!

Before God delivered Israel out of bondage, He sent a similar plague of locusts upon Egypt that devoured all vegetation throughout the land:

And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 10:14-15)

The demonic locusts of Revelation are different from the plague of locusts that came upon the land of Egypt, however. They have a different mission:

1. They are commanded by God: Revelation 9:4.
2. They are given scorpion-like power: Revelation 9:3. The scorpion is a large member of the arachnida class, 4 to 7 inches in diameter including the leg spread.
3. They are told not to hurt the grass, trees, or any green thing: Revelation 9:4. Normally, locust rapidly devour such greenery. God preserves it because if all the vegetation was destroyed, there would be no oxygen and His people would not survive.
4. They are not permitted to kill anyone, but are to torment those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads: Revelation 9:4-5. You will recall that there are 144,000 who have God's seal of supernatural protection on them (Revelation 7:2-4). The locust can only harm those who do not have this seal.
5. The duration of their torment is five months: Revelation 9:5. We are not told why the plague ceases after the fifth month. Perhaps the locust die off naturally, some chemical or mechanical method of extermination is discovered, or God simply ends the plague at that time.
6. Their sting is painful-like that of a scorpion: Revelation 9:5.
7. They are pictured as long-haired, flying creatures with the appearance of horses, teeth like lions, breastplates of iron, and tails like scorpions: Revelation 9:7-9. As this great swarm of locust assembles together, they resemble horses

that are prepared for battle. They are ready to attack. As they fly through the air, their number is so great that the noise of their wings is like a great squadron of horses and chariots rushing into war. The crowns on their heads are symbolic of the power they are given to torment men for a period of five months. Their breastplates of iron indicate their invincibility. There will be no possible way of striking them in a vulnerable spot. John describes their teeth as being like lion's teeth, which emphasizes their fierceness. They do not use their teeth as a lion does to tear apart its victim, however. Instead, they use their scorpion-like tails to torment.

8. They have a king named Abaddon, which is the Hebrew word for destruction. In Greek he is called Apollyon, which means destroyer: Revelation 9:11.

When the angel of Revelation 9:1 comes from heaven, the evil angel bound in the abyss will be loosed. He will take with him his demon locusts and torment men. God is going to release this plague of demonic locust out of the bottomless pit upon the wicked who refuse to repent of their evil. God's purpose for sending this judgment is to punish the wicked and to call them to repentance.

During this time when the fifth trumpet is sounding, the wicked are going to be so tormented by the terrible scorpion-like sting of these locusts that they will try to kill themselves but will not be able to do so:

And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them. (Revelation 9:6, NAS)

Each trumpet judgment John has witnessed has been more fearsome than the previous one. Now, as the horror of this tormenting plague of locusts fades before John's eyes, he waits for the two remaining trumpets that are yet to sound. *"One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes hereafter" (Revelation 9:12).*

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN THE SIXTH TRUMPET, THE SECOND WOE

Four trumpets have sounded declaring the coming judgments of God. John has seen and heard awesome sights and sounds--hail, fire, and brimstone, and fearful signs in the heavens. After the sounding of the first four trumpets, he sees an angel flying through the heavens pronouncing three woes that will come upon the earth at the sounding of the final three trumpets.

In the last chapter, we learned when the fifth trumpet sounds, the first woe is released upon the earth--the plague of locust-like creatures. Now it is time for the sixth angel to blow his trumpet and release the second woe upon the earth:

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. (Revelation 9:13-19)

When the sixth angel blew his trumpet, John heard a voice from heaven from the golden altar that is before God, saying: *"Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates"* (Revelation 9:14, RSV). God, who is a God of purpose, plan, design, and objectivity, has prepared four angels and kept them bound at the Euphrates River specifically for this time of future judgment.

Never forget--God has an end-time plan and a specific timetable. There is a time set for every event that will take place upon the earth in the last days. Once God's judgments are set in motion--from the breaking of the first seal, until the new heavens and earth are established--nothing can stop them. Always remember: God is on the throne and He is in control!

As these four angels by the River Euphrates are loosed, John sees a great army extending across the horizon as far as his eyes can see. The number of these horsemen is 200 million. Led by the four angels, this army is given power to kill one-

third of the world's population by the fire, smoke, and sulfur that comes out of their horses' mouths (Revelation 9:17-18). Who are these fierce horsemen? Where are they from? How do they fit into God's end-time plan?

God promised Abraham and his seed that the land that stretched from the Nile to the Euphrates was their possession (Genesis 15:18). The Euphrates marked the boundary between Israel and her chief enemies. Throughout history, it has been identified as the ancient boundary between east and west. The invading army is approaching from the Euphrates River.

The Euphrates runs a distance of approximately 1,800 miles, and it is extremely difficult and often impossible to cross it. It is 12 hundred yards wide at points and between 10 to 30 feet deep.

In Revelation, chapter 16, when the sixth vial of God's wrath is poured out, the Euphrates River will dry up so that the *"way of the kings of the east might be prepared"* (Revelation 16:12). In January, 1990, a recently-built dam blocking the Euphrates River was closed by the President of Turkey and the river dropped 75 percent in one day.

This fierce-looking army that John has seen in his vision is symbolic of a great, end-time, Oriental army that will come from east of the Euphrates. When the sixth trumpet sounds, this great army, 200 million strong, will be given power to kill one-third of the world's population.

When John wrote the book of Revelation, such a massive army was beyond comprehension. Today, however, it is a real possibility. In China alone, there is an estimated 200 million armed and organized militiamen. China now possesses nuclear capabilities and is emerging as a major world power. (China's flag is also red and yellow and many members of the army wear dark blue uniforms. China is often called the yellow peril and the fire-breathing dragon with a large head is one of the nation's favorite symbols.)

In 1978 the Karakoram Highway extending from the Singkiang Province in China over the formidable Himalayan mountains into Pakistan was completed. This super-highway covers a strategic area where the frontiers of five countries converge: Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, India, and the former Soviet Union. It is the only access China has into Pakistan and the surrounding area.

The Karakoram Highway links up with the Grand Trunk Road and other roads that extend as far as the Euphrates River. The completion of this highway has now made it possible for the "kings of the east" (as prophesied in Revelation 16:12) to cross the Euphrates River to participate in the Battle of Armageddon. The "kings of the East"

will join together with "the king of the south" (Egypt and her African allies) and "the king of the North" (including Syria and Turkey) to war against the Antichrist:

And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. (Daniel 11:40)

When the sixth vial of God's wrath is poured out and the Euphrates River is dried up, the alliance of kings and their armies will march over the dry riverbed into Israel, where they will fight the battle of Armageddon.

A section of China's Karakoram Highway extends through Pakistan to the Indian Ocean. A section of this highway also runs through Afghanistan and Iran to Iraq, where the Euphrates River runs from Turkey to the Persian Gulf. We know that the nations of the earth will be gathered together in the last days for the great battle of Armageddon (Joel 3:2) and China will be among those nations. The completion of the Karakoram Highway makes it possible for the kings of the east to advance into Israel for the great battle of Armageddon!

As this army advances, the fire, smoke, and brimstone issuing out of the mouths of their horses and their serpent-like tails kill one third of all mankind.

During the six trumpet judgments, God has been pleading with men upon the earth, giving them additional opportunities to repent and be saved from His wrath that is yet to come. Even though the wicked know that God has brought these judgments to call them to repentance, they still harden their hearts:

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9:20-21)

Wicked men do not repent of their sins, despite the judgments of God they have experienced. They continue their idolatrous ways, they do not repent of their murders, sorceries, fornications, or thefts. Thus, after the holocaust of the seven seals and the first six trumpets, the world as a whole clings fast to its sin.

It is not God's will that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;

but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

God is long-suffering and His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. However, in His eternal plan there is a set period, forever established, in which He has allowed time for men to repent. He will not go beyond that point. When that time comes, the wicked will be cut off. The declaration that will go forth will be:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (Revelation 22:11)

In the closing days of time, a line will be drawn and the wicked will be forever separated from the righteous. There will be no further opportunities given for repentance. Instead of receiving mercy, the wicked will receive the fury of God's wrath.

What a sobering thought! That is why we must blow the trumpet in Zion. We must warn people. We must give of our material resources to advance the Gospel as never before. We must go forth with the message of salvation. We must intercede. We must weep and mourn for sinners who face an eternity without God! God is revealing His end-time plan to you for a purpose. These are your "marching orders" for this end-time harvest. Blow the trumpet in Zion!

The second woe is past. One third of all mankind perishes. There is a third woe yet to come. But first, there is an important heavenly interlude...

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT A HEAVENLY INTERLUDE

Before the seventh and final trumpet sounds, the scene in John's vision once again changes. In chapter ten there is a heavenly interlude and John hears seven thunders and encounters an angel with a special book:

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10:1-7)

John saw a mighty angel coming down from heaven. This angel was clothed with a cloud, his face shone like the sun, a rainbow was over his head, and his feet were as pillars of fire. A cloud is always associated with the presence of God and Jesus (i.e., at Mount Sinai, and Christ's ascension into Heaven). The rainbow is symbolic of the promises of God, the first rainbow being instituted as a covenant with man after the great flood on earth. The angel's face was bright like the sun and his legs were as pillars of fire (which signifies judgment).

The angel was gigantic! He placed his right foot on the sea, his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. In response, seven thunders "uttered their voices."

Throughout the Book of Revelation, the sounding of thunder is associated with God's punishment being poured out upon the wicked:

- Thunder sounds before the seven trumpet judgments: Revelation 8:5.
- Thunder is heard before the first vial of God's wrath is poured out: Revelation 11:19.
- Thunder sounds as the seventh vial of God's wrath is released: Revelation 16:17-18.

In Revelation 10:4, we learn that John heard seven different messages given by the thunders and began to write down what he had heard. Suddenly, a voice from heaven commanded John to *"Shut up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not"* (Revelation 10:4).

In the beginning of John's vision, Christ had instructed him to write down all the things he had seen, the things which are, and the things that were yet to come (Revelation 1:19). But now, John is told not to reveal the meaning of these seven thunders.

Why? What was the purpose of these seven thunders? Why did they sound? Why did God instruct John not to reveal the messages? Did the seven mysterious messages reveal seven additional end-time judgments? The key to understanding these thunders is timing. God has determined a time when the messages of these seven thunders will be revealed. Until that time they will remain a mystery to us.

God revealed information concerning end-time events to Daniel approximately 630 years before John's vision, but he was told to *"shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end"* (Daniel 12:4). Daniel heard and saw things he did not understand and the meaning of these things was *"sealed till the time of the end"* (Daniel 12:8-9). Today, God is pouring out revelation knowledge upon His people as prophecy is being revealed to us. More and more will be revealed as Christ's coming draws nearer.

After the seven mysterious messages were sealed up, the powerful angel standing with one foot on the land and one foot on the sea lifted his right hand to heaven and made a solemn oath: "There shall be no more time!" The word "time" here means "delay."

...The disciples once asked Jesus, *"...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matthew 24:3).

...In a vision, Daniel saw an angel who asked the question, *"How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"* (Daniel 12:6).

...The martyrs in Revelation 6:10 asked, *"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"*

At this point in God's end-time plan, the seven seals have been broken, six trumpets have sounded, and the seven thunders have "uttered" their voices. Now--at this point in time--the angel proclaims that there shall be no more delays in fulfilling God's end-time plan. The *"mystery of God"* which He declared to His servants the prophets will be fulfilled.

These verses pinpoint the exact time of the end. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the "*mystery of God*" will be accomplished and God's purposes will be fulfilled.

The Apostle Paul told the Ephesians, "*And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ*" (Ephesians 1:9-10, NIV).

When this last great alarm resounds throughout the heavens and earth, it will signal the end of the world as we know it and will announce God's final triumph over evil. At that time, God is going to establish Christ's Kingdom upon earth and give Him dominion over all the nations. God's people will possess God's literal Kingdom upon this earth, where we will rule and reign with Him.

Daniel saw this in a vision and prophesied:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Up to this point in his vision, John had been observing and hearing awesome sights and sounds as God's end-time plan was revealed. Now the time had come when he must become actively involved:

And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (Revelation 10:8-11)

A voice from heaven commanded John to take the little book from the angel's hand and he immediately obeyed. He took the book and ate it. The phrase "eat the little book" is a type of Hebrew expression for the reception of knowledge. What John was witnessing was not just to be seen and heard—it must be assimilated. The effect the book had upon John is sufficient proof that the book contains catastrophic events

that are to transpire upon the earth. The revelation was sweet to receive, but the content was bitter. Prophetic ministry is often bittersweet.

When John had finished eating, the angel gave him his "marching orders." John was commissioned to prophesy before many peoples and nations (Revelation 10:11). The Greek word used here and translated "before" should be translated "concerning." It means that John would prophesy again concerning peoples, nations, tongues, and kings--which is exactly what he did in the remainder of the Revelation.

It was not sufficient for John to merely hear and observe the revelation of God's end-time plan. He had to reach out and take it. He had to ingest it into his innermost being and share it with others. Being able to understand what will happen in the last days is exciting, but it is not enough for you to merely observe and hear the revelation of God's end-time plan. Before the power of this revelation can be realized in your life, you must appropriate it.

Just as John was instructed to take the little book and eat it, you must take the revelation God is giving you and eat it--ingest it into your inner spiritual being. God is pouring out revelation understanding in these last days as we have never had before. The revelation God gives must become part of you. Head knowledge is not enough. It must penetrate deep down into your spirit.

Along with the revelation God has given you, there comes a solemn responsibility. Not everyone is called to prophesy as John was, but God does expect you to take the revelation He has given you and share it with others to prepare them for what is ahead.

After John had eaten the book, he said: *"It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour"* (Revelation 10:10). The prophecies in the book of Revelation are both sweet and bitter. To the Christian they are sweet, but to the ungodly they are bitter. They reveal the glories of heaven and the rewards that are waiting for all those who are faithful unto the end. They also reveal the fearful judgments of God that are coming upon all those who reject God and do not apply the blood of Jesus to their lives.

Remember: Revelation must be appropriated before it produces power! You must take the revelation you are receiving, eat it--make it part of your life--and share it with others. You must be faithful to share both the bitter and the sweet truths that God has shown you in this revelation of His great end-time plan.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE THE SEVENTH TRUMPET, THE THIRD WOE

In Revelation 8-9, six trumpets sound. In Revelation 10, there is a heavenly interlude during which John hears seven thunders and encounters the angel with the book. Then, in chapter 11, John receives a very powerful revelation of the Tribulation period, which we will discuss in depth in the next section of this study.

After this...

...the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:15-19)

At the sounding of the seventh and final trumpet, a great declaration is made in heaven concerning God's final triumph over evil. John hears loud voices in heaven declaring, "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*" (Revelation 11:15).

The sounding of this seventh trumpet brings to a conclusion the purpose and plan of God. The 24 elders fall on their faces before God in worship and praise for His mighty power and the great victory He has won. In Revelation 10:7 in the Amplified Bible, we read, "*But that when the days come that the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God's mystery-His secret design, His hidden purpose-as He had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets, should be fulfilled (accomplished, completed).*"

When the seventh trumpet sounds, it is a wonderful time in Heaven, but a terrible time on earth. The time has come for the Great Day of the Lord, when God's wrath will be poured out upon the wicked. It is the time for Christ to reward the saints and destroy the wicked:

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead,

that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. (Revelation 11:18)

In the concluding verses of Revelation 11, the sanctuary of God in Heaven is thrown open. The Ark of the Covenant is revealed and there is an awesome manifestation of God's great power. Lightning flashes, there are loud roars of thunder, another earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

When that great seventh trumpet sounds “...*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15). The end of all things is at hand.

In view of these things we are learning, we should live every day with a sense of expectancy, preparing yourself and others for that day when you will see Jesus Christ returning in the cloud:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Peter 3:11-14)

SELF-TEST FOR SECTION FIVE

1. Complete the following chart:

Trumpet Number	What Happens
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
•	_____
5 (first woe)	_____
6 (second woe)	_____
7 (third woe)	_____

2. What happens during the heavenly interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION SIX

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 11

INTRODUCTION

A vision of the throne room, a book with seven seals, seven angels with their trumpets--these are the tremendous revelations given to the Apostle John in chapters 1-10 of Revelation which we have studied about in the first five sections in this prophetic study. When the seals were opened in Revelation chapter 6, we witnessed seven miraculous events occur on earth:

1. A rider on white horse representing false christs: Revelation 6:2
2. A rider on a red horse representing war: Revelation 6:3-4
3. A rider on a black horse representing famine and pestilence: Revelation 6:5-6
4. A rider on a pale horse representing death: Revelation 6:7-8
5. An altar with souls: The cries of the martyred: Revelation 6:9-11
6. Signs in heaven and earth signaling that the great day of the Lord was at hand: Revelation 6:12-17
7. Seven angels with seven trumpets which sounded in succession: Revelation 8:7-11:19

In the Section Five of this study, we learned about the seven trumpets that sounded at the opening of the seventh seal:

1. The first trumpet: One-third of vegetation on earth is destroyed: Revelation 8:7
2. The second trumpet: One third of ocean life and ships are destroyed: Revelation 8:8-9
3. The third trumpet: One third of fresh water is poisoned: Revelation 8:10-11
4. The fourth trumpet: One third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened: Revelation 8:12
5. The fifth trumpet: The first woe: A hellish invasion of demonic forces upon the earth-appearing as locust: Revelation 9:1-12
6. The sixth trumpet: The second woe: A second hellish invasion of demons upon the earth-an army of horsemen: Revelation 9:13-21
7. The seventh trumpet: The Great Tribulation is ushered in: Revelation 11:15-19.

These events are only the beginning of sorrows as God pours out His judgment upon this earth. As judgment falls from Heaven, terrible things occur on earth. It is a time called the Great Tribulation and is described for us in the books of Revelation, Daniel, and Zechariah. As we begin this study of this terrible time to come, remember that the purpose of prophecy is to prepare you, not to scare you.

CHAPTER FORTY THE TRIBULATION TEMPLE

The parenthetical passage recorded in Revelation 11 begins with John being handed a "reed like unto a rod." It is thick and heavy like a measuring rod and is about 12 ½ feet long. The angel directs John to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who are worshipping:

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, "Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 11:1-2)

The measuring here is not done to prepare for building. It is done to prepare for destruction. The temple that John saw in this vision is the Jewish temple in Jerusalem--the Tribulation temple--which will be rebuilt on the Temple Mount where Solomon's Temple once stood.

We know that John is referring to this particular temple because of four specific reasons:

- 1. The old temple:** The old temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. approximately 25 years before John wrote the book of Revelation.
- 2. The current temple:** There is no temple during this current dispensation, for the Church is the temple of God:

...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:20-22)

- 3. The Millennial temple:** Ezekiel tells us that the Millennial temple will not be built until after the battle of Armageddon (Ezekiel 38-42). Zechariah tells us that the Man called the Branch (Jesus) will build that temple and sit upon the throne:

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. (Zechariah 6:12-13)

4. The instructions to measure: We also know that this is the Tribulation temple because in verse 2 John is instructed not to measure the outer court which has been given to the Gentiles. Then we read, "*and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*" The "*holy city*" referred to here is Jerusalem, the City of David. This title, "holy city," is used throughout the Word in reference to the city of Jerusalem.

This particular Temple which John measures is the one that will be rebuilt by the Jews before the Tribulation and destroyed at the end of that time. The Prophet Daniel implied that it would be built, Jesus confirmed it in His teaching on the Mount of Olives, and Paul also verified it when he said that the Antichrist will defile it.

Why is John instructed to measure the Temple? Because everything pertaining to the Jewish part of the temple will pass under the rod of judgment for the purpose of preparing Israel to receive their Messiah. The court of the Gentiles was not measured by John to be trodden down of the Gentiles because it is already in their possession.

The Jews were chosen by God and have always been precious to Him, but they have not accepted Jesus Christ and will come under severe persecution during the Great Tribulation. They will pass under the divine rod of God's judgment.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE A TRIBULATION TIME-LINE

The Tribulation will be ushered in by the Antichrist. We will learn more about the Antichrist in Section Seven of this study as we study *“The Beasts Of Revelation.”* For now, it is sufficient to note that the Apostle Paul warned about the Antichrist so that believers would...

...be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:2-4)

The actual event inaugurating the Tribulation is found in Daniel 9:27 when the Antichrist makes a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years. Even though he will later break this covenant, the signing of it will trigger God's prophetic clock. From that moment, only seven years will remain for man on earth.

It may be that when Christ raptures the Church the Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel the very next day or the next week--no one knows exactly how much later this event will occur. When it does happen, however, the Tribulation has begun.

Sacrifices will be offered in the Tribulation Temple for at least three and one-half years, after which the Antichrist will break his agreement with Israel and the Temple will be made desolate. Jerusalem will be trampled down and Israel and the saints will be persecuted by the Antichrist for period of forty-two months, which is three and one-half years:

And he (the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)

Daniel further expounds on this series of events:

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these

things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. (Daniel 12:7-12)

Daniel's prophecy gives us a general time-line for the Tribulation. The key to interpreting it is to understand that the word "weeks" refers to years.

The 490 years (called weeks in Daniel's prophecy) are divided into three periods:

1. The first period consisted of seven sevens or forty-nine years during which time the city of Jerusalem (the holy city) and its wall were to be built. These 490 years began with "the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah."

In biblical history, there were three decrees given for the restoration of the city, so how can we know which one this passage is referring to? Easily. The first decree (given during the reign of Cyrus) and the second decree (given during the reign of Darius) were not fulfilled in a 49-year period. The third decree (given during the reign of Artaxerxes) was fulfilled within 49 years.

The third decree is the one mentioned in this vision as the starting point of the 490 years, because the first two would not fulfill the prophecy that required exactly 49- years for the full restoration of Jerusalem. There were 92 years from the first decree and 72 from the second decree to the time of the third decree, and still the city was not fully restored. Under the third decree, Ezra restored the temple and Nehemiah restored the city of Jerusalem.

2. The second period consists of sixty-two sevens or 434 years. It began immediately after the first period of seven sevens or forty-nine years and continued without a break to the time when the Messiah was "cut off" or crucified...*"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off..." (Daniel 9:26).*

The phrase "cut off" is from the Hebrew *karath*, meaning, "to cut off in death." These forty-nine and 434 years make 483 years from the third decree to the crucifixion of the Messiah, or sixty-nine of the seventy sevens of years. This leaves the last period of seven years concerning Israel and Jerusalem to be fulfilled after the crucifixion.

3. The third period will consist of the seven-year period that is known as Daniel's

Seventieth Week. The crucifixion of the Messiah ended the sixty-ninth week and God ceased dealing with Israel as a nation. They were broken off in unbelief and their city destroyed as foretold in this vision of Seventy Weeks and by Jesus Himself:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:37-39)

This Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy will be the last seven years of the current dispensation and will parallel the seven-year covenant between the Antichrist and Israel. It is the time when the events of Revelation 6:1-19:21 will be fulfilled. This week of years will begin after the rapture of the Church and end at the Second Advent.

There are two major divisions of the Tribulation period:

1. The first division is the first three and one-half years of the Seventieth Week and is termed "the lesser Tribulation" for it is not as great in severity as the last three and one-half years. This portion takes in the fulfillment of Revelation 6:1-9:21. The judgments of the sixth seal and first six trumpets come in this period.

2. The second division is the last three and one-half years and is termed "the Great Tribulation" because it will be more severe than the first three and one-half years. For one thing, the Antichrist--who will protect Israel the first three and one-half years--will break his covenant in the middle of the week (seven year period). The Antichrist will become Israel's bitter enemy and try to destroy her. This will call down the judgments of the seven vials that we will study about in Section Eight of this study.

This part of the Tribulation includes the fulfillment of Revelation 10:1-19:21. Jesus, Daniel, Jeremiah, and many others speak of this time of Israel's trouble as being worse than any time of Tribulation that has ever occurred.

Despite the terrible time of Tribulation on earth that ensues with the rise of the Antichrist, God will have His people. There will be two powerful witnesses that come on the scene...

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO THE TWO WITNESSES

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. (Revelation 11:1-14)

During the closing days of time, the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the nation of Israel will enter into a seven-year treaty with the Antichrist. In the middle of that treaty, the Antichrist will stop the daily sacrifice and set up the "abomination of desolation" prophesied by Daniel.

And armed forces of his shall appear (in the holy land), and they shall pollute the sanctuary, the (spiritual) stronghold, and shall take away the continual (daily) burnt offering, and (they shall) set up (in the sanctuary) the abomination that astonishes and makes desolate (probably an idolater). (Daniel 11:31, TAB)

And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred and ninety days. (Daniel 12:11, TAB)

This "abomination of desolation" being set up in Jerusalem marks the beginning of the time known as the Great Tribulation.

At that time, God will give power and authority to two witnesses who will prophesy for a period of three and one-half years. (Under Mosaic law, two witnesses were required to validate matters pertaining to the Jewish religion.) They will wear sackcloth, which is a garment of mourning. They will have power to shut up the sky so that there will be no rain; power to turn the waters into blood; and power to strike the earth with various plagues.

When they have fulfilled the ministry God has given them, the Antichrist will war against them and kill them:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. (Revelation 11:7)

Over the years, there have been many different views as to the identity of these two witnesses.

1. There are those who believe that the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, who come back to earth during this time. This belief is usually based on the fact that they are the only two Old Testament personalities who did not die.

2. Others believe Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses, Moses representing the law and Elijah the prophets. But since Moses died and would have to be resurrected, then he could not die again. Resurrected bodies are not subject to death since it is "*appointed unto man once to die...*" (Hebrews 9:17).

3. Others believe that these two witnesses are symbolic of the Church, Jews, and Gentiles working together in the end-times

4. There is another school of thought that claims that the two witnesses will be two prophets of the future who fulfill the prophetic office in the same power and spirit as Elijah.

The mystery of the identities of these two witnesses will be made fully known at God's appointed time. What is important for us to understand their role in fulfilling God's end-time plan and His purpose for raising them up.

The word "witness" is translated from the Greek word "*martus*" meaning "martyr, one who bears witness by his death. Webster defines "witness" as "one that gives

evidence, to furnish proof of." Through their lives, deaths, and resurrections, these witnesses will be living testimonies of the power of God.

The two witnesses are given power and authority and will prophesy for a specific time that God has determined--1,260 days or three and one-half years.

These two witnesses will give a final end-time witness that God is the only true and living God. By the supernatural miracles they perform, they will give evidence of God's power to the world.

During their ministry, the witnesses will be clothed in sackcloth that was worn by prophets of old as a sign of grief, danger, crisis, and humility.

The fire that proceeds out of their mouths indicates that at their command fire from heaven will slay their enemies as in the case of the Prophet Elijah:

And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. (2 Kings 1:10)

For three and one-half years, these two prophets will prophesy throughout the earth:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (Revelation 11:3)

The word "prophesy" is translated from the Greek word "*propheteus*", which means "to foretell events, to speak under divine inspiration, to exercise the prophetic office."

During the days of their testimony, the two witnesses will declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a demonstration of power. Under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they will warn of the coming judgments of God and manifest signs and wonders as divine proof of what they are saying.

The word "testimony" in verse seven is translated from the Greek word "*marturia*" which means "evidence given, record." During the three and one-half years, they will provide evidence to the world that Christ's claim to be the Son of God is valid. They will declare the glory and mighty power of God.

- The two witnesses will have power to shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain during the time of their prophecy.

- They will have power to turn water into blood.
- They will have power to smite the earth with every type of plague.
- During the three and one-half years of their ministry, they will be indestructible. If anyone tries to harm them, they will call down fire from heaven to consume them.

Look at verse four, where John explains more about who these witnesses are. He said, *"These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth"* (Revelation 11:4). Two witnesses, two olive trees, and two candlesticks are all symbols representing the same thing. The key to understanding these symbols is found in a vision that God gave to the prophet Zechariah, recorded in the fourth chapter of Zechariah:

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. (Zechariah 4:1-3)

In this vision, Zechariah saw a golden candlestick with a bowl on top of it. The bowl was a reservoir for oil that was placed on top of the candelabrum. From it, tubes extended which fed the oil to the lamps. Each lamp was separate and was kept burning by the supply of oil coming from the bowl.

Standing beside the candlestick were two olive trees. These olive trees discharged oil from their branches into pipes that emptied the oil into the bowl which kept the lamps constantly supplied.

Zechariah asked the angel who appeared to him to interpret the vision:

Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? (Zechariah 4:11-12)

Zechariah wanted to know the meaning of the olive trees, the branches, the golden pipes, and the candlestick.

Actually, the meaning of Zechariah's vision is twofold:

1. It contained a message for Zerubbabel concerning the rebuilding of the temple. In this vision, the candlestick with the seven lamps represented the reconstructed temple. King Zerubbabel had begun rebuilding it in the second year after the Jews returned to Jerusalem out of Babylon captivity. The two olive trees represented Zerubbabel and Joshua, who God used to finish the temple. This is clear by the remainder of the passage:

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth. (Zechariah 4:6-10)

2. This vision was also a foreshadowing of the end-time Church. The candlestick is a symbol of the Church. The branches of the olive trees represent the Jews and the Gentiles. The golden pipes represent the Holy Spirit. In Romans 11, Paul explained to believers in Rome that Jews are the original olive tree and Gentiles are the wild olive tree. Then he explained how, through Jesus Christ, the Gentiles were grafted into the original olive tree:

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (Romans 11:17-25)

When Zechariah questioned who the two anointed ones were, the angel explained:

And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the LORD of the whole earth. (Zechariah 4:13-14)

The "two anointed ones" literally means the "sons of oil." They are the channels through whom the oil of the Holy Spirit will flow. In the last days, the "golden oil" of the Holy Spirit is going to flow out of these two in a united effort to cause the Church to accomplish the work God has planned for it.

For three and one-half years, the two witnesses are given God's power and authority to prophesy proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, warning of coming judgment, and calling people to repentance. Through the miracles, signs, and wonders they perform, they will furnish proof of God's power and authority to the world.

When the two witnesses have fulfilled all God has purposed for them to accomplish, the Antichrist will fight against them and kill them. Their bodies will lie exposed in the streets of Jerusalem and for three and one-half days people from every race and nation will rejoice and celebrate by sending gifts to one another:

The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them, and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. (Revelation 11:10, NIV)

The death of these witnesses will be a world news event and satellites will transmit pictures of their bodies all over the world. This time has been aptly called "The Devil's Christmas," as sinners all over the world will rejoice and exchange gifts to celebrate.

Their celebration will be short-lived, however! After three and one-half days with their bodies lying in the street in disgrace, the Spirit of God will come upon the two witnesses and they will be resurrected from the dead!

John actually saw a vision of the witnesses standing to their feet and noted the "...great dread and terror fell on those who watched them" (Revelation 11:11, TAB).

As they stood upon their feet, the two witnesses heard a loud voice saying to them "Come up here!" (Revelation 11:12, TAB) When they heard this voice, they ascended up into heaven in great victory as their enemies watched!

What a glorious sight! As the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and their followers watch, the Spirit of God enters the bodies of these witnesses and they are raptured!

The entire world will have this final witness of God's supernatural power! As they watch the witnesses ascend into heaven, the world will know that the prophecies that they have spoken--the warnings they have given, the messages concerning Christ and His Kingdom--are all true. The world will be unable to deny it!

As the world beholds the awesome sight of the witnesses being taken up into heaven, there is another great earthquake:

And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Revelation 11:13)

Within an hour of the time of the ascension of the witnesses, a catastrophic earthquake results in the destruction of a tenth of the city of Jerusalem and the death of 7,000 people.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE THE TIME OF TRIBULATION

This earthquake marks the end of the "second woe" and signals the beginning of the "third woe," which comes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the final outpouring of God's wrath.

During this time, there will be a terrible season of trouble on earth known as the Tribulation. God will allow the Antichrist to have power over all nations and people for a limited period of three and one-half years (Revelation 13:5-7).

The term "Tribulation" strikes terror into the hearts of men--and rightly so! It will be a time of unspeakable horror. The question is: Why would God allow such a terrible time? God never does anything without purpose. God has specific purposes for the Tribulation revealed to us by the Prophet Daniel:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)

Here are the specific purposes of the Tribulation:

1. To finish the transgression: This time of suffering will end the transgression of Israel, which is the rejection of her Messiah. During the Tribulation, the people of Israel will turn to Christ in a great revival. Israel will come to the place where she will recognize Jesus Christ as her Messiah. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be desolate until she was ready to say:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matthew 23:37-39)

God promised to bring Israel out from the nations where she has been scattered with a mighty hand:

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury

poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 20:33-38)

2. To make an end of sins: The phrase “make an end” literally means to “seal up.” This period of time will end with the binding of Satan that will “seal up” sin once and for all. During the Tribulation, God’s wrath will be poured out on those who have rejected the Gospel until men cry...

... to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:16-17)

3. To make reconciliation for iniquity: Again, this is a reference to Israel’s reconciliation to God through Christ for the sin of rejecting their Messiah.

4. To bring everlasting righteousness: The age of righteousness--the Millennial Kingdom of Christ--will be ushered in at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Although there will be a brief rebellion at the end of the Millennial, it will be so short-lived that it will not interrupt this final period of everlasting righteousness that leads to the new era described in Revelation 21-22.

5. To seal up the vision and prophecy: When Israel turns to Christ and the last events of biblical prophecy are fulfilled, there will no longer be a need for prophetic visions and prophecy. God’s plan of the ages will be complete.

6. To anoint the most Holy: Jesus Christ will reign forever and ever!

The scriptures also refer to the Tribulation as the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7); “the indignation” (Isaiah 26:20); and a “time of trouble” (Daniel 12:1). It is a terrible time when the Antichrist is empowered by Satan. As part of God’s plan, he will have dominion during this time for the ultimate purpose of separating those who are in rebellion against God from those whose names are written in the book of life (Revelation 13:8).

One of the most graphic descriptions of this time is found in the book of Zephaniah:

And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof. The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wateness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. (Zephaniah 1:12-18)

From this passage, here is a composite picture of conditions during the Tribulation:

- ...People will build houses and plant fields but will not live in the houses or eat of the fruit of the fields.
- ...Depression and sorrow: Even mighty man will bitterly cry.
- ...A day of trouble and distress.
- ...A day of waste and desolation.
- ...A day of darkness and gloominess.
- ...A day of alarm.
- ...Distress that will cause spiritual blindness.
- ...Blood poured out as dust and flesh as dung.
- ...Silver and gold are worthless.
- ...The whole land will be devoured.
- ...All those who are evil will finally be destroyed.

This terrible time of Tribulation on earth will end in a final triumph over evil. Saints living upon the earth at that time will overcome *"by the blood the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony"* (Revelation 12:11). They will not be defeated!

John saw a great multitude, which no man could number who had come out of great Tribulation, clothed in white robes, rejoicing before the throne of God:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And

cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:9-17)

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR WHO WILL GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION?

One question that is frequently asked in regards to biblical prophecy is, “Who will go through the Tribulation?”

To answer this, we must review some of the purposes of the Tribulation we just examined:

...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness...(Daniel 9:24)

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have already dealt with your sin and been reconciled to God. You are already righteous in God’s sight through the blood of Jesus. True, born-again believers will not go through the Tribulation. Revelation 4:1 clearly indicates that the rapture of God’s people will occur before final judgment begins on this earth:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1)

We dealt with this in Section Three at length, but let’s review it briefly once again. The rapture will not occur mid-way through the Tribulation or at the end of the Tribulation as some people believe. The purpose of the Tribulation is to punish those who have rejected the Word of God:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

The Bible assures that there is no “condemnation (judgment) to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1), so how could true believers possibly go through the Tribulation?

Jesus clearly stated regarding His next return to earth:

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:13)

The prophecies in Revelation and Daniel reveal that the abomination of desolation

by the Antichrist occurs exactly midway through the Tribulation-3 ½ years or 42 months after the beginning and 3 ½ years or 42 months before the end of it. If the Tribulation is seven years long and we can know the exact timetable of the abomination of desolation described in scripture, then what prevents us from knowing exactly when Jesus will return? Nothing. When the abomination of desolation occurred, people who believed in a mid-Tribulation or post-Tribulation rapture would know exactly when it was going to happen-and that is contrary to scripture. They could continue to live ungodly lives and then repent right before time was up.

In Section Three of this study, we discussed ten scriptural evidences for a pre-Tribulation rapture. Let's go back and review these at this point:

1. God's wrath cannot be outpoured on the earth until the Church is removed: 2 Thessalonians 2:7.
2. In Revelation chapter 4, we see the saints in Heaven, already robed and crowned.
3. The Tribulation is judgment on those who have rejected God and His Word: 2 Thessalonians 1:8.
4. Christ's Bride accompanies Him back to earth for the final battle: Luke 12:36 and Revelation 19:7-8.
5. In a number of places, the Bible refers to the Tribulation as a time of trouble for the Jews. Every time you see the phrase "Jacob's trouble," it pertains to the descendants of Jacob. The Church is not mentioned.
6. The Millennium population: If Christ were to come back after the Tribulation to rapture all the saints and slay all the ungodly, who would them be left to populate the Millennium, that period of 1,000 years of peace on earth? Only the pre-Tribulation rapture view can solve this dilemma.
7. The end of the Church age is recorded in Revelation: In Revelation 4:1, the Spirit tells John "come up hither." After this command to "come up hither," the Church is not mentioned in scripture at all.
8. The examples of Noah and Lot. Jesus compares the last days to the times of Noah and Lot: Luke 17:28 and Matthew 24:37-39. In both of these biblical accounts, God removed His people before judgment was poured out on the earth.
9. The Tribulation will primarily concern Israel and the nations. Israel and the nations are dealt with in Revelation chapters 6-19.
10. God promises to keep us from the hour. Revelation 3:10 declared to the Philadelphian Church, which is symbolic of the final church age, *"I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation (testing), which shall come upon all the world, to try (test) them that dwell upon the earth. (Revelation 3:10, TAB).*

In answering the question, “Who will go through the Tribulation,” the real answer is *you* are the one who decides whether or not you will go through the Tribulation. Your acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior will assure that you will be saved from the “hour of temptation” coming upon the world. If you reject Him, then you will be one of those unfortunate individuals who will live at the time of the greatest misery in the history of mankind.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH

In this end-time, God is raising up men and women who will go forth to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. (You might want to take time to review the ministry of the Prophet Elijah recorded in 1 Kings 17 through 2 Kings 10 before continuing with this chapter.)

The Prophet Elisha ministered in the spirit of Elijah after receiving the mantle of his anointing. John the Baptist ministered in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures state that Elijah will return to earth before the great and notable Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). There has been much speculation regarding the meaning of this scripture which God will unveil to us in His timing, but one thing is for sure...

...In these closing days of time, God is raising up men of faith who will go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the Gospel with supernatural signs following. Like John the Baptist, they will prepare the way of the Lord!

Those who will rise up in these end-times to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah are those who walk humbly with God. Their lives will be simple lives like that of the Prophet Elijah. They will be totally dedicated to God's purposes. Elijah lived a humble and simple life style. The world and its activities held no interest for him.

Elijah's ministry was marked by signs and wonders. He brought the dead to life, he healed the sick, he had supernatural wisdom and knowledge. No circumstances arose against him that he could not master through the power of God. Even the elements were compelled to obey and the waters of the Jordan River parted when he spoke the Word.

Those who rise up to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah will minister in great boldness. Elijah did not fear to stand before kings. He did not compromise. He had a work to do and he did not allow anyone to cause him to deviate from it.

Elijah's ministry exposed what was counterfeit--the false prophets of Baal. Those who minister in the spirit and power of Elijah will do likewise. Single-handedly, Elijah challenged the false cults and the strongholds of the enemy.

God's end-time messengers will come in love, but they will not hesitate to minister in judgment also. If the nations are to turn to God, then it will only be through an "Elijah" ministry. Only a miraculous, proof-producing ministry will be able to stand against the forces of hell that are soon to be unleashed.

Finally, Elijah was caught away by God in a chariot of fire. “Elijah” saints of this end-time will go in a similar way when we are caught up with the Lord in the air at the rapture. The question is: Are you ready?

SELF-TEST ON SECTION SIX

1. How do we know that Revelation 11:1-2 refers to the Tribulation temple?

2. Summarize what you learned about the Tribulation time-line.

3. Summarize what you learned about the two witnesses.

4. List six specific purposes for the Tribulation.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. Who will go through the Tribulation?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION SEVEN

SEVEN IMPORTANT PERSONAGES

Revelation chapters 12-14

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation chapters 1 through 11, we learned how the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in heaven. As the seven sealed book was opened and the seven trumpets sounded, he witnessed the pouring out of God's judgment on this world.

Now, in Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduces us to seven important personages. It is at this point in John's revelation that many people get bogged down and give up trying to understand the book of Revelation.

- ...Who or what is represented these chapters?
- ...Who is the sun-clothed woman?
- ...Who or what are these beasts?

Earlier in this study, we discussed the reasons why symbolism is used in the Book of Revelation. The style used in Revelation is an example of what is called "apocalyptic literature" which was quite popular from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. It was a style that was well known and understood by both Jews and Gentiles in the first century church and a major feature of this style was the use of symbols. Our difficulty in understanding this book sometimes arises due to our unfamiliarity with apocalyptic literature as a method of communicating a message.

In addition, when Jesus was on earth He often taught by means of parables to conceal the meaning from the ungodly and reveal it to His followers..."...*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*" (Matthew 13:11-15). The mysteries of God are revealed through parables and symbols to His children, to those who hear with a spiritual ear. They are withheld from the so-called "*wise and prudent*" (Matthew 11:25).

Here is a brief synopsis of the personages you will encounter in the passages you are going to study and who or what they represent:

1. The sun-clothed woman representing Israel: Revelation 12:1-5.
2. The dragon, representing Satan: Revelation 12:70-17; 12:1-2,4,11.
3. The Man-child, representing Jesus Christ: Revelation 12:4-16.

4. Michael, representing the angels: Revelation 12:7-9.
5. The beast out of the sea, representing the world dictator: Revelation 13:1-8.
6. The beast out of the earth, representing a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator: Revelation 13:11-17.
7. The 144,000, representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation: Revelation 14:1-5.

As we begin the revelation regarding these important personages, pray that God will release the spirit of prophecy upon you--*“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...”* (Ephesians 1:17-18).

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX
THE SUN CLOTHED WOMAN
Representing Israel
Revelation 12:1-5

One of the recurring problems in the interpretation of prophecy through the centuries has been the tendency to take passages that relate to Israel and interpret them as dealing with the Church at large in this present age. If the predictions in Revelation chapters 12-14 are to be properly interpreted, it is necessary to give close attention to the details concerning each person described and properly interpret the meanings.

Revelation chapter 12 opens with a vision of a woman and a child. In Scripture a woman is frequently used to represent different spiritual entities. For example, the evil Queen Jezebel represents a false religion:

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. (Revelation 2:20)

The harlot described in Revelation chapter 17 is the apostate church of the end-time. The true Church is depicted as a Bride ready to be joined to her Bridegroom (Jesus):

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19:7)

The woman in this vision is not the Church nor is it Jesus Christ. The woman represents the nation of Israel, the maternal genealogical line from which Jesus Christ came:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. (Revelation 12:1-2)

In numerous passages in the Old Testament, Israel is represented as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah. In the description given in Revelation 12, the woman (Israel) is described as being "*clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet*" (12:1). This phrase is a reference back to Joseph's dream in the Old Testament in which he saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him:

And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. (Genesis 37:9)

The sun and the moon in this context refer to Jacob and Rachel, Joseph's parents, who were the patriarchs of Israel. The woman in John's vision is also seen with "a crown of twelve stars on her head." In Joseph's dream the stars were symbolic of his eleven brothers who, along with Joseph, later became the tribes of Israel. These symbols--the stars, sun, and moon--identify this woman as the nation of Israel.

The fact that the woman is pregnant and in pain refers to the birth pangs the nation of Israel has experienced down through the centuries while waiting for their coming Messiah. The woman's suffering refers to the nation of Israel as a whole, not just to the birth process experienced by Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus.

Then John saw...

...another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. (Revelation 12:3-5)

Standing before the woman is a great red dragon who draws part of the stars of heaven and prepares to devour the woman's child as soon as it is born.

It is vital that we know: Who or what is represented by this dragon?

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN
THE DRAGON
Representing Satan
Revelation 12:7-17; 12:1-2,4,11

In Revelation 12:15, John saw a vision of a dragon who was standing in front of a woman awaiting the birth of her man-child. We have identified the woman as symbolic of the nation of Israel. The dragon is described as...

...a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. (Revelation 12:3-4)

This passage has dual meaning. First, it refers to the birth of Christ and the attempts of King Herod to destroy the infant Jesus. To escape Herod, it was necessary for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to go into exile in Egypt for the early years of Jesus' life:

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. (Matthew 2:16-18)

Second, the dragon refers to Satan himself--the spirit of the Antichrist--that operated in Herod, has continued to operate down through the centuries, and will become even more dominant in the final days of time.

The enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads refers to the reign of the evil Roman Empire, not only at the time of Christ's birth but during its revival in the end-times. The Prophet Daniel saw a similar vision of...

...a...beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. (Daniel 7:7)

Revelation 13 reveals more concerning this red dragon with ten horns. The ten horns represent ten countries constituting the nucleus of the beast's empire. The seven

heads and seven crowns refer to the principal governments and rulers of the empire.

John also predicted that the tail of the dragon will draw a third part of the stars to the earth. Stars are symbols of angels. The fact that one-third of them are swept out of the sky means he caused one-third of the angels to fall.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT
THE MAN-CHILD
Representing Jesus Christ
Revelation 12:4-16

John recorded that the woman he saw in his vision (Israel) gave birth to a male child:

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12:5-6)

Expositors have argued concerning the identity of the child, some claiming it represented the Church rather than Christ. The text, however, indicates that the woman's child is a male child. If the child was symbolic of the Church, it would be female because the feminine gender (the Bride) is used in scripture to describe the Church. It would seem confusing to mix metaphors to refer to the Church as a male child, especially since the Church is consistently referred to in Scripture as a Bride.

Jesus is definitely the "man-child" who is caught up unto God and these verses summarize Satan's continued attempts to destroy Him and God's divine plan of the ages.

The male child is also described as the one "*who will rule all nations with an iron scepter*" (verse 5). This is prophesied in Revelation 19:15 concerning Jesus Christ and fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom:

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Revelation 19:15)

It was also predicted in Psalm 2:9 that Christ will rule "*with a rod of iron.*"

The statement that the child will be "*caught up to God and to His throne*" (Revelation 12:5) has also been debated, some believing it referred to Christ's deliverance from Egypt after Herod's death. Most likely, this refers to the ascension of Christ after His earthly ministry, however, because the expression "caught up" is too strong of a term to refer to the return of Christ and His family from Egypt to Nazareth. The same word is used to describe the rapture of the Church in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, of Paul being caught up to heaven in his vision in 2 Corinthians 12:2,4, and of Philip's experience of being caught up by the Spirit of God which is recorded in Acts 8:39.

The dragon ready to devour the child definitely refers to Satan. We know that Satan not only attempted to destroy Christ when He was born, but throughout His entire life the enemy was continually trying to defeat Him.

When Jesus died on the cross, Satan thought he had won the victory. But, praise God, we know that after Christ died, He descended into the pits of hell, snatched the keys of hell and death from Satan, released the prophets and saints held captive, rose from the grave, and ascended into Heaven where He reigns victoriously at the right hand of God.

In John's vision, after the birth of the man-child, the woman flees into the desert to a place prepared for her by God. There she is supernaturally preserved for 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). This reveals how Israel (the woman) will be preserved during the Great Tribulation as predicted in Old Testament:

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:7)

The 1,260 days is the exact length of the Great Tribulation that will culminate in the second coming of Christ. (Remember: This is the second coming of Christ, not the rapture of the saints. The rapture already occurred before the Tribulation.)

During the Tribulation, many in Israel will perish:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. (Zechariah 13:8)

Despite this great loss of lives, Israel as a nation will be preserved and rescued by Christ when He comes:

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 20:33-38)

This supernatural deliverance is based upon God's promise to Israel:

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. (Romans 11:26-27)

Many believe that Israel will be preserved in the mountainous region of Petra, an abandoned city that was carved into the rocks and mountains centuries ago. It has only one entrance, and would be easy to defend (see Matthew 24:15).

The next part of John's vision in Revelation chapter 12 concerns Michael, a host of angels, and a great spiritual war in the heavens...

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE
MICHAEL
Representing The Angels
Revelation 12:7-9

The beginning of the Great Tribulation, Israel's terrible time of trouble, is also marked by a war in heaven. John saw this in the vision which is recorded in Revelation chapter 12:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

Earlier, the Roman Empire was pictured as the dragon (Revelation 12:4), but here the dual interpretation of the dragon is clearly noted. The dragon is depicted as Satan, who will influence world governments prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, just as he did at the time of Christ's birth.

Until the events described in this chapter take place, Satan is given access to Heaven, where he continually accuses the saints before God, just as he did in the case of Job.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?...forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.(Job 1:6-11)

The description of Satan as the devil has in it the thought of slandering or defaming (diabolos) and is used several times in Scripture, perhaps in most detail in Zechariah:

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath

*chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?
(Zechariah 3:1-2)*

Just Jesus defends believers before the throne of God, Satan accuses them.

As John watched the fierce struggle in the heavens, Michael overpowered the great dragon (Satan) and cast him down into the earth with his angels. The battle John saw is a spiritual battle that will take place in Heaven in the end-times. This is not the war that occurred when Satan fell from his exalted position in heaven as Lucifer.

The casting down of Satan to the earth also marks the beginning of the most awful period in human history, the Great Tribulation. John recorded hearing a voice from heaven commemorating this event:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 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, which accused 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 the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them...(Revelation 12:10-12)

This passage shows how Satan's role in Heaven will climax and how his activities on earth will intensify. There was great rejoicing in Heaven because Satan, the accuser, was thrown out once and for all! But there was an ominous warning to those on earth:

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12:12)

On earth there will be many martyrs throughout the Great Tribulation. John records that...

...when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Revelation 12:13-14)

The time period here is the same as the 1,260 days mentioned earlier as the term "time" refers to one year, "times" refers to two years, plus a half time-or a total of three-and-a-half years.

During the Great Tribulation, many in Israel will perish as predicted by Jesus:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:15-22)

Despite the intense suffering, there will be a supernatural preservation of a remnant of Israel. Some believe that there will be a specific place in the desert where Israel can flee (Petra). Others think it is not a place but simply representative of the safety of those who survive.

Some believe the “wings of an eagle” refer to the United States, whose national symbol is an eagle. Others believe it speaks only of the supernatural preservation of God as when he brought Israel up from Egypt on “eagles wings” (Exodus 19:4).

John further recorded...

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:15-17)

Although the power of Satan is tremendous, so is the strength given believers. Those who overcame Satan did so by the blood of the Lamb, by their faithful testimony, and their willingness to be martyrs if necessary (Revelation 12:11).

The flood which issues from Satan is probably symbolic of all he will do to destroy Israel, including false teaching which in the end-time will come in like a flood and negative circumstances of the Tribulation which will test their faith in the fulfillment of their promised Messiah.

The Tribulation will be a terrible time on earth! John watches in awed silence as he sees in his vision two fierce beasts arise--one from the sea and one from the earth...

CHAPTER FIFTY
THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA
Representing The World Dictator
Revelation 13:1-8

Revelation chapter 13 focuses on the end-time world government and the beast (the Antichrist) and the False Prophet, who are the political and spiritual leaders. It pulls together many prophecies throughout Scripture that speak of this crucial time of three-and-a-half years which culminates in the second coming of Christ.

Having introduced the main characters of the end-time--the woman (Israel), the dragon (Satan), and the man-child (Christ)--the Revelation of John goes on to describe two more important personages who will dominate the Great Tribulation. In this chapter we will discuss the beast out of the sea. In the next chapter we will learn about the beast out of the earth.

Chapter 13 opens with John seeing a monstrous-looking creature rise up from the depths of the sea:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Revelation 13:1-2)

This is the same beast described in Revelation 17 as “A scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” Revelation 17:3). This beast represents the revived Roman Empire and its ruler in the end-time. This passage corresponds to the description given in Daniel 7:7-8 and Revelation 12:3; 17:7. This beast--the future world ruler--will arise out of the sea which represents the mass of humanity.

The empire is seen here after three of the ten nations that form its beginning are overthrown and come under the power of the beast. The ten horns represent ten governments, as the horn is used in Scripture as a symbol of political power (this is illustrated in Daniel chapters 7-8.) The crowns are diadems and emblems of governmental authority. Their blasphemous names indicate that they are opposed to God. The seven heads refer to the principal authorities that head these future governments.

John recorded that the beast he saw resembled a leopard but had feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion (Revelation 13:2). In Daniel's description of the four great world empires preceding the Kingdom from heaven, the four great empires are also described

as beasts (Daniel 7). The Babylonian power is represented as a lion (Daniel 7:4), the Medo-Persian Empire as a bear (Daniel 7:5), the leopard was Alexander the Great in his conquest (Daniel 7:6), and the beast of Revelation 13:1-7--who is not named--represents the future Roman Empire (Daniel 7:7-11).

The three beasts of Daniel represented in the beast of the sea reveals that the final world ruler draws into his power all the preceding political leaders and kingdoms and eventually becomes ruler over the entire globe.

John also pointed out that the dragon gave the beast his power, throne, and authority (Revelation 13:2). Satan will be behind the political powers and rulers in the end-times. The human world ruler--the beast from the sea--is representative of Satan, much as Christ is representative of God the Father.

John also describes a fatal wound received by the beast which is healed:

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed...(Revelation 13:3)

Because of this supernatural event, the whole world was astonished and followed the beast:

...and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? (Revelation 13:3-4)

The Roman Empire seemingly has been dead for centuries. The fact that it is resurrected at this time would seem to indicate that while the empire had a fatal wound that should have caused its demise, there will be a future revival of the Roman Empire.

In any event and regardless of what the interpretation of this fatal wound is, the supernatural origin and special powers of this world ruler cause the world to be attracted to him and worship him. The final form of apostasy is to worship a man instead of worshiping God and to worship Satan who sought to be like God.

John records that...

...And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and

*power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.
(Revelation 13:5-7)*

The Scriptures leave no doubt that this is an actual political government that extends over the entire globe.

During most of the final three-and-a-half years, the world ruler has power to cause the saints to be martyred, as previously revealed in Revelation 7:9-17. His authority extends to the entire globe and to every person in the world. He is actually worshiped as God:

*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
(Revelation 13:8)*

While the prophecy states that everyone on earth will worship the beast, there is the glorious exception of those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book Of Life.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE
THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH
Representing The False Religious Leader
Revelation 13:11-17

In Revelation 13:9, before introducing the next symbol, there is an important verse: *“He who has an ear, let him hear.”* In Revelation 2-3, each time this was stated it included *“let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”* The omission of that phrase here confirms that the rapture of the Church occurs before the Tribulation.

In Revelation 13:11-18, a second beast is introduced. The Apostle John wrote:

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13:11-12)

Working alongside Satan and the first beast (the Antichrist who is known as the world ruler), is a third person in the diabolical, unholy trinity known as the False Prophet. This False Prophet will be the leader of a false religious system and will prepare the way for the Antichrist.

John saw this end-time False Prophet in the form of a second beast. After the awesome-looking beast with seven heads and ten horns (the Antichrist) passed from view, John saw another beast that looked like a lamb, had two horns, and a voice like a dragon. This beast rose up out of the earth and it represents the end-time False Prophet.

This description reveals this prophet's power to deceive. Jesus is the Lamb of God, and this beast comes as a lamb, but a lamb with horns. Lambs do not have horns. Jesus warned His disciples of false prophets who would come in sheep's clothing but were ravenous wolves inwardly:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15)

This end-time False Prophet and the counterfeit religion he represents will appear harmless as a lamb, but will be based upon lies from the pits of hell. His message will bring destruction on those who accept it.

Just as the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself but testifies of Christ, the False Prophet will not speak of himself but will speak of the Antichrist. He will cause those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book Of Life to worship the Antichrist. Empowered by Satan, he will be able to perform counterfeit signs and wonders. Like Elijah, he will be able to call down fire from heaven:

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, (Revelation 13:13)

The Apostle Paul warned:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12)

Through counterfeit signs and wonders, the False Prophet will persuade unbelievers on earth to make an image of the Antichrist. This image will be placed in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem where the Antichrist will set up his headquarters:

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13:14-15)

This event is called is the "abomination of desolation" which was prophesied by Daniel:

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. (Daniel 11:31)

Using his satanic powers, the False Prophet will cause the image to come to life and it will be able to speak. All those living upon the earth will be required to worship this image or face death. This worship will involve total allegiance to Satan and his counterfeit religious system which will be signified by an identifying mark:

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count

the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13:16-18)

You may wonder why anyone would do such a thing, but you must remember that during these times God will send strong delusion upon all those who have rejected the truth. They will be deceived by the counterfeit miracles the False Prophet performs and they will willingly give their wholehearted allegiance to him. The mark of the beast is six hundred threescore and six--666--which is the mark of the Antichrist.

The modern world has two sets of symbols: The alphabet and numbers. The ancient world used only a single set of symbols to represent both letters and numbers. This kind of system is called an alphanumeric system. Every number is a letter, and every letter is a number. For example, A might be represented by 100, B by 101, etc. The mark of the beast will be 666 computed in an alphanumeric system.

The redeemed will have Christ's Name, the Name of God, and the name of New Jerusalem written on their foreheads (Revelation 3:12; 14:1; 22:4). His Name will identify them as God's possession and will be a seal of protection for them. The mark of the Antichrist--666, which is the numeric equivalent of his name--will mark those who belong to Satan and seal their fate in the lake of fire!

Those who take the mark of the beast will be able to buy, sell, and will escape the wrath of the Antichrist, but they will not escape the wrath of God. They will be tormented forever in the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

Those who refuse to take the mark of the beast will not be able to buy or sell and will face death, but in the end they will rejoice around the throne of God forever (Revelation 7:14-17).

Beloved, the time has come for us, as part of the Church of the living God, to go forward from a new position of strength knowing that we are part an impenetrable force that cannot and will not be defeated! One of the most important strategies an army can have in winning a war to know its own strength and to know the strength of the enemy. Satan's counterfeit system has been exposed to you. You can see how, even now, Satan is at work preparing the world for the Antichrist and his godless system.

It is later than you think! Don't allow yourself to become distracted by things that will take your focus off the fact that Christ's coming is near at hand.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO
THE 144,000
Representing The Remnant Saved Out Of The Tribulation
Revelation 14:1-5

The parenthetical chapters of Revelation 12 through 14 focus on symbols representing characters who will be important personages during the end-times.

In Revelation chapter 12 we learned how Israel, Christ, Satan, and Michael are vitally linked to the final great drama of the ages.

In Revelation chapter 13, we learned about the future world ruler (the beast out of the sea) and the False Prophet (the beast out of the earth) along with details of their world government.

As Chapter 14 opens, we find an interesting scene described by the Apostle John:

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:1-5)

Here we find that the 144,000, who were introduced in chapter 7 and sealed to be kept safely through the Tribulation, have been supernaturally preserved. In this vision, John is seeing the triumph of the Lamb following His second coming and the 144,000 on Mount Zion who were preserved by His keeping power.

John records that these 144,000 have the names of Christ and of God the Father written on their foreheads. This not only indicates possession by God, it marks them for safety to be preserved through the Great Tribulation. One of the divine purposes of this group is illustrating the keeping power of God during the most terrible time ever experienced on earth.

As John is looking at this group of people, all of a sudden he hears a sound from heaven which he compares to the roar of rushing waters or a peal of thunder. It is, of

course, a demonstration of God's divine power. The sound, though powerful, also has a musical quality as if it is being played on a harp.

Suddenly, the masses standing before the throne begin to sing a new song of praise to God. No one but the 144,000 could sing this special song. The 144,000 singing this beautiful melody are described as...

...Those who did not defile themselves with women.

...Pure like virgins.

...Redeemed.

...Following the Lamb wherever He goes.

...Those who are offered as first-fruits to God and the Lamb.

The implication from this description is that the 144,000 are kept from doctrinal and moral impurity and are characterized as those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Under ordinary circumstances, the married state is not regarded as less pure than the single state, but in the terrible period of the Great Tribulation, a normal married life would be impossible. So, in order to serve the Lord without distraction, they remain unmarried.

This description of the 144,000 emphasizes the importance of living a life of purity and being a witness to the world. Believers are to be holy and blameless:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. (Ephesians 1:4)

We are to be without fault:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy... (Jude 24)

The 144,000 illustrate an amazing testimony of the holiness of God in the midst of a generation that is utterly wicked. If they can do it during the most terrible time ever experienced on earth, what valid excuse could we possibly have for not abiding by the standards of God's Word?

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE
THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH
Representing The Lord Jesus Christ

In discussing the symbols of personages who will play vital roles in God's end-time plan, there is one final symbol that must be mentioned as we conclude our study. This symbol is more powerful than the beast of the land and the beast of the sea. It is more powerful than Satan himself. Actually, we first encountered it at the time of the opening of the book with seven seals:

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (Revelation 5:5)

The symbol is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Jesus is not only pictured as a lion, but Scripture records that His words are as a lion's roar:

They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. (Hosea 11:10)

Satan, the great counterfeiter, tries to disguise himself as a lion because that is the symbol of our Savior. That is why we are warned to be sober, vigilant, and aware of the enemy's tactics:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan is as a roaring lion-he is not the lion! We have authority over this imitator:

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. (Psalm 91:13)

As we face the perilous end-times, the righteous can be bold as a lion because we have the Lion of Judah resident within us:

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

We know that Jesus is coming soon. We know that the end-times are upon us. We know that Satan is intensifying his efforts as never before. Don't allow yourself to

become so busy and involved with the cares of this life that the day of the Lord catches you unprepared. Heed Jesus' warning:

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:34-36)

Do not fear the things coming upon this earth! Look up and rejoice, knowing that your redemption is drawing nigh:

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luke 21:28)

The power within you is greater than all the power of the enemy:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

The "beast" within you is greater than all of Satan's forces. The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed (Revelation 5:5).

SELF-TEST ON SECTION SEVEN

1. The sun-clothed woman represents _____
2. The dragon represents _____
3. The man-child represents _____
4. Michael, represents _____
5. The beast out of the sea represents _____
6. The beast out of the earth represents _____
- The 144,000 represents _____
8. Jesus Christ is represented by the symbol of what animal? _____

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION EIGHT

THE SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH

Revelation Chapters 14-16

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation chapters 1 through 11, the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in heaven, the opening of the book with seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets as God's judgment was poured out on this world.

In Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduced seven important personages: The sun-clothed woman, representing Israel; the dragon, representing Satan; the man-child, representing Jesus Christ; Michael, representing the angels; the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator; the beast out of the earth, a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator; and the 144,000 representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.

As the scene in Revelation chapter 14 opens, we see 144,000 on Mt. Zion with the Heavenly Father's name written in their foreheads. The number 144,000 is symbolic of the faithful, those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony--God's spiritual Israel.

Jesus promised to all who overcome, *"I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God: and I will write upon him my new name"* (Revelation 3:12).

What John sees in this magnificent vision is the glorious sight of the redeemed of all ages, from every nation, tribe and tongue. They are with the Lamb and are singing a new song, a song that only the redeemed can sing:

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. (Revelation 14:1-3)

Suddenly, right in the midst of this glorious scene, three angels fly through the air with final warnings to those who remain on the earth...

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR THREE ANGELS, THREE WARNINGS

Just imagine the glorious scene of worship and praise described in Revelation 14:1-5:

- ...The Lamb of God (Jesus), standing in magnificent glory.
- ...Those who have overcome the enemy, singing a glorious song of praise to their Redeemer.
- ...A voice from Heaven that sounds like the voice of many waters.
- ...The voice of harpers playing their harps...

...Then--right in the middle of this glorious scene--there is a divine interruption. Three angels come flying through the air, each with a message for those who remain on the earth.

THE FIRST ANGEL:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

The first angel proclaims the Gospel to the world giving mankind a final opportunity to repent and worship the true and living God. There will not be anyone who can say, "I didn't hear...I wasn't warned...I didn't know." There will be a universal proclamation of God's Word. Every nation, every kindred, every tongue and people will hear.

The message will be loud and clear: *"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:7).*

Everyone will know that the hour of God's judgment has come. They will be forced to make a decision to worship either the Antichrist or the true God of the universe. This end-time message will not be a "watered down" version of the Gospel. It will be a warning of the coming judgments and a clear call to repentance.

THE SECOND ANGEL:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

The second angel announces the coming fall of Babylon the Great, the apostate church. Those who have compromised with the world, those who have polluted the Church, and those who have perverted the Word of God will be warned of the destruction that is soon to come upon them.

In chapter 16, we will learn how the vials of God's wrath are poured out in judgment upon the wicked and in chapters 17-18 we will learn about the fall of Babylon. But here, before the final wrath of God falls, a last warning is given. The word "fallen" is repeated twice to indicate two separate falls. The false religious system will fall first when the Antichrist turns on it just after the middle of the Tribulation. The rebuilt city of Babylon will fall near the end of Tribulation.

THE THIRD ANGEL:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 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 wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he 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 ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:9-11)

The third angel warns of coming destruction upon all those who take the mark of the Antichrist. Every person who takes this mark will know exactly what they are doing and they will know the consequences.

Those who refuse to take the mark of the Antichrist will not be able to buy and sell and will face death, but they will rejoice around the throne of God forever (Revelation 7:14-17).

Those who take the mark of the Antichrist will be able to buy and sell and will escape the wrath of the Antichrist, but they will not escape the wrath of God. In the end, they will be eternally tormented in the lake of fire. They will have no rest, night or day and the smoke of their torment will ascend forever. Forever is a long, long time!

These three messages will be proclaimed throughout the earth to warn, to call the lost to repentance, and to prepare people for what is coming. Beloved, this is the message that the end-time Church must proclaim to the world! God has revealed His end-time plan to us. We must be faithful to seek out every opportunity to proclaim the pure unadulterated Word of God, to warn, and to call others to repentance while there is time.

Three angels, three final warnings...But the third angel also bears a message of hope for God's people:

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. (Revelation 14:12-13)

The third angel declares that those who keep the commandments of God and maintain their faith in Christ are blessed. Saints who die in the Lord will rest from their labors and their work for God and His Kingdom will follow them, even in death.

As soon as the three angels have completed their announcements, John witnesses another awesome scene as a beautiful white cloud appears in the heavens...

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE THE FINAL HARVEST

In the remaining verses of Chapter 14 following the announcements of the three angels, the Apostle John is given a glimpse of the final end-time harvest of the earth:

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. (Revelation 14:14-20)

In verse 14, Christ is revealed to us as the Lord of the harvest. John saw Jesus seated on a cloud. He had a crown on His head which is the crown or wreath of victory that belongs to Him as the great conqueror.

The time for the final harvest of the earth has come and Christ is ready, as he is holding a sickle in His hand. An angel comes out of the Temple and cries out with a loud voice, "*Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*" (verse 15). The command is given to Jesus by the Father: The great Day of the Lord has come! In response, Jesus thrusts the sickle into the earth and it is reaped.

Joel prophesied concerning this coming Day of the Lord, when this final harvest occurs. He said:

Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:13-14)

In verses 14-15, we see the first phase of the harvest, which is the gathering of the righteous from the earth.

Jesus, Himself, revealed that He was Lord of Harvest, and spoke of a day when *"...he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).*

Jesus talked with His disciples concerning this final harvest. He said, *"...and at the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matthew 13:30).*

Jesus compared the final reaping on earth to a harvest where wheat is gathered from among the tares and the tares are burned. The wheat are the righteous, the tares are the wicked.

When Christ returns, He will thrust in the sickle and reap the harvest of this earth. The saints living on the earth then will be separated from the unrighteous, gathered up to meet Christ in the air, and then the wrath of God will be poured out upon the wicked on the earth.

John also saw an angel coming out of the temple in heaven with a sharp sickle. Another angel, who had been given power over fire, told the angel with the sickle, *"Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe" (verse 17).*

First, John had seen Christ separating the righteous from the wicked and gathering the saints from the earth. Now, in verses 17-20, we see the wrath of God being poured out upon the wicked. The phrase, *"vine of the earth,"* refers to the wicked--all those who are enemies of God who have still refused to repent.

Look at the word *"winepress"* in verse 19. In Bible days, grapes were trampled by foot in a trough called a winepress, which had a duct leading to a lower basin where the juice collected. Throughout the Word, the treading of grapes is symbolic of God's divine wrath being poured upon His enemies. In these verses, God revealed to John that when Christ comes He will separate the righteous from the wicked, gather up the saints, and tread the winepress of God's wrath upon the wicked.

Notice where the winepress is going to be trodden--without the city (verse 20). This refers to the city of Jerusalem.

When Jesus came to earth the first time, He came as the meek and mild Lamb of God. At His second coming, however, He will come as a mighty warrior prepared for battle. In chapter 19, we are given a glimpse of Christ as this mighty conquering King, descending out of heaven when *"He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty" (Revelation 19:15, RSV).*

With this opening scene in Revelation 14, the great day of the Lord has begun. The final wrath of God will soon be released upon the earth.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX A VICTORY CELEBRATION IN HEAVEN

The time for the outpouring of God's wrath has come! John is filled with awe as he sees seven angels who have the seven final plagues to be poured out upon the earth:

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. (Revelation 15:1)

Before the seven vials of God's wrath are poured out upon the earth, however, John witnesses a great victory celebration in heaven! There, before the throne of God on the crystal sea of glass, were thousands upon thousands of saints who had come out of the Tribulation and won the victory over the Antichrist. These saints had harps and were singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb:

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:1-4)

This song was a song of deliverance and victory!

For just a moment, let's go back in time to when God's people were captives in Egypt. God drew a line between His people and the Egyptians. God placed His seal of protection upon them and kept them from the plagues that He sent upon Egypt. God provided a way of deliverance for them.

Through the sacrifice of the unblemished lamb and the blood being applied to their doorposts, they were delivered out of the land of Egypt. By eating the meat of the lamb, they were given strength for their journey.

At the crossing of the Red Sea, God delivered Israel out of the hands of their enemies and when they were safely on the other side, they had a great victory celebration (Exodus 15). All Israel joined together rejoicing and praising God for His great deliverance. Miriam led the women, who took their timbrels and sang and danced before the Lord. They sang the Song of Moses:

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. (Exodus 15:1-21)

Can you imagine two and one-half million Israelites standing safely on the banks of the Red Sea rejoicing and singing this great song of victory? Can you see them dancing and shouting for joy? Can you imagine how the powerful presence of God must have hovered over them at that moment?

The Egyptians had followed the Israelites in hot pursuit. They boasted that they would overtake and destroy the children of Israel and divide the spoils. But, as the Israelites stood on the banks of the Red Sea, they watched God pour out His wrath upon their enemy.

At this great victory celebration, Israel sang praises to God. Not only were they grateful for God's deliverance out of the land of Egypt, they were confident that God would lead them safely to the Promised Land. They knew that God's seal of protection was upon them. They were not afraid because they were not depending upon their own strength. They were depending upon God's unlimited faithfulness and great power to deliver them. They were trusting God to lead them to the land He had prepared for them where He would dwell with them.

Their victory over Pharaoh and the Egyptians is a foreshadowing of the great victory of all God's redeemed over Satan, the Antichrist. Here, in John's vision, we see God's spiritual Israel--His chosen, anointed ones--standing safely on the banks of the heavenly promised land, the home God has prepared for them, having a great victory celebration. Like Israel, they have seen the enemy destroyed. The enemy said "I will pursue and overtake," but God triumphed over him!

Right now, your enemy may be making threats against you. You may feel as if you will be overcome by his onslaughts. He may be hot on your trail, so to speak. But God will deliver you if you will continue to trust in Him and follow His commands. Just as Israel, you will stand on the other side of your difficulty rejoicing in victory! Just as He did for Israel, God will guide you until you "pass over" safely into your promised land. He will bring you in and plant you in the "mountain of your inheritance," in the place He has reserved for you. Rejoice! God reigns over every circumstance of your life. He is greater than the Red Sea! He is greater than the Antichrist! He is the Almighty God!

As the Redeemed of God stand on that crystal sea of glass waiting for God to avenge their blood and pour out His wrath upon the Antichrist and all those who have taken his mark upon their hands or foreheads, they sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb. This song is referred to as the Song of Moses and of the Lamb because it is the Lamb of God Who leads us to this great victory:

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord,

and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:3-4)

Study this Song of Moses carefully and you will see the great victory that Christ the Lamb has already won for us!

After their great victory, the children of Israel sang, *"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling" (Exodus 15:13)*. This is the song of the redeemed, triumphant Church who will stand before the Throne of Almighty God in Heaven. Just as God supernaturally delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt with mighty signs, wonders and miracles, He will manifest His supernatural power in our midst and bring us to our promised land.

God held back the waters of the Red Sea until all the children of Israel had walked across on dry land to the other side. Then, He destroyed the Egyptians and caused the water to cover them.

By the power of His mighty, outstretched arm, God will again deliver us out of the hand of the enemy until the people He has purchased with the blood of the Lamb have passed safely over into that glorious home He has prepared!

All nations will see the hand of God upon His people and those who attempt to destroy us will have God's wrath poured out upon them. Just as God supernaturally brought the children of Israel into the promised land, He will bring the redeemed into the holy dwelling place that He has prepared for them.

Do you really comprehend the great victory that God has planned for His people? The Church triumphant--the redeemed of all the ages--will stand before Him and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, a song of ultimate victory over the enemy!

Remember, revelation must be appropriated. It must be acted upon before it produces power. God has revealed this great scene of victory to strengthen you right now in the battles you are facing.

...And you don't need to wait until you get to Heaven to experience total victory. In fact, you don't need to wait one more day, one more hour, or even one more minute. Today is your day for victory!

You may be thinking to yourself, "Easy for you to say...You don't know what I'm up against. You don't know the problems I am facing." Whatever you are facing, God will bring you through to total victory as you keep your faith and confidence in Him.

The mighty warrior, King David, expressed confidence in God in the face of adversity. He said that when the kings of the earth gather together against the Lord and His people that God laughs at them. He actually makes fun of them! All the powers upon the earth combined are just a tiny speck of dust compared to God's great power and glory.

Whatever your circumstances, God is saying to you:

“Ask of Me, and I will answer you. I will give you victory. I will strengthen you with My right hand. Has not My Word declared it unto you this day? Have you not heard Me gently speaking to you that I will take care of you? My hand is upon you. You are My beloved child. I will lead you. I will protect you and I will make you to walk the path of victory that I have chosen for you. Lean on My strong arm. Do not worry or become fearful for I, the Lord thy God, will cause My strength to flow through you until you will be amazed at what I have accomplished through you.

Place your confidence and trust in Me now. Am I not worthy to be trusted? Have I not proven Myself to you? Come up higher, My children, to a new place in Me, above the cares of this life, above those things that pull you down to defeat. This is the day that I have chosen to show Myself strong in your behalf. You are My people. I have provided a dwelling place for you and I will lead you safely home.”

Receive the Word of the Lord! God has declared His faithfulness to you. Make a declaration of your confidence, your dependence, and your trust. Claim victory right now in the Name of Jesus! This is your time for prophetic fulfillment!

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

The temple of the tabernacle of heaven was opened and John saw seven angels, clothed in pure linen with golden sashes across their chests. These seven angels proceeded out of the opened sanctuary to release the final plagues, which are the wrath of God poured out upon the wicked:

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. (Revelation 15:5-8)

One of the four cherubim (referred to as beast in the King James version) gives each of these seven angels a golden vial--a bowl--full of the wrath of God. As they prepare to pour out these vials of God's wrath, John sees the temple filled with the smoke of God's glory. The glory of His Holy Presence is so great that no one is able to stand or enter into the sanctuary until the seven bowls of His wrath are poured out. The day of God's mercy has passed. There is no more time for repentance, no more time for intercession. The final moment has come and all is ready.

As God's power and glory filled Heaven, John heard a mighty voice coming from the temple:

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. (Revelation 16:1)

The angels hastened to obey and in rapid succession they poured out the vials, one by one. Remember that all of these plagues are directly from God and they each have a supernatural cause.

THE FIRST ANGEL:

The first angel poured out his vial upon the land:

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image. (Revelation 16:2)

The first plague is similar to the plague of boils that came upon the Egyptians (Exodus 9:8-12). Malignant sores broke out upon the people who had the mark of the Antichrist.

His mark, you will remember, is the numerical symbol of 666 placed on the forehead or the right hand. We saw in Revelation 7:1-3 that God's people were preserved with the mark of the Father in their foreheads. Satan, too, has his mark. God's seal is one of divine protection. The Antichrist's mark is the seal of doom. It is the brand of Hell.

The sores experienced by these rebellious people will be extremely painful and full of corruption.

THE SECOND ANGEL:

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. (Revelation 16:3)

When the second angel poured out his vial of wrath, the sea turned to blood like that of a dead man coagulated and rotting. Every living thing in the sea died.

Previously, when the second trumpet was blown, the sea was affected and one-third of the shipping industry was lost. Here, the devastation will be so much greater that the shipping industry will be totally destroyed because the sea-lanes will be clogged with dead and dying fish and decaying plant life.

THE THIRD ANGEL:

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. (Revelation 16:4-7)

The third bowl is similar to the second, except that instead of the seas, the rivers and drinking water sources are ruined. A special angel is assigned to the waters of the earth and he will proclaim justification for this awful judgment.

The vast oceans and rivers act as God's great air conditioner, sweeping away the impurities of the air and balancing nature. The plankton plants in water also supply the majority of the earth's oxygen. When the oceans and rivers suddenly turn to blood--

possibly because of billions of dying fish--the waters will become putrid. Foul smelling air will sweep across the world from the decaying fish. The fishing industry will collapse, many people whose diet consists chiefly of fish will starve, and the oxygen supply of the entire world will be diminished.

THE FOURTH ANGEL:

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. (Revelation 16:8-9)

The fourth angel adds his vial to the mixture of God's wrath outpoured and the sun is affected and begins to scorch mankind with its intense heat. Down through the ages, many cultures have worshiped the sun as the sustaining force of life. In this judgment, God reveals that He, not the sun, is the sustainer of the earth. We have all experienced heat waves from time to time, but add to this excruciating heat wave the fact that there is no drinking water, and you will begin to understand its intensity.

One would think that this experience would drive men to repentance, but instead they blaspheme the name of God. The Greek word for "repent" means to "change one's mind," meaning that it is not simply a matter of forsaking sin, but a transformation of one's attitude regarding it. These evil men and women refuse to repent.

The best commentary on the judgment resulting from this fourth vial comes from the Prophet Malachi:

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (Malachi 4:1)

THE FIFTH ANGEL:

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat 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 their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (Revelation 16:10-11)

The vial carried by the fifth angel plunges the earth into darkness. It is also specifically directed against the capital city of the beast's empire--his seat of government--as it further aggravates the sores resulting from the first bowl (Revelation

16:2). The pain is so intense that people gnaw their tongues, the same tongues that they have used to curse and blaspheme God.

This judgment is to be understood literally. The Prophet Amos declared: *Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! To what end is it for you? The day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. (Amos 5:18)*

Nahum echoed these same thoughts:

Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.(Nahum 1:6-8)

A similar picture was painted by Zephaniah:

That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, (Zephaniah 1:15)

Christ's own prediction was that *"...in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light" (Mark 13:24).*

THE SIXTH ANGEL:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Revelation 16:12)

The sixth bowl judgment comes in two parts:

1. The drying up of the River Euphrates in preparation for the battle of Armageddon.
2. The release of demonic forces that will bring the rebellious armies of the world to the Valley of Megiddo for the purpose of opposing the Lord.

When the sixth angel empties his vial, the River Euphrates dries up, opening the way for the armies of the east to march on Israel. On a world map, it is easy to see the strategic position of this body of water. Africa, Palestine, and Arabia are southwest of

this river. Russia, China, Indian, and Iran (Persia) are to the northeast. The Euphrates is the line of separation.

Just prior to the pouring out of the seventh vial, John sees a parenthetical vision:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16)

What could convince the kings of the earth to concentrate their forces on this one spot? The only answer is the devastating, deceiving power of lying spirits. Three powerful evil spirits will come forth during the Tribulation: One from the mouth of Satan, one from the Antichrist, and one from the False Prophet. The frogs that John saw symbolize the propaganda of the Antichrist, Satan, and the False Prophet. These false spirits will deceive the whole earth and gather them for the final battle, the Battle of Armageddon.

Actually, the expression “Battle of Armageddon” which is often used to describe the decisive battle between the Antichrist and his forces and Christ, is really referred to in scripture as “the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

In the midst of this scene, the Holy Spirit inserts an admonition: “*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*” (Revelation 16:15).

“*I come as a thief*” refers to the unexpected arrival of Jesus in His second coming. This is also true of the rapture. The admonition for both events is to be prepared.

THE SEVENTH ANGEL:

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 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. And 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. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. (Revelation 16:17-21)

As the seventh angel poured out his vial, John heard a great voice coming out of the temple in heaven from the throne God: "IT IS DONE!"

Lightning flashed! Thunder roared! A great earthquake--greater than any other earthquake man has ever seen--rocked the earth with a force so strong that John saw every island and mountain moved out of its place. As if this were not enough, great hailstones--weighing 100 pounds--began to fall out of the skies upon the wicked. But even after all these great plagues, men still refuse to repent. They continue to curse and blaspheme God.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT

Make no mistake about it, judgment is coming. Our minds cannot conceive the full intensity of the judgments God has revealed through John's vision.

You have seen the awesome judgments that will come upon the world--the pain, sorrow, death, and destruction. Millions upon millions are going to face these awful judgments and eternity in hell unless we warn them. If ever there was a message that should motivate God's people into action, this is it!

What are you going to do in light of the revelation you have received regarding God's wrath that will be poured out upon this earth?

Do you "hear" what the Spirit of God is saying to the Church? God does not want us to sit back with our hands folded, He is saying:

"Look around you. Do you not see the signs of the end? It is time for My people to open their eyes, to listen to My voice, to rise up, to warn, to weep and mourn for that which is soon to come upon the earth.

"There is no time to be caught up with your own selfish interests and insignificant, endless worries. I have chosen you, and called you out from the nations of the earth to be a light upon this earth.

"That light has grown dim. My people have not labored long in the fields harvesting souls into My Kingdom. They have been occupied with building up treasures upon the earth. They have been occupied with the pleasures of this life. They have been occupied with building their own houses. They have struggled to make a name for themselves among their friends and loved ones. All this have they done, and have not put My Kingdom first.

"Behold, today is the day for you to rise up in new power. It is time to blow the trumpets and sound an alarm. Cast off the cares of this life. You have a work to do that no one else can do. Do not hold back. As you go forward I will lead you. Do not linger, wondering: 'What shall I do?' Begin where you are.

"As you go forth, My words will be in your mouth, and as My Word goes forth it will save, it will heal, it will deliver all those who are oppressed by Satan.

"Do you hear Me calling? If you do, hearken unto My voice, and I will do a new work in your life, and you will be to Me a strong and mighty sword in this great end-time battle to push back the enemy that has come to destroy My people."

God is giving you your marching orders! God is revealing His end-time plan for a two-fold purpose:

1. To let you know that you will escape these judgments if you will remain faithful to Him.
2. To blow the trumpet in Zion and warn those who are lost without God. You must begin to act upon the revelation God has given you.

Jesus said:

"...no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor I myself, knows the day or hour when these things will happen; only the Father knows. And since you don't know when it will happen, stay alert. Be on the watch (for my return). My coming can be compared with that of a man who went on a trip to another country. He laid out his employees' work for them to do while he was gone, and told the gatekeeper watch for his return. Keep a sharp lookout! For you do not know when I will come, at evening, at midnight, early dawn or late daybreak. Don't let me find you sleeping. Watch for my return! This is my message to you and to everyone else." (Mark 13:32-37, TLB)

Jesus said to be alert and watch for His coming. He warned: *"Behold, come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15)*. We must "keep our garments" by being cleansed of all sin in our lives and walking in holiness before Him.

The Apostle Paul warned that Christ will return during a time when people are saying there is peace and safety. He said:

For you yourselves know well that the day of the will come like a thief in the night. When people say, 'There is peace and security,' sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child and there will be no escape. But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6, RSV)

The great Day of the Lord is coming as a thief in the night. It will be sudden and unexpected for sinners, but God's chosen ones will be waiting, watching, warning, and working. Paul said, *"So then, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober."*

Are you spiritually awake, aware of His soon coming, and preparing for the day you will see Him face to face? God has made you a watchman:

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. (Ezekiel 33:7-9)

You must snatch souls from hell:

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; they said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who set up divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And convince some, who doubt; save some, by snatching them out of the fire; on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 17-23, RSV)

God is calling us to watch, to warn, and to snatch souls from hell! *"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches."*

With the pouring out of the seventh vial, the third woe is past. The cup of God's wrath has been poured out through the seven vials of judgment.

What will happen next?

SELF-TEST ON SECTION EIGHT

1. What was the message of the first angel in Revelation 14? _____
2. What was the message of the second angel in Revelation 14? _____
- What was the message of the third angel in Revelation 14? _____
4. Describe the victory celebration in heaven discussed in Revelation 15.

5. What were the contents of the first vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

6. What were the contents of the second vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

7. What were the contents of the third vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

8. What were the contents of the fourth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

9. What were the contents of the fifth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

10. What were the contents of the sixth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

11. What were the contents of the seventh vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION NINE

THE FALL OF BABYLON

Revelation Chapters 17-18

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation chapters 1 through 11, the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in Heaven, the opening of the book with seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets as God's judgment was poured out on this world.

In Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduced seven important personages: the sun-clothed woman, representing Israel; the dragon, representing Satan; the man-child, representing Jesus Christ; Michael, representing the angels; the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator; the beast out of the earth, a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator; and the 144,000 representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.

As Revelation 14 opens, we saw 144,000 on Mt. Zion with the Heavenly Father's name written in their foreheads who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Suddenly--right in the midst of this glorious scene--three angels fly through the air with three final warnings to those who remain on the earth...

1. The first angel proclaims the Gospel to the world giving mankind a final Opportunity to repent and worship the true and living God: Revelation 14:6-7.
2. The second angel announces the coming fall of Babylon the Great, the apostate church: Revelation 14:8. Those who have compromised with the world, those who have polluted the Church, and those who have perverted the Word of God are warned of the destruction that is soon to come upon them.
3. The third angel warns of coming destruction upon all those who take the mark of the Antichrist: Revelation 14:9-11.

Then John witnessed horror and devastation as the seven vials of God's wrath were poured out in chapters 14-16...

...The first vial: Malignant sores: Revelation 16:2.

...The second vial: The sea turns to blood: Revelation 16:3.

...The third vial: Rivers and drinking water sources turn to blood: Revelation 16:4-7.

- ...The fourth vial: The sun scorches with intense heat: Revelation 16:8-9.
- ...The fifth vial: Darkness: Revelation 16:10-11.
- ...The sixth vial: The River Euphrates dries up and demonic forces are loosed in the earth: Revelation 16:12.
- ...The seventh vial: A great earthquake occurs; Jerusalem is divided; and the fall of Babylon is predicted: Revelation 16:17-21.

In this section we will be examining the fall of Babylon, which was foretold by the second angel announcing woes to come:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

As the seventh vial of God's wrath is outpoured, "...great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Revelation 16:19).

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE THE IDENTITY OF BABYLON

As chapter 17 opens, one of the seven angels who had been given the responsibility of pouring out the vials of God's wrath upon the wicked, called out to John:

...Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Revelation 17:1-2)

Suddenly, John is carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness where he sees a very unusual sight:

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, "Mystery, Babaylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17:3-6)

Archaeologists tell us that ancient Babylon was the cradle of modern civilization. Located on the shores of the Euphrates River, the ruins of this city have revealed some of the oldest documents of past generations. This city was founded by Nimrod, who rebelled against God. The city generated some of the greatest wickedness ever known to mankind and in ancient days Satan seemed to make Babylon the capital of his evil operations.

The first few verses of Chapter 17 reveal an awful scene portraying through symbols two great forces, one religious and the other governmental. This vision comes from one of the seven angels who had the bowls and--although it is not stated by John--the context locates this judgment scene as taking place in the middle of the Tribulation.

Ten details are provided about this woman. She is...

1. "The great harlot."
2. "That sitteth upon many waters."
3. "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication."

4. "And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."
5. "A woman (in the wilderness) sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast."
6. "Arrayed in purple and scarlet."
7. "Bedecked with gold and precious stones."
8. "Having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."
9. "Upon her forehead was a name written, 'Mystery, Babylon the great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.'"
10. "Drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, this drunken harlot is clothed in purple and scarlet and wearing all types of jewelry made of gold, pearls, and precious stones. In her hand she holds a golden cup. On her head she wears a band with the title "*Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*"

Who is this mother of harlots? What is the identity of Babylon the great? What is the meaning of the beast upon which she sits?

Even before we receive the angel's interpretation of this vision, it is clear that we are not dealing with a human being, for no one woman could commit fornication with the kings of the earth, nor could a woman be drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs.

One of the main rules for Bible interpretation is that when the literal meaning of a Scripture makes common sense, we seek no other meaning. In this case a literal woman does not make common sense, therefore we seek another meaning.

To discover the meaning of this passage, we must first look back into the Old Testament record where references to a harlot were always used to signify religious apostasy. The prophet Isaiah referred to Israel as "the faithful city" that had become a harlot:

How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. (Isaiah 1:21)

Jeremiah identified the backslidden people of God who had been corrupted by heathen nations as a harlot. He said, "*Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She...played the harlot*" (Jeremiah 3:6, TAB).

This same message was repeated by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel,

Amos, and Micah as Israel continued to pollute themselves through idolatry and intermarrying with heathen nations.

The harlot is referred to in Revelation 17:18 as *"that great city that reigneth over the earth"* and in verse five she is wearing a band on her head which identifies her as Babylon the great.

This "harlot" does not represent a physical city, but rather a spiritual condition. Ancient Babylon had a worldwide reputation for its luxury, vice, and corruption. It was considered the center of false religions and pagan gods. This reference to the city of Babylon is made to emphasize the corruption of the apostate church. The woman seated on the scarlet-colored beast is the apostate church which has committed spiritual adultery with the world. A spiritual harlot or prostitute is one who has stopped following God.

Thus we see that there are two rival women at the end-time. Both claim to love Christ. One is the true Church, the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7-9). The other is the apostate false church, the great harlot of Babylon.

The kings of the earth have committed fornication with this woman. This tells us that the false church of the end-time will have a great influence on the nations of the world. The church loves the world and the world loves her. But the Bible warns:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

"The inhabitants of the earth...made drunk" refers to the false doctrines and teachings of the apostate church.

Stop and think for a moment: Are you in a church that is a growing part of the apostate world church? Have you been made "drunk" by her wine so that you don't even recognize what is happening to you?

Note that the great harlot has a royal external appearance, but her cup--that which she offers to others--is filled with abominations. The cup is golden, which means that her teachings may outwardly seem to be beautiful, moral, and godly, but from that glistening cup comes only filth.

The mystery of the woman is made clear to us by the name on her forehead. "Babylon the Great" reveals that the final apostate world church system will have its roots in the false religions of history. The name "Babylon," however, refers to two systems in the end-times. It refers to the final apostate religious system which we are discussing and it also refers to the political and commercial networks during the

Tribulation that will be entwined with the one-world system.....And that brings us to the mystery of the scarlet colored beast...

CHAPTER SIXTY THE SCARLET-COLORED BEAST

The scarlet-colored beast in Revelation 17 is the same beast described in Revelation 13:1 which we have identified as the Antichrist:

And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. (Revelation 17:7-13)

Five important details are given regarding the beast upon which the harlot is seated. The beast...

1. Is "full of names of blasphemy" (v. 3)
2. "Having seven heads" (v. 3)
3. "And ten horns" (v. 3)
4. It "...carrieth her" (v. 7)
5. It "...was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (v. 8)

The facts that this beast existed in the past, cannot now be seen, but shall appear again coming out of the bottomless pit--all point to Satan. Satan existed in the past, cannot be visibly seen now, but will be released on this world in the future in the physical forms of the Antichrist and False Prophet whose political and economic systems will at first support the woman (the apostate church).

The seven heads on this beast upon which the harlot was sitting symbolize seven mountains. This undoubtedly refers to the city of Rome, which was built on seven hills and was considered the capital of the Roman Empire. In John's day, it was the center of persecution against Christians.

The ten horns on these seven heads are the ten nations comprising the revived Roman Empire that will join together with the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation. These ten horns are those ten kings portrayed in Daniel 2:42 and 44 as the ten toes of the statue that we learned about in the last section of this study. Daniel 7:24-28 portrays these as ten horns which are ten kings and speaks of the Antichrist coming as another horn:

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter...(Daniel 7:24-28)

This passage corresponds with the verses in Revelation 17:12-13 which show that these ten kings follow the Antichrist in his final hour of power. "These have one mind" indicate that these ten end-time kings give complete allegiance to the Antichrist.

In Revelation 17:6, John saw the harlot "*drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*" Because of her alliance with the Antichrist during his persecution of the saints, the apostate church will be guilty of the blood of those who are martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ. In Revelation 18:24, we read that..."*...in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*"

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE WARRING AGAINST THE LAMB

The ten nations, which have aligned themselves with the Antichrist, will eventually join together and make war with the Lamb:

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (Revelation 17:14)

The ten kings and the Antichrist will persecute those who turn to Christ, and the persecution will be especially fierce during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.

Yet Christ, the Lamb of God, shall overcome them! This is accomplished in several ways...

1. The persecution of the Antichrist and his kings is overcome by Christ's Blood sacrifice at Calvary atoning for the sins of those who turn to Him as their Savior:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11)

2. Christ is victorious because death is swallowed up in victory:

...And I saw...the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4)

3. Jesus delivers pre-Tribulation believers from the hour of temptation:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (Revelation 3:10)

4. Jesus saves a remnant from death by preserving them during the Tribulation:

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12:6)

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly

into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Revelation 12:14)

5. At the end of seven-year period, Jesus comes to battle at Armageddon and destroys the Antichrist, his followers, and his armies. (We'll learn more about this in the next section of this study).
6. At the final judgment, Jesus does not permit the followers of the Antichrist to enter the Millennial Kingdom:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25:31-34, 41,46)

The ones who return with Jesus to do battle are the “called out ones, the chosen, the faithful.” They are the ones who have remained faithful to God, despite the apostate church and despite persecution during the Tribulation.

When Jesus Christ returns in great power and majesty with these called and chosen saints, He will conquer the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all those who are aligned with them in a great and final victory!

The angel then reveals to John the meaning of the waters:

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. (Revelation 17:15)

All peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues are affected by this apostasy. In the end, however, the ten nations--represented by the ten horns--will turn on the apostate church and destroy her:

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to

agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17:16-18)

Once again, we see who is really in control. The Antichrist, the ten-nation confederacy, the one-world government--none of them are in control. God is the One in control! It is God Who causes the ten kingdoms to agree to give their authority to the Antichrist and who causes them to eventually attack and destroy the apostate church.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO THE FALL OF BABYLON

In Revelation chapter 18, John continues his description of the destruction of the apostate church. He sees an angel with great power, authority, and glory coming down from heaven, declaring with a mighty voice...

...Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18:2-3)

The angel comes to show John the ruination of the Babylonian system's latter-day metropolis, the commercial emporium of the world.

The pronouncement speaks of a future event as already having taken place. This was the same method used in Isaiah 53 when the prophet described the first advent of the Messiah as if already accomplished:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

Here we find the same basic language dealing with the fall of latter-day Babylon as Isaiah used 700 years B.C. to speak of the fall of the ancient Babylonian kingdom:

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged. (Isaiah 13:17-22)

The ancient Babylonian empire was vanquished by an invasion of the Medes and

Persians in 536 B.C. (Isaiah 13:17; Daniel 5:28-31). Babylon will be rebuilt, and in Revelation 18 it is destroyed by sudden devastation by fire at the time of the pouring out of the Seventh Bowl of Wrath.

Following this declaration, John hears another loud voice from heaven warning the people of God:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (Revelation 18:4-5)

This admonition was a warning, not only to believers in the early Church who were living when John wrote the Book of Revelation, but it is also a warning to all true believers today. We cannot be joined together with the apostate church and partake of her sins, compromise with the world, and expect to escape the judgment of God.

Some of those who have turned to God have, as is evident from the command here, remained in this evil city. The heavenly voice commands them to "Come out!" The incentive for obedience is "that ye be not partakers of her plagues."

The Bible warns us:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

Today, God is appealing for His people to come out, just as the angel appealed to Lot (Genesis 19:12-25). This is the cry of the Spirit that is going forth even today to the Church...

- ...Come out from the world.
- ...Separate yourself from sin.
- ...Get ready--Jesus is coming!

Revelation 18:5 states that "God hath remembered her iniquities," meaning God remembered the judgment He promised. This Babylonish-Antichrist system has reveled in sin, and it seemed sometimes as if God had overlooked it. With its sudden destruction, however, it will be apparent that God has "remembered her iniquities."

...and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. (Revelation 16:19)

Because of the sins committed by the apostate church, God's judgments will come upon her quickly and harshly. The ten nation alliance will be used by God to destroy the apostate church. In "one day, death, and mourning, and famine," will come upon her:

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (Revelation 18:6-8)

At the start of this chapter, the harlot and the beast rode together but eventually the Antichrist and his ten kings turn in hatred upon the harlot. From this passage, we see that the united apostate world church will support the evil Antichrist in his rise to power during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation but that somewhere along the line, the Antichrist, his kings, and their supporting economic and political system will turn against this apostate church.

Perhaps this will occur in connection with the abomination of desolation and the persecution that follows? Perhaps the Antichrist will turn on the harlot church because she rivals him for power? In any case, we see a progressively worsening relationship and a thoroughly complete destruction. But remember--all of this is in accord with God's plan of the ages! It was foretold by John in this awesome revelation centuries ago.

The false church is somewhat synonymous with the ancient ruling city of the earth. She is called, "Babylon" so in God's sight this system becomes basically the same as Babel-Babylon, a system in total rebellion against God.

The world mourns at the destruction of this harlot, apostate church! The kings, merchants, and men of influence who have yielded to her temptations and have committed adultery with her all mourn...

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived

deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning...And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate. (Revelation 18:9,18-19)

“One hour” could mean “a short space of time” or spread out over a few days--or it could mean an actual hour of time. Which ever--what no earthly army can do, God will accomplish in a short time.

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE THE FATE OF THE APOSTATE CHURCH

You will remember that in the Lord's message to the church in Thyatira He reproved them for allowing the false prophetess, Jezebel, to remain in their church because she was seducing believers into fornication and sacrificing to idols:

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (Revelation 2:20-23)

This is an example of the fate of an apostate church!

Revelation chapter 18 also describes the fate of the end-time apostate church:

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that 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 nought. And every shipmaster, 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 city is like unto this great city!

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (Revelation 18:11-23)

This passage describes the goods of an affluent society evident in Babylon, along with “slaves and souls of men,” which may represent those who are enslaved or work at meager wages to provide such goods and services.

A study of this passage reveals the terrible fate that awaits those who join themselves together with the world's system and commit spiritual adultery. Each of these judgments may be applied spiritually to the Church today, in addition to their specific application to the harlot, Babylon:

- A double return of the evil they commit:

Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. (Revelation 18:6)

- Economic devastation:

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. (Revelation 18:11)

- Loss of that which was lusted after:

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. (Revelation 18:13)

- Loss of joy:

And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be,

shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee. (Revelation 18:22)

- Spiritual darkness:

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (Revelation 18:23)

- Sudden destruction:

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (Revelation 18:8)

...Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come. (Revelation 18:10)

- Total destruction:

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. (Revelation 18:21)

John sees a strong angel pick up a stone, similar to a millstone which were four to five feet in diameter, one foot thick, and weighed thousands of pounds. This mighty angel, with one sweep of his hand, hurled this millstone into the sea and declared, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (verse 21). Babylon's destruction will be complete, swift, and final.

The treasures of the wicked are gone. Isn't this the irony of iniquity? Sin deludes us into thinking that we can have great treasures, but in the end they all turn to ashes. We must always remember the words of Jesus who warned...

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in

thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:19-24)

At the destruction of Babylon, God's people rejoice while the ungodly people of the earth mourn her fate.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF AN APOSTATE CHURCH

As we face the closing days of time, it becomes increasingly important for us to be able to recognize the signs of an apostate church.

In Revelation chapter 18, we are given a detailed description of the apostate church:

*How much she hath glorified herself, and **lived deliciously**, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, **I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow**. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have **committed fornication** and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come...And **the fruits that thy soul lusted after** are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were **made rich by her**, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that 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 nought. And every shipmaster, 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 city is like unto this **great city**! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that **great city**, wherein were **made rich** all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for **by thy sorceries were all nations deceived**. **And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.** (Revelation 18:7-24)*

The bold-faced portions in is passage, combined with other New Testament references, reveal the following characteristics which mark an apostate church:

1. The apostate church will reject sound doctrine. The Apostle Paul warned:

For the time is coming when (people) will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but having ears itching (for something pleasing and gratifying), they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions. (2 Timothy 4:3-4, TAB)

The apostate church will pollute the Word and introduce heresies, refusing to acknowledge Christ as the Son of God. Peter said:

...there will be false teachers among yourselves, who will subtly and stealthily introduce heretical doctrines destructive - heresies - even denying and disowning the Master Who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2: 1, TAB)

2. The apostate church will be materially rich, but spiritually poor. Note the passages in bold face in the previous passage drawn from Revelation 18:7-24...*She was rich, made others rich, and lived deliciously.* God's message to such a church is...

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (Revelation 3:17-18)

3. The apostate church will be full of Christians who follow after their own lustful desires:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts. (2 Peter 3:3, NAS)

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. (2 Timothy 3:1-2,4)

4. The apostate church will have a form of godliness, but will deny the true power of God:

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Timothy 3:5)

• **The apostate church will be full of Christians who have lost their first love.** They will be more in love with the world and its material possessions than they are the things of God (Revelation 18:15-16):

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

6. The apostate church will reject God's prophets:

And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (Revelation 18:7-24)

7. The apostate church will deceive the nations:

...for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (Revelation 18:23)

8. The apostate church will be filled with evil, sorcery, and fornication:

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication...having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. (Revelation 17:2,4)

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her...(Revelation 18:3)

9. The apostate church will compromise to avoid persecution: This church is accepted by the world and rejects the idea of suffering and persecution...*"I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow"* (Revelation 18:7).

10. The apostate church will be filled with those who have fallen away: The Apostle Paul warned that before Christ returns, there will be a great falling away:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all

that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

The Greek word for "falling away" is "apostasia," which means "apostasy; a revolt; rebellion." Throughout history, there have been periods of great apostasy in the Church. Many Christians have been deceived or disillusioned and have fallen away. Others have compromised by adopting the world's standards and sin has crept into the Church. Many have followed after their own lusts and have denied the faith.

In these verses, Paul warns that before Christ returns, there will be a time of apostasy of such great proportions that it will be known as the final apostasy. It will be a time of final rebellion and rejection of God.

You may wonder, "How can this be? The Church is on the verge of experiencing the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit that the world has ever known."

Yes, it is true that we are experiencing a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit; thousands of souls are being won into the Kingdom of God; miracles of healing and deliverance are occurring on a great scale around the world; the Church is experiencing great spiritual breakthroughs; the Church is growing and we are seeing breakthroughs in satellite, computer, and Internet technology that will enable us to cover every nation of the world with the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

Simultaneously, while we are witnessing signs, wonders, and this great outpouring of His Spirit, we are also witnessing sin on an unprecedented scale. In the Church, spiritual lukewarmness and unconcern for the lost is rampant.

There are tens of thousands of people, right now, who are straddling the fence, with one foot in the world and one foot in the Church. There are Christians today who are walking after their own lusts and saying, "*Where is the promise of his coming?*" (2 Peter 3:3-4).

Some of them may say that they believe Jesus is coming, but their actions prove otherwise. They have become so materialistic and selfish that they are more interested in acquiring things than winning souls.

While the move of the Holy Spirit will grow stronger and stronger, this apostasy and rebellion against God will continue to grow until there will be a clear line of separation drawn between the true Body of Christ and professing Christians, between good and evil, and between God's divine system and Satan's counterfeit system. Once that final line is drawn and there is a separation between the real Body of Christ and the harlot apostate church, God will send strong delusion upon all those who refuse the truth and rebel against Him:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

The word "delusion" means "the act of misleading the mind; to impose on; to deceive or trick." God will cause the minds of those who have rejected the truth and have delighted in wickedness to be deceived into believing Satan's lies and his counterfeit system. All those who refused to hear and accept the truth will be judged and condemned.

Do you see why it is so important for you to warn others of this coming judgment and point them to the Way, the Truth and the Life before it is too late?

Heed the warning of the angel--separate yourself from the world! Prepare yourself for Christ's coming. Destruction and judgment are coming upon this counterfeit harlot church. The plagues of God's wrath are going to be poured out upon it.

These warnings concerning the coming apostasy and God's judgment upon the apostate church are given so that you will be on guard and spiritually alert against the deception and seducing spirits that are working in the Church today.

In these closing days of time, ask God to give you a spirit of discernment so you will not be led away from the truth!

SELF-TEST ON SECTION NINE

1. Summarize what you learned about the identity of Babylon.

2. Who is the scarlet-colored beast described in Revelation 17? _____

3. Who will make war against the Lamb? _____

4. How will Christ overcome this alliance? _____

5. Summarize what you learned about the fall of Babylon.

6. What is the fate of the apostate church?

7. List ten characteristics of an apostate church.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION TEN

ARMAGEDDON AND THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Revelation Chapter 19

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation chapters 1 through 11, the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in Heaven, the opening of the book with seven seals, and the sounding of seven trumpets as God's judgment was poured out on this world.

In Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduced seven important personages: The sun-clothed woman, representing Israel; the dragon, representing Satan; the man-child, representing Jesus Christ; Michael, representing the angels; the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator; the beast out of the earth, a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator; and the 144,000 representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.

In Revelation 14 we witnessed the outpouring of seven vials of God's wrath and heard warnings from three angels giving mankind an opportunity to worship the true God. The second of these three angels announced the coming fall of Babylon the Great, the apostate church:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

As the seventh vial of God's wrath was outpoured, "...great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Revelation 16:19).

In the last section, we learned in Revelation 17 of the destruction of the apostate church (symbolized by the harlot woman) and the world economic and political system of the Antichrist (symbolized by the beast upon which she sat).

This section takes us inside the portals of Heaven to witness what occurred there after the destruction of Babylon. We will then return to earth to learn about the final battles that will be fought and the Millennium reign of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE REJOICE OVER HER!

In chapters seventeen and eighteen, we left John in the wilderness where the angel had shown him a harlot, drunk with the blood of the martyrs, sitting on a scarlet-colored beast. We identified this harlot as the promiscuous, unfaithful, end-time apostate church who--for a time--will support the Antichrist and will accept his system. In the end, however, the ten-nation confederacy of the Antichrist (represented by the beast upon which the woman is sitting) will change and Babylon (the apostate church) will be destroyed.

All the people of the world mourn at the destruction of the apostate church and the economic and political system which supported her. Merchants, kings, ship-masters, sailors-everyone who profited through their evil alliances:

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more...And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that 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 nought. And every shipmaster, 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 city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate. (Revelation 18:11-19)

While the evil people of this world are mourning, the saints in Heaven will be rejoicing because of God's righteous judgment:

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (Revelation 19:1-2)

The heavens, apostles, and prophets are all commanded to rejoice at the judgment of the apostate church:

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. (Revelation 18:20)

In chapter 19, the scene changes dramatically to a great celebration in Heaven:

This passage begins with "*after these things.*" After what things?

- ...After the outpouring of the seven trumpet judgments.
- ...After the outpouring of the seven vials of God's wrath.
- ...After the testimony of the witnesses.
- ...After the destruction of Babylon...

Earlier in his vision, John had seen the souls of those who were martyred for their faith. They cried out, "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*" (Revelation 6:10). The time had now come! God had poured out His judgments on the wicked, destroyed the harlot church, and avenged the blood of the martyrs.

Suddenly, John hears the loud roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting...

Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants. (Revelation 19:1-2, NIV)

Joining this great multitude in praise and honor for God's righteous judgments are the 24 elders and the four cherubim who fall on their faces before God seated on His throne. They cry out, "*Amen, Hallelujah!*"

Now, look closely at verse five:

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (Revelation 19:5)

The focus of the praise suddenly changes, as John hears a voice coming from the throne of God. A universal call is made to "*Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!*" (Revelation 19:5, NIV).

Again, the heavens resound with the voices of a great multitude. Like the roar of crashing waves of the ocean and loud clashes of thunder, the voices shout "*Hallelujah! for our Lord God Almighty reigns*" (Revelation 19:6, NIV).

The original Greek word for "Almighty" literally means "one who holds all things in

his control." Praise the Name of the living God! The all powerful, supernatural One who holds all things in His control is not an impersonal, detached Being up in the sky somewhere. He is the Lord of all! Our God is on the throne and He alone is in control!

Once this truth--that God has a master plan and timetable and that all things are under His control--takes root deep within your spirit, you will be able to face every circumstance in your life from a strong position of knowing that will make you victorious. Nothing is beyond God's control!

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

The glorious praise and worship intensifies as all of Heaven focuses on the celebration of all celebrations--the glorious event which the Bride of Christ has long anticipated. The time has come for which Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, has patiently waited. A multitude of voices joyously proclaim that the marriage of the Lamb is at hand:

Let us rejoice and shout for joy-exulting and triumphant! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb (at last) has come and His bride has prepared herself. (Revelation 19:7, TAB)

The wedding referred to in these verses represents much more than our wedding ceremonies of today. The marriage of the Lamb refers to the full and complete union of Christ and His faithful Church. This union will enable us to enter into a new, unlimited relationship with Christ that is beyond our natural mind's conceptions.

As wonderful and precious as our personal relationship with Christ is today, it is limited. Although we are able to continually grow in the knowledge of Christ, we only know Him in part:

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV).

Even after years of serving Jesus, the cry of the Apostle Paul was, "*That I may know him*" (Philippians 3:10).

On that glorious wedding day when we stand before Christ, we will see Him face to face. We will know Him in His fullness. We will enter a blessed communion with Him that will last throughout eternity.

Throughout the Word, marriage is used as an analogy to express the intimate relationship between God and His people. In the Old Testament, God said to Israel, "*I will betroth thee unto me for ever*" (Hosea 2:19). He said, "*For thy Maker is thine husband...*" (Isaiah 54:5). In the New Testament, Paul portrays Christ and the Church in terms of the intimacy of marriage:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. (Ephesians 5:25)

To the Corinthian church Paul said:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2)

God is calling His people today to rekindle the fires of their bridal love for Christ. Many Christians are just going through the motions--they are teaching Sunday School classes, praying for the sick, preaching, singing in the choir--but they have lost their first love and they don't even realize it. These Christians have convinced themselves that the good works they are involved in prove their love for Christ.

How easy it is for God's people to fall into this trap. Many become so busy doing good works that they fail to build their personal relationship with Christ. The excitement--the driving hunger to know more about Christ, to know His Word, to be one with Him, the desire to tell everyone what Christ means to them--slowly dies like a fading flame.

The end-time Church today must have an intimate bridal relationship with Christ before it can truly be a conquering Church...

...It is a fervent, undying love for Christ that will cause God's people to refuse to compromise with the world.

...It is a fervent, undying love for Christ that will enable God's people to say "no" to every temptation of the flesh.

...It is a fervent, undying love for Christ that will cause God's people to be willing to give themselves and all they possess, if need be, to evangelize the world before Jesus comes.

...It is a fervent, undying love for Christ that will enable God's people to endure hardships, trials, and persecutions for the cause of Christ without wavering.

The final preparations are being made and soon that great wedding procession will begin. Christ will descend from Heaven and gather His Bride to meet Him in the air. We will enter into the eternal home He has prepared for us and the doors will be forever closed.

Although John does not describe the actual wedding feast in his vision, Jesus referred to a time when people from the east and west will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God:

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 8:11)

He told His disciples of a day when He would drink the fruit of the vine with them in the Kingdom of His Father:

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (Matthew 26:29)

What a glorious wedding day that will be! A great multitude will be gathered together, stretching as far as the eye can see in every direction. They are clothed in white, shimmering robes which reflect the light of Jesus. He is in the center of the vast multitude and His loving Presence is so great that each person feels as if He is seated next to them. Spread out before them is a great banquet table filled with an abundance of everything ever needed or desired. The table extends as far as the eye can see.

Right now, it is time for the Bride of Christ to make herself ready for that great day. The cry will soon ring out, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him."

Are you ready?

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN PREPARING FOR THE WEDDING

Every bride prepares for her wedding day, no matter what culture or ethnic background she is from. There are traditional ceremonies, ancient rituals to be observed, special wedding garments, and a host of other preparations that must be made.

We are now in the period of preparation for the greatest wedding of all times, the marriage between Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church. Here is how you can get ready for this great wedding...

1. You must put on the wedding garment. Good works are insufficient. They are like filthy rags in God's eyes. When you confess your sins and are born again, all the sins and stains of your past are washed away. You are clothed in His righteousness. There are no substitutes for this wedding garment. No one will enter the marriage supper of the Lamb without it.

2. You must keep your wedding garment unspotted from the world. In Jesus' message to the seven churches, He spoke of the few in Sardis who were worthy to walk with Him in white, who had not defiled their garments.

Peter admonished the Church concerning Christ's second coming:

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Peter 3:14)

Jesus said,

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Revelation 16:15)

As you prepare for the return of the Bridegroom, you must be diligent and make every effort to separate yourself from the world and the lusts of the flesh and "*abstain from all appearance of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Ask the Holy Spirit to create in you an overwhelming desire for holiness and purity. Turn to the Lord with your whole heart and allow Him to purge and purify you.

3. You must be continually cleansed through the Word. The Word of God is alive. It is more than a book--it is the written and living Word of Almighty God. As you read and apply it to your life, the Word will come alive within your spirit. It will reveal and convict you of sin in your life. As you confess your sin and repent, Christ--the Living Word--will cleanse you. This is why it is so vital that you spend-time in the Word daily.

4. You must rekindle the fires of your bridal love for Christ. Get alone with the Lord. Lay aside your own desires and self-centered plans. Repent of your selfishness and give yourself unreservedly to Christ. Put the development of your relationship with Him before everything else.

5. You must fulfill your spiritual responsibilities. We are saved to serve. We have a commission to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has equipped us with power and gifts equal to the task.

Jesus said:

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (Matthew 25:14-15)

Jesus is our Master who has gone to the far country of Heaven. Prior to His departure, He gave us gifts to use and responsibilities to fulfill in His absence.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which

hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:29-30)

As believers, we must use our spiritual and material resources wisely for the purpose they were given--the advancement of the Kingdom of God. We must fulfill our God-given destiny so that we will be ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb!

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT THE MIGHTY WARRIOR OF GOD

One of the important themes in the book of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in all His power and glory.

- In chapter one, we saw the glorified Christ, the Alpha and Omega.
- In chapters two and three, we see Him as the Head of the Church.
- In chapter five, we saw Christ as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and as the Lamb of God Who is worthy to open the seals.
- In chapter seven, we saw the great multitude of the redeemed in Heaven worshipping Christ, the Lamb.
- At the end of chapter seven, Christ the Lamb becomes our Shepherd Who leads us to fountains of living water.
- In chapter fourteen, we see Christ the Lamb standing on the heavenly Mount Zion as the redeemed sing a new song of praise.
- At that that great final harvest of the earth, we see Him as the Lord of the harvest.

Now, in chapter nineteen Christ is unveiled as the mighty, conquering, warrior Messiah:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

In these verses, John sees the heavens opened. The billowing clouds roll back like a gigantic scroll and Christ descends on a beautiful white horse. Remember that the

first rider on a white horse, the Antichrist, appeared at the beginning of the Tribulation. Now, the true ruler comes out of Heaven on a white horse ready to conquer.

The first time Jesus came into Jerusalem he rode on a lowly donkey. This time, He will come riding a white horse followed by the armies of Heaven. His eyes are as a flame of fire, piercing and penetrating the hearts of the wicked. Nothing is hidden from His gaze.

On His head are many diadems, symbolizing His unlimited power and sovereignty. On His crown, a name is written that no man knows but He Himself. The garment He is wearing has been dipped in blood, which symbolizes His victory in the coming battle of Armageddon as well as His blood shed on Calvary. His name is called the Word of God, which identifies this great warrior as Jesus, the living Word. Following Him are the armies of Heaven, riding white horses and clothed in white, fine linen which is symbolic of righteousness.

Pictured here is not the meek and mild Lamb of God, who as a sheep was led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). He is a mighty Warrior prepared for battle.

When Christ returns, there will be no more mercy for the wicked, only the fierceness of God's wrath. The tribes of the earth will mourn:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30)

The wicked will run in terror and try to hide:

And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isaiah 2:19)

Look closely at Revelation 19:15: *“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”* When Christ returns as the Mighty, Conquering, Warrior Messiah, there are divine purposes He will fulfill:

1. Jesus will come to smite the nations. John saw a sharp sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth. This sharp sword is not a literal sword, but is symbolic of the powerful force of the words that come forth from His mouth. The all-powerful, conquering Christ will not need man-made weapons. With the same powerful force that He used to speak the heavens and the earth into existence, He will bring death and

destruction upon the wicked. Isaiah prophesied concerning Christ: "...he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4).

2. Jesus will rule the nations with a rod of iron. This reference to ruling with a rod of iron speaks again of destruction. Christ will be strong and unyielding in His judgments upon the wicked.

3. Jesus will tread the winepress of God's wrath. Throughout the Word, the treading of grapes was symbolic of divine wrath. Isaiah prophesied of the Day of the Lord when God's wrath will be poured out:

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (Isaiah 13:9)

4. Jesus will fight and win the war of Armageddon. Jesus and His heavenly army return for the greatest battle of all times--the ultimate conflict between good and evil--the battle of Armageddon. Because of the importance of this battle, we need to know the details about it as well as the other end-time battles that will be fought on earth...

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE GOD'S END-TIME BATTLE PLAN

There has never been a time on earth when some type of war was not being fought. Throughout the ages, there have been innumerable wars fought since the first battle between good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Wars will continue until the end of time.

There are three major end-time wars that will take place in the closing hours of time...

War #1: The end-time invasion of Israel.

War #2: The battle of Armageddon.

War #3: The final rebellion and destruction of Satan.

Jesus prophesied that one of the signs of His coming would be wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6). In the Book of Revelation, chapter six, verse 4, when the second seal is broken, a rider on a red horse, symbolizing war, is sent forth with a great sword to take peace from the earth. During these three final end-time wars, the death and destruction will be far greater than anything that has ever occurred before upon the earth.

These three major wars are not determined by man, but have been ordained by God to fulfill His purposes. In each of these three end-time battles, God is in control. He is directing the outcome and will use these wars to fulfill His end-time plan. We will study each of these in terms of the prophetic scriptures, opposing forces, purpose, battlefield, timing, major events, and outcome.

End-time WAR #1-THE END-TIME INVASION OF ISRAEL:

Prophetic Scriptures: Ezekiel 38-39

Opposing Forces: An alliance of nations will come against Israel:

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (Ezekiel 38:1-6)

Led by Gog, chief prince of Meschech and Tubal. The following nations will come against Israel: Persia (Jewish commentaries or Ezekiel describe Persia as modern day Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan); Ethiopia; Libya; Gomer (Eastern Europe, Germany, Poland); and Togarmah (Turkey).

The nations listed in Ezekiel 38 who come against Israel descended from the sons and grandsons of Noah. Most of them are descendants of Japheth, one of Noah's three sons. The leader of this attack against Israel is Gog, who is identified as "the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. Many prophecy teachers believe this refers to the leader of Moscow and Tobolsk in Russian Siberia. Magog is the nation that will lead this attack. This was the name of a grandson of Noah, who settled in present-day Russia.

Purpose: The purpose of this war is...

To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. (Ezekiel 38:12)

These allied forces, led by God will attack Israel in an attempt to annihilate the Jewish people from the earth. Their purpose will be to "take a spoil" of the wealth of Israel. God will supernaturally intervene on Israel's behalf as an end-time witness to the world and position Israel for the fulfillment of their end-time spiritual destiny.

Battlefield: This battle will be fought on the Mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38:8).

Timing: This battle will occur after Israel has been restored as a nation. This event occurred on May 15, 1948. On September 13, 1993, the historic Israel-PLO Peace Accord was signed, which ushered in a short-lived peace in Israel and the Middle East. Everything is falling into place and the stage is now being set for this end-time war against Israel.

Don't confuse this war with the war of Armageddon. This war against Israel will happen some time before the Great Tribulation. The Battle of Armageddon will be fought when Christ returns and He will fight against the Antichrist and his allies to destroy them.

Major events:

- A great earthquake will occur in Israel (Ezekiel 38:18-20).
- God will send pestilence and rain great hailstones, fire and brimstone upon Gog and his allies (Ezekiel 38:21-22).
- God will send fire upon the land of Magog and those dwelling securely in the coast lands (Ezekiel 39:6).

Outcome: God will supernaturally intervene on Israel's behalf and destroy Gog and the invading armies (Ezekiel 39:2-5). Israel will burn the weapons of their enemies for seven years (Ezekiel 39:9-10). The destruction of their enemies will be so complete that it will take seven months to bury the dead. There will be a burial ground called "The Valley of Hamongog" for Gog and the multitude of those slain (Ezekiel 39:11).

As a result of God's miraculous intervention during this battle, from that day forward, Israel will once again recognize God as their God and know--beyond any doubt--that He has delivered them. This victory will be a great end-time witness to Israel and the world of His power on behalf of His people.

WAR #2-THE WAR OF ARMAGEDDON:

Prophetic Scriptures: Revelation 19:11-21; Revelation 16:12-16

Opposing forces: The Antichrist, the False Prophet and their allied forces, including the army of two million from the east, will war against Christ and His army of saints from Heaven:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16)

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. (Revelation 19:19)

This war is not fought between earthly kings and nations of the world. Evil spirits are sent forth from Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet to seduce and draw the allied nations together to fight against Christ and the saints who are with Him.

The Greek word "*polemos*," in the King James Version, is translated "battle." The word actually means war. This is not an isolated skirmish...it involves all the nations of the world that have aligned themselves with the Antichrist. It is not a man-made war; it is the war of the great day of the Almighty God!

God will gather the nations together against Jerusalem. Christ will return with His saints to bring judgment upon the wicked and destroy the Antichrist and all his allies (Revelation 19:11-21).

The king of the South and the king of the North will attack the Antichrist. He will then enter those countries and defeat them. Many nations will be overthrown by the Antichrist (Daniel 11:40-41). The phrase "king of the South" refers to Egypt and its African allies. The king of the North identifies nations to the north of Israel.

The Antichrist will hear news from the east and north, and he will assemble his forces together in Israel to meet the coming onslaught of the kings of the east.

Purpose: During this war, Christ's purpose will be to destroy the Antichrist and the False Prophet and pour out God's wrath in judgment upon the wicked who have refused to repent. Christ is coming to tread the "winepress of God's wrath" (Revelation 19:15). This war will usher in the thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints upon the earth.

Battlefield: This war of Almighty God will be fought "in the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon" (Revelation 16:16). The Greek word for Armageddon is "harmagedon," which means "the mountain of Megiddo."

This area has been the site of many battles. It was here that Joshua conquered 31 kings (Joshua 12:24); God gave Gideon a great victory (Judges 7); Deborah and Barak destroyed and eliminated the army of Sisera "by the waters of Megiddo" (Judges 5:19); and many other battles were fought between Israel and its enemies.

The city of Megiddo was situated on the main road linking Egypt and Syria. Because of its location, it was the most strategic city in Israel. The Old Testament name of the entire valley separating Samaria from Galilee is Jezreel. It is the major corridor through the rugged Palestinian hills and was a key military site.

The western part of this valley is the plain of Esdraelon, located about 55 miles north of Jerusalem. It is a triangular plain approximately 15 by 15 by 20 miles, bounded along the southwest by the Carmel mountain range and on the north by the hills of Nazareth.

The exact location where this war will be fought is unknown, but the Word of God clearly reveals that it will be fought somewhere within this vast valley.

Timing: This war will occur after the Great Tribulation when Christ returns with His saints (Revelation 19:11-19).

Major events:

- A great earthquake in Israel. When Christ sets His foot down on the Mount of Olives the ground will split, creating a crevice extending from the Dead Sea through the mountain to the Mediterranean (Zechariah 14:3-5).
- The Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem with a plague (Zechariah 14:12).
- The Euphrates River will dry up, preparing the way for the "kings of the East" to cross and enter into Israel. In order to reach Northern Israel, the two million-man army of the "kings of the East" (Revelation 16:12) must cross the Euphrates River.

Outcome: Christ, Himself, will personally lead His heavenly forces against the Antichrist and his armies. He will descend with His saints from Heaven to destroy the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all those gathered together to war against Him (Revelation 19:11-19).

The fierceness of God's wrath will be poured out upon the wicked. There will be such desolation that a river of blood will flow for 200 miles up to the bridles of the horses (Revelation 14:20). Isaiah prophesied this coming day, when Christ will tread the winepress of God's wrath upon the wicked (Isaiah 63:1-6). With swift judgement, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

The remnant of those aligned with the Antichrist will be slain and their bodies given to the birds of prey (Revelation 19:17-18, 21). Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

WAR #3-FINAL REBELLION AND DESTRUCTION OF SATAN:

Prophetic Scriptures: Revelation 20

Opposing forces: Satan, leading a great multitude from the nations of the earth, will surround the "beloved city."

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. (Revelation 20:7-8)

This war is not the same "war of Gog and Magog" as described in Ezekiel 38-39. In Ezekiel, Gog refers to the leader of Magog--Russia--who leads a confederation of nations from the North to attack Israel. The name "Gog and Magog" in (Revelation 20)

is used symbolically to refer to the nations throughout the earth who are in rebellion against God.

After the thousand-year reign of the saints with Christ upon the earth, Satan will be loosed and will go into the nations to deceive and lead them in one final rebellion against God.

Purpose: God's purpose for this final rebellion is to completely eradicate every trace of sin and disobedience from the earth. Even during the Millennial reign of Christ with the saints, there will be those who will be deceived and will rebel against God. After leading this final rebellion, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire forever.

Battlefield: This final war will take place in Israel, as Satan and this vast multitude surround the "beloved city" of Jerusalem where Christ has established His throne during the Millennial reign:

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Revelation 20:9)

Timing: After the Millennial reign of Christ with His saints upon earth and before the great white throne judgment, Satan will be loosed to lead this final rebellion.

Major Events:

- The saints will not have to fight during this war. God will supernaturally intervene.
- God will rain down fire from heaven, defeating all enemies!

Outcome: The great multitude that have rebelled against God and have gathered together against the saints will be devoured by the fire from Heaven. This will be Satan's final overthrow! He will be cast into the lake of fire with the Antichrist and the False Prophet. This is Satan's final destination where he will be tormented day and night throughout eternity:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

CHAPTER SEVENTY THE Millennial REIGN

The thousand-year period described in Revelation 10 when Satan and his evil forces are bound and cast into the bottomless pit is known as the New Millennium. The word “millennium” means a thousand years:

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. (Revelation 10:1-3)

Verses 4-6 of this chapter describe the first resurrection that occurs at this time (we will learn more about the resurrections and the time of final judgment in the next section of this study.) Other than these verses, details of the Millennial Kingdom are not discussed in John’s vision, except that it is clear that it will begin with the second coming of Christ and will end with judgment on the world and the creation of the new Heaven and new earth.

Other passages in the Bible provide additional information about the Millennial Kingdom, however. According to the Old Testament, Jerusalem will be the capital of the Millennial Kingdom and war will cease:

The Millennial Kingdom will be characterized by righteousness, peace, and tranquility, and there will be justice for all the oppressed:

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Isaiah 11:3-5)

Even the ferocity of beasts will be tamed:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put

his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9)

(Additional passages describing this period include Isaiah 11:11-16; Jeremiah 23:3-4, 8; 30:3-9; 31:314.)

Psalms 72 provides a prophetic picture of the future Millennium. It is described as flourishing, having a righteous government, and abundant peace. Christ's rule extends from sea to sea and the earth is filled with the glory of God.

Many passages in the Old Testament emphasize the fact that Israel will have a prominent place in the Millennial Kingdom. According to Ezekiel 20:33-38, at the time of the Second Coming Israel will experience a purging judgment and only the righteous, godly remnant will be allowed to enter the Kingdom. Israel, pictured in the Old Testament as being an untrue wife, will then be rejoined to Christ in the symbol of marriage and experience the love of Christ:

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:10-11)

As we have noted, at the end of this 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed for a season:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison...(Revelation 20:7)

People have sometimes asked the question why this would be allowed. This event is in harmony with God's purpose to demonstrate that man left to his own devices will--even in a perfect environment--sin against God. Man's evil heart is revealed in the fact that people reject Christ and follow Satan when he is once again loosed.

Satan's release also demonstrates his unregenerate wickedness, because even 1,000 years in confinement does not change him or his evil forces.

Finally, Satan and his forces are cast into the lake of fire where they will dwell for eternity:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

You will note that the beast and the False Prophet, who were thrown into the lake of fire 1,000 years before, are still there, demonstrating that this is not annihilation but continued punishment.

As we close this segment of our study, remember what we learned at the beginning of our journey through the book of Revelation. The purpose of prophecy is not to scare, but to prepare. We have seen some wonderful things in this lesson (the final return of Jesus, the establishing of the Millennial Kingdom, etc.), but we have also looked into the future to view some frightful scenes.

Remember: God has given us this revelation knowledge to prepare us...

...For the future.

...For His return.

...For eternity...

...To accomplish the task He has given us to reach a waiting world with the good news of the Gospel.

As Jesus, we must declare...*"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (John 9:4).

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TEN

1. Summarize what you learned about the marriage supper of the lamb.

2. How can you prepare for this event?

3. Who is the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19:11-16? _____

4. What are four major purposes Jesus will fulfill when He returns as the Warrior Messiah?

_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Read Ezekiel 38-39 and complete the following chart about the end-time invasion of Israel:

Who are the opposing forces? _____

What is the purpose of this war? _____

Where is the battlefield? _____

What is the timing? _____

What major events will occur? _____

What will be the outcome? _____

6. Read Revelation 19:11-21 and 16:12-16 and complete the following chart about the battle of Armageddon:

Who are the opposing forces? _____

What is the purpose of this war? _____

Where is the battlefield? _____

What is the timing? _____

What major events will occur? _____

What will be the outcome? _____

7. Read Revelation 20 and complete the following chart about the final rebellion and destruction of Satan.

Who are the opposing forces? _____

What is the purpose of this war? _____

Where is the battlefield? _____

What is the timing? _____

What major events will occur? _____

What will be the outcome? _____

8. Summarize what you learned about the Millennial reign of Jesus.

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION ELEVEN

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Revelation Chapter 20

INTRODUCTION

Let's take a moment to review again what we have learned.

In Revelation chapters 1 through 11, the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in Heaven, the opening of the book with seven seals, and the sounding of seven trumpets as God's judgment was poured out on this world.

In Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduced seven important personages: The sun-clothed woman, representing Israel; the dragon, representing Satan; the man-child, representing Jesus Christ; Michael, representing the angels; the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator; the beast out of the earth, a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator; and the 144,000 representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.

In Revelation 14 we witnessed the outpouring of seven vials of God's wrath and heard warnings from three angels giving mankind an opportunity to worship the true God. The second of these three angels announced the coming fall of Babylon.

In Revelation 17 we learned of the destruction of the apostate church (symbolized by the harlot woman) and the world economic and political system of the Antichrist (symbolized by the beast upon which she sat).

In our last study, we learned about the final battles that will be fought on earth and we studied about the Millennium reign of Jesus Christ.

In this section we will study some of the most exciting events of all times...the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The meaning of the word "resurrection" is a raising or rising up. It means to cause to rise or raise up from the dead. There are three categories of resurrections that are clearly identified in the New Testament:

<u>Past</u> :	The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
<u>Present</u> :	The spiritual resurrection of believers in Jesus Christ.
<u>Future</u> :	The future resurrection of all that are in the graves.

The first resurrection we will study is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament foretold the birth of Jesus Christ, His death for the sins of all mankind, and His resurrection. David mentioned the resurrection of Jesus:

Being therefore a prophet (David) and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; He foreseeing his speaks of the resurrection of the Christ... (Acts 2:30-31, ASV)

Many verses in the Bible confirm the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day after His burial:

But now is Christ risen from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

In the end of the sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre...And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead... (Matthew 28:1,5-7)

Many people saw Jesus after His resurrection:

After His suffering He showed himself alive to them in many convincing ways and appeared to them repeatedly over a period of forty days talking to them about the affairs of the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3 Phillips Translation)

After His resurrection, Jesus was careful to provide evidence that He had a real body and was the same person who had been crucified. The evidence of this was His hands, feet, and side, which still had the marks of the nails and the spear.

In other ways His body had experienced important changes. It no longer was subject to the limitations of a mortal body. He could now appear or disappear at will.

He could enter a closed room and He could pass between earth and Heaven (John 20:19). When Jesus appeared to His disciples He let them touch the nail prints and the scar from the spear to prove His identity (Luke 24:36-40).

The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is vital to the Christian faith, because...

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

Believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary to become a true believer:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:9)

The resurrection confirms Jesus Christ is the Son of God:

And (as to His divine nature) according to the Spirit of holiness, was openly designated the Son of God in power (in a striking, triumphant and miraculous manner) by His resurrection from the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord, the Messiah, the anointed one. (Romans 1:4, TAB)

The resurrection confirms that believers are justified:

Who (Jesus) was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

The resurrection means death is defeated:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil. (Hebrews 2:14)

The resurrection means because He lives, we too shall live!

CHAPTER SEVENTY-TWO THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS

The Bible also speaks of a spiritual resurrection of believers. This means those who were once dead in sin are now made alive spiritually through Jesus Christ:

And you (he made alive) when you were dead (slain) by (your) trespasses and sins...Even when we were dead (slain) by our own shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickeneth Him...(Ephesians 2:1,5, TAB)

And you, being dead in your sins... hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (Colossians 2:13)

Baptism in water is an outward sign of death to the old life of sin and the spiritual resurrection of a believer in Jesus Christ. But it is not only water baptism that confirms the spiritual resurrection of the believer. It is the new life which he lives:

We were buried therefore with Him by the baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, we too might habitually live and behave in newness of life. For if we have become one with Him by sharing a death like His, we shall also be one with Him in sharing His resurrection by a new life lived for God. (Romans 6:4,5)

Jesus provided many evidences of His resurrection. These include the empty tomb, the message of the angels, and visible appearances after His resurrection. There are also evidences which confirm the spiritual resurrection of believers. They include...

- Death to sin resulting in a new life style:
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:11)
- Living with a new Master:
And that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:15)
- A new life purpose:
If then you have been raised with Christ (to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead), aim at and seek the (rich eternal treasures)

that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above-the higher things-not on the things that are on the earth. (Colossians 3:1-2, TAB)

You can experiences this resurrection right now...you don't have to wait. If you have not already done so, ask forgiveness of your sins, accept Jesus as your Savior, and begin your new life today!

CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Two separate resurrections of all people who have ever died will occur in the future: There will be a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust. Jesus said concerning this...

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; They that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29)

At death, the physical body returns to the earth:

...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19b)

Man's soul and spirit enters a new existence in eternity. There is still a personality, recognition of one person by another, and awareness of present conditions. The destiny of spirits of the righteous is different from that of spirits of the wicked. Study the parable of the rich man and Lazarus which confirms these facts:

And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:20-31)

Both Lazarus and the rich man went to a place of departed spirits called in the Hebrew language "Sheol" and in the Greek language "Hades". But the destinies of the two men were different. The rich man was in a place of torment called Hell. Lazarus was in a place of rest. Between these two places there was a gulf that could not be crossed from either side.

If the gulf could not be crossed, then it means there is no hope to change the eternal destiny of a soul after death. Because of this, it is of no value to pray for the dead. The decision to accept or reject Jesus as Savior must be made during this life. It is this decision that determines the destiny of your soul.

The place of rest for departed spirits of the righteous was called "Abraham's bosom." This meant it was a place for those who followed the same faith of Abraham by serving the one true and living God.

The story of Lazarus and the rich man reveals what happened to departed souls before the death and resurrection of Jesus. After His resurrection, the destiny of the souls of the wicked remained the same, but the destiny of righteous souls changed.

When Jesus died He said "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." His body was laid in a tomb, but the destiny of His spirit was decided by God. The Bible reveals what happened Christ's spirit after death:

Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower part of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. (Ephesians 4:9-10)

Christ's spirit descended into "Sheol", the place of all departed spirits. First He went to the place of the spirits of the righteous. This was called "paradise" or "Abraham's bosom." From paradise, Jesus went further into the area of "Sheol" reserved for the wicked spirits. This was necessary in order for Him to complete the work of atonement for man's sin. He endured both physical and spiritual penalties of sin in Sheol. The physical penalty was physical death. The spiritual penalty was separation from God which is called spiritual death.

Then Christ's spirit ascended from Sheol back to the world. At that time, His body which had been lying lifeless in the tomb, was raised up from death and His soul, spirit, and body were reunited to form a complete personality.

These events between the death and resurrection of Jesus set a new pattern for the destiny of righteous souls. Prior to Christ's resurrection, departed spirits of the righteous went to paradise. After His death and resurrection, the spirits of the righteous could ascend immediately into the presence of God.

The Apostle Paul also confirms:

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord...We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6,8)

At death, man's spirit and soul will go to the realm of the departed spirits. The righteous will ascend to the presence of God. The wicked will go to a place of torment (hell). At the resurrection, the body will be raised again from death and reunited with the spirit and soul.

There will be two resurrections: One of the just and one of the unjust:

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:15)

The Bible also calls these two resurrections the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:25,28-29)

The resurrection of life will happen when Jesus returns to earth for His Church. The resurrection of the unjust (also called the resurrection of damnation) will occur at the end of the 1000-year Millennial reign which we studied about in the last section of this study.

The book of Revelation provides an additional record of the resurrection of the righteous:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first

resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6)

The resurrection described in this passage is of believers who died as martyrs during the Tribulation period. They are raised immediately before Christ's Kingdom is established on earth. The resurrection of the just is complete after the raising of this last group of believers. Those who take part in this resurrection are blessed (happy); holy (separated as God's people); priests (serving in the presence of God); reign a thousand years (the length of their earthly reign with Jesus); the second death has no power over them (they will not be cast into the Lake of Fire which is called the second death).

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FOUR JUDGMENT STRATEGY

The word "to judge" means to separate or make a difference between. This includes bringing to trial, examining evidence, determining guilt or innocence, and deciding the penalty for sin. Eternal judgment is the great and final judgment spoken of in the Bible that determines the eternal destiny of all souls.

God's desire is that all men come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ:

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17)

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

While it is God's desire that all men everywhere repent, if they do not do so they will experience His judgment:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent; Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness... (Acts 17:30-31)

God has given Jesus the authority to judge:

...for He has given all judgment-the last judgment and the whole business of judging-entirely into the hands of the Son...And He has given Him authority and granted Him power to execute (exercise, practice) judgment, because He is a Son of man (very man). (John 5:22,27, TAB)

In the final judgment true believers will also help judge the world:

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?...(1 Corinthians 6:2-3)

The word "saints" in this verse means all true believers. They will help judge the "world" (the unrighteous).

The standard by which we all will be judged is the Word of God:

And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came

not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:47-48)

It is not the standards, creeds, or traditions of man by which we will be judged. It is not on the basis of organizational or denominational rules. The standard by which we will be judged is the fixed standard of the Word of God:

Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)

The Bible reveals judgment is necessary because of sin against God's law, ungodliness, unrighteousness, unbelief, trespasses, and evil deeds:

For...as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. (Romans 2:12)

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7)

Jesus will return...

To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 15)

The unjust are reserved unto the day of judgment:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. (2 Peter 2:9)

We will stand condemned if we do not believe in Jesus Christ:

He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

Worldly principles of judgment vary from nation to nation. Standards may even vary from state to state within a nation and from city to city. Worldly principles of judgment and punishment vary because people interpret certain acts in different ways. The same act interpreted as wrong in one culture may be acceptable in another. For example, killing a cow is viewed quite differently in America, where it is used for meat,

than in India where the cow is considered sacred by some people. Judgment by man varies because the standards by which they judge vary. But the principles of God's judgment do not change.

WE WILL BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF THE WORD OF GOD:

Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven. (Psalms 119:89)

WE WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO OUR KNOWLEDGE:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee. (Matthew 11:21-24)

The men of Ninevah shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. (Matthew 12:41)

We all have the opportunity to have knowledge of God because...

...the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that we are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

WE WILL BE JUDGED INDIVIDUALLY:

The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. (Ezekiel 18:20)

WE WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO TRUTH:

...But we are sure the judgment of God is according to truth...(Romans 2:2)

WE WILL BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF PERSONAL CONDUCT:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in this body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

...Who will render every man according to his deeds. (Romans 2:6)

...the Father...judgeth according to every man's work. (1 Peter 1:17)

...the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:12)

WE WILL BE JUDGED WITHOUT PARTIALITY:

...the Father...without respect of persons judgeth. (1 Peter 1:17)

...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

WE WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO RIGHTEOUSNESS:

And He shall judge the world in righteousness; He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. (Psalms 9:8)

...He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth. (Psalms 96:13)

...He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:31)

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 all them also that love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

WE WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO OUR MOTIVES AND THOUGHTS:

Therefore judge nothing before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsel of the hearts... (1 Corinthians 4:5)

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (Romans 2:16)

These are the standards of final judgment...but when, where, and how will the judgments be carried out?

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE THE JUDGMENTS

The Bible actually teaches that there are five judgments--one in the past, one in the present, and three in the future.

1. JUDGMENT FOR PAST SIN:

Past sins of all true believers were judged at the cross upon the death of Jesus Christ:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

The result of Jesus being judged in our place is that we are justified before God:

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

2. PRESENT JUDGMENT:

There is a present judgment that goes on continuously. All men are continuously judged as sinful or righteous before God. The present judgment of man is on the basis of whether or not he has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior:

He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)

God judges unbelievers by showing His wrath because they hinder the truth:

For God's (holy) wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth... (Romans 1:18, TAB)

God's present judgment of believers is in love. He corrects them when they do wrong:

...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth...But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. (Hebrews 12:5,6,8)

Just as a natural father corrects his child, God judges the behavior of His children. If they sin, God corrects them in love just as a father does his son. God's chastisement (correction) of His children is for a specific purpose:

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Hebrews 12:11)

God has a specific pattern of chastening in our lives. It moves from reproof, which is a simple form of chastening, through more severe levels of chastening:

Reproof: To correct a fault, make a statement of error, give instruction or correction. God first speaks to us and reproves us of wrong in our lives. See Isaiah 11:4; Psalms 50:21; 141:5; Proverbs 1:23; Ephesians 5:13; 2 Timothy 3:16.

Rebuke: A sharp reproof or reprimand. If we fail to listen to reproof, God will deal more sternly. See Hebrews 12:5; Revelation 3:19; Psalms 6:1; Deuteronomy 28:20.

Wrath: After we are rebuked if we persist in our sinful ways and refuse God's correction, then we may incur His wrath. See Romans 2:8-9.

Affliction: God's wrath may be revealed through affliction in circumstances that will drive you to Him. (This does not mean all affliction is judgment from God.) See Romans 2:9, Psalms 119:75; Deuteronomy 28:15-47; Leviticus 26:14-39; Amos 4:6-13.

3. JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER'S WORKS:

This judgment will occur when Christ returns to earth and...

...We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10)

Those who remain faithful to God during the Tribulation will be resurrected and judged along with the righteous who were taken in the rapture:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. (Revelation 20:4-5a)

All true believers will be judged for their works and rewarded accordingly:

*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
(Romans 14:12)*

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

We will be judged by how we have built our lives on the foundation of God's Word:

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved... (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

In the natural world, wood, hay, and stubble all grow visibly above the ground. They burn easily. They are symbolic of works done by believers to be seen by man. Gold and silver are not destroyed by fire. In the natural world, these substances develop below the ground unseen by man. They are symbolic of works done with the right motive, not just to be seen and praised by man. They are works that are valuable in God's Kingdom because they were done with the proper motive. The works of true believers will be judged on the basis of obedience. The parables of the talents in Matthew 25 and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19 were told by Jesus to illustrate this truth.

In both these parables, servants were judged on the basis of what they had done with what they were given. They were told to invest funds for their masters. Servants who were disobedient were judged unfaithful.

Just like these parables, our Master has given us a responsibility. That responsibility is known as the Great Commission:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19-20)

We are to take what God has given us, the message of the Gospel, and reproduce it by sharing it with others throughout the world. As we obey this Commission, we are investing what God has given us and increasing it.

Some believers have greater responsibilities than others in this Commission.

Some are called as pastors, evangelists, teachers, etc. But every born-again believer has some responsibility in reaching the world with the Gospel.

Believers will be judged on the basis of their faithfulness to the responsibility God has given them:

*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
(1 Corinthians 4:2)*

Believers will not be judged on the basis of abilities, education, or spiritual gifts. They will be judged on the basis of obedience and faithfulness to what God has given them to do.

The judgment of true believers is not one of condemnation because a true believer cannot be condemned to eternal punishment. Through accepting Christ, a believer has passed already from spiritual death to eternal life:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)

A true believer is one who has repented from sin and shown faith toward God by accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior. He is one who has become and lived as a new creature in Jesus Christ. Paul confirmed:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)

When a sinner comes to Jesus, the record of his former sins is erased by God. When a believer sins, he needs only to repent and confess his sin and God erases it from the record:

If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

4. JUDGMENT OF SATAN AND HIS EVIL FORCES:

Satan, the False Prophet, and the Antichrist will be judged by God and cast into the lake of fire prepared for them:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

The angels who rebelled with Satan have been reserved for this day of judgment:

For... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...(2 Peter 2:4)

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6)

5. JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED:

The "great white throne" judgment will be for the remaining wicked dead who are resurrected at the close of the Millennium in the second resurrection (the resurrection of the unjust).

The Great White Throne judgment is recorded in detail by John in the closing pages of Revelation:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

The unrighteous will be judged and, because of their sin, cast into a lake of fire along with Satan and his angels.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX THE DESTINY OF THE WICKED

Punishment for the wicked is eternal. The same word that is used for eternal life in the Bible (John 3:15) and the eternal God (1 Timothy 1:17) is used to describe eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:2). If one of these is temporary, then the other two would have to be temporary.

There is no way to escape the conclusion that if God is everlasting and eternal life is everlasting, then so is punishment in Hell. God does not send people to Hell. Man chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus Christ and living a sinful life. God has provided a way of escape from eternal punishment through the plan of salvation. He is not willing that any should perish.

Hell is the eternal destiny of the wicked. Hell is a place of:

EXTREME SUFFERING:

And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

MEMORY AND REMORSE:

And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom...But Abraham said, Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. (Luke 16:23,25)

UNSATISFIED DESIRE:

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water; and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. (Luke 16:24)

CONTEMPT:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2)

WICKED COMPANIONSHIP:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and

whoremongers sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

HOPELESSNESS:

When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth. (Proverbs 11:7)

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT:

Hell was originally prepared for Satan and his angels, not for man. Your decision determines your destiny. God will not send a person to Hell. They will go there because they rejected Jesus Christ:

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SEVEN THE REWARDS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

Jesus is not returning for a weak, anemic, defeated Church. He is returning for a mighty, powerful Church composed of men and women who have learned to overcome. In each of His messages to the seven churches, Jesus gave a specific promise to those who overcome:

1. Overcomers will eat of the tree of life: *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).* Those who overcome will inherit eternal life. They will live forever!

2. Overcomers will not be hurt by the second death. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:11).* Those who overcome have their names written in the Book of Life and are part of the first resurrection. The "second death" is identified in Revelation 20:14 as the lake of fire. The second death has no power over the righteous who are part of the first resurrection: *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).*

3. Overcomers will eat of the hidden manna. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna..." (Revelation 2:17).* The "hidden manna" refers to Christ because He is the Bread of Life (John 6:33-35). Jesus, in all His fullness, will be manifested to those who overcome and they will partake of all that He is and has!

4. Those who overcome will be given a new name. *"I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:17).* To "write the name upon something" is a common Hebrew expression used to indicate taking absolute possession of something. Christ will write His Name upon the foreheads of those who overcome, forever identifying them as His own possession.

5. Overcomers will be given power over the nations. *"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." (Revelation 2:26).* Overcomers will reign with Christ and sit in judgment over the nations (Revelation 20:4).

6. Overcomers will be clothed in white garments. *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5).* The white garments that overcomers will wear represents the righteousness of the saints: *"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8).* John saw the redeemed standing before the throne of God, clothed in white robes with palms in their hands (Revelation 7:9).

7. Overcomers will be a pillar in the temple in the New Jerusalem. *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12).*

A pillar is permanent, so Christ's promise to those who overcome means He will give them a permanent place in the New Jerusalem. Absolutely nothing will be able to remove them from their place in heavenly Jerusalem!

8. Overcomers will sit with Christ on His throne. *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).* Those who overcome will sit with Christ on His throne and reign with Him forever!

9. Overcomers will inherit all things. *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7).* This promise is the summation of all the blessings God can bestow. Like a son taking possession of his inheritance, those who overcome will take possession of all their Heavenly Father has prepared for them.

The word "overcome" in these verses is translated from the Greek word, "*nikao*", which means, "to conquer." When Christ calls us to overcome, He is calling us to conquer by locating our enemy, engaging him in combat, and defeating him!

...We are called to overcome and conquer the flesh!

"So, since Christ suffered in the flesh, (for us, for you), arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose (patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God). For whoever has suffered in the flesh (having the mind of Christ) has done with (intentional) sin - has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God. So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by (his) human appetites and desires, but (he lives) for what God wills" (1 Peter 4:1-2, TAB).

...We are called to overcome and conquer the world!

Jesus said: *"In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer - take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted - for I have overcome the world - I have deprived it of power to harm, have conquered it (for you)" (John 16:33).*

...We are called to overcome and conquer sin!

"For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14).

...We are called to overcome and conquer Satan!

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

We are able to overcome because Christ has overcome and, by His Spirit living within us, we are able to do the same:

For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (2 John 5:4-5, NIV).

You do not overcome because of who you are. It is not because of any merit of your own-your good works, your strength, or anything else you possess. You are able to overcome the flesh, the world, sin, Satan and his evil principalities because of Jesus Christ who lives within you!

In the Spirit, John glimpsed the great victory that belongs to God's people and declared, *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11).*

Beloved, you are an overcomer and more than a conqueror through Him who loved you (Romans 8:37). Your victory is sealed with the assurance of the blood of Jesus Christ!

The Bible also lists several "crowns" that will be awarded to believer's for their faithful service:

A CROWN OF LIFE:

This is the crown to be given to martyrs:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

A CROWN OF GLORY:

This is the crown reserved for elders and pastors:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

A CROWN OF REJOICING:

This crown will be awarded to soul winners:

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

AN INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN:

The incorruptible, enduring crown will be awarded to overcomers--the victorious saints!

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)

A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

A crown of righteousness will be given to all who love His appearing:

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 all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

CHAPTER SEVENTY-EIGHT HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

How should this revelation of eternal judgment affect our lives as believers? How should the fact that we will all someday stand before God and give account influence us now?

When writing on the subject of future judgment, the Apostle Peter answered this question:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness...Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, blameless. (2 Peter 3:11,14)

Our God, Who is a God of purpose, plan, design, and objectivity, has appointed a day in which every person must give an account of himself. Every knee must bow and every tongue confess.

On that day, you will not give an account for your husband, wife, son, daughter or any other person. You will stand alone.

According to His end-time plan, God has appointed Christ to sit in judgment on that day. Jesus said:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ... And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all those in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:22, 27-29)

Jesus also said:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. (Matthew 25:31-32)

On this great day, the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous: To those who are not prepared at His coming--those who are careless and indifferent about the lost, who are more in love with the world and their own selfish desires than Christ and

His Kingdom--Christ will say, "*I never knew you.*" They will take their place among the hypocrites, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:42-51).

To those who have been faithful to the responsibilities and talents that they have been given with the Kingdom of God, Christ will say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*"

To those who have ministered in Christ's Name, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and those in prison, Christ will say, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you...*" (Matthew 25:34).

To those who fail to minister to the hungry, naked, sick, or those in prison, Christ will say, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire...*" (Matthew 25:41).

To those who sanctimoniously carry out the work of God--who profess to be Christians outwardly by prophesying, casting out devils, and doing many good works, but who are inwardly full of hatred, pride, lust, greed and who do not really know Christ and have a personal relationship with Him--Christ will say, "*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (Matthew 7:23).

You may be wondering, "What is my position going to be on that day when I stand before the throne, face to face with Christ?"

If you have on your wedding garment of Christ's righteousness at His coming, if you are ready and looking for Him, if you have faithfully endured trials and hardships unto the end, then you will be part of the first resurrection. You will receive a glorified body and will rule with Christ during the Millennial reign.

John said:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

If you have been unfaithful--if you have been wicked and you are an unbeliever--you will stand condemned before God.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (Revelation 20:13)

On judgment day, when all men are gathered together before Christ on His throne, the saints who were part of the first resurrection will be judged regarding their works,

but not their eternal destiny. John said:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power... (Revelation 20:6)

What is the second death? The answer to this question is found in Revelation 20:14: *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."*

In Jesus' letters to the churches, He promised: *"...He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death" (Revelation 2:11).*

On judgment Day, the overcomers will stand before Christ in their glorified bodies. They will come before Him boldly, without fear, knowing God has already delivered them from death unto life, knowing that they will not face condemnation.

God does not want you to dread the day that you will stand before Christ and wonder whether or not you will be saved. God wants you to know your eternal destiny. He wants you to live your life free from any past sins or failures hanging over your head. If you accept Jesus Christ, God's Word says that you possess eternal life now. You have already passed from death unto life! Jesus said:

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39)

God desires that...

- ...every person who enters into a living relationship with Christ...
- ...all those who believe on Him...
- ...all who give themselves in a full surrender to Him ...
- ...should have eternal life!

One day soon, we will all stand before Christ:

For we must all appear and be revealed as we are before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive (his pay) according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil, (considering what his purpose and motive have been, and what he has achieved, been busy with and given himself and his attention to accomplishing). (2 Corinthians 5: 10, TAB)

It is time to search our hearts, to examine our thoughts and motives. Are your thoughts and motives pure and clean in the sight of God?

It is time to consider the works that we are doing in the Name of the Lord. Have

you been faithful? Are you sowing to the flesh or to the Spirit?

When you stand before Christ, will He say to you, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"* or *"Depart from me, I never knew you"*?

God wants to bring you to a new position of strength where you can look forward to judgment day without fear, knowing that you will be able to stand boldly before Him with full assurance that you have already passed from death to life through Jesus Christ.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION ELEVEN

1. The past resurrection is that of _____

2. The present resurrection is _____

3. The future resurrection is _____

4. Why is the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus vital to the Christian faith?

5. What are some of the evidences of the spiritual resurrection of believers?

6. What are the two future resurrections of the dead?
1. The resurrection of the _____
2. The resurrection of the _____

7. Summarize what you learned about the strategy that will be used at the final judgment. On the basis of what will we be judged? How will we be judged?

8. What are the five judgments discussed in Chapter Seventy-One of this study?

9. What is Hell like?

10. What are five crowns that will be awarded in Heaven?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

SECTION TWELVE

THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH

Revelation Chapters 21-22

INTRODUCTION

We have come to the final section of this prophetic study, so let's take a moment to review what we have learned in the prophecies of the end-times as revealed to the Apostle John and recorded in the book of Revelation.

In chapters 1 through 11, the Apostle John received successive revelations of the final days of time. He viewed tremendous scenes of worship in Heaven, the opening of the book with seven seals, and the sounding of seven trumpets as God's judgment was poured out on this world.

In Revelation chapters 12-14, John introduced seven important personages: The sun-clothed woman, representing Israel; the dragon, representing Satan; the man-child, representing Jesus Christ; Michael, representing the angels; the beast out of the sea who is the world dictator; the beast out of the earth, a religious leader who is a False Prophet and supports the world dictator; and the 144,000 representing the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.

In Revelation 14 we witnessed the outpouring of seven vials of God's wrath and heard the warnings from three angels giving mankind an opportunity to worship the true God. The second of these three angels announced the coming fall of Babylon.

In Revelation 17 we learned of the destruction of the apostate church (symbolized by the harlot woman) and the world economic and political system of the Antichrist (symbolized by the beast upon which she sat).

Next, we studied about the final battles that will be fought on earth and about the Millennium reign of Jesus Christ. In the last section we learned about the resurrections and the final judgment.

Now, in the closing portion of Revelation (chapters 21-22), John describes one of the most awesome visions of the entire book. He sees a new Heaven and earth and New Jerusalem descending from Heaven.

In these chapters, we reach our final destination in our spiritual journey through the Book of Revelation. We see the consummation of all that God has prepared for us to enjoy throughout eternity.

God's wrath has been poured out upon the wicked. The final conflicts are over. The Antichrist, the False Prophet, and Satan have been cast into the lake of fire. The final judgment is complete. Evil has been erased from the earth. Now, we are given a glimpse of the glorious future God has prepared for those who overcome and remain faithful to the end...

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE A GLIMPSE INTO ETERNITY

John said: *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth passed away; and there was no more sea."* (Revelation 21:1).

John saw a "new heaven" and a "new earth." The earth that was marred and polluted with sin, disease, and death was no more. The curse had been removed and God had created all things new.

Why is it so hard for us to conceive of the earth and heavens as we know them being replaced? The same God Who spoke the universe into existence is able to speak many more into existence!

The Apostle Peter spoke of the Day of the Lord *"in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10).

God spoke through the Prophet Isaiah of the day when He would create new heavens and a new earth. He said:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (Isaiah 65:17-19)

John said that he *"saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"* (Revelation 21:2). He was given a glorious glimpse of the final destination God has prepared for us where we will live with Him in a place so magnificent that it is beyond human comprehension.

It was said of Abraham, *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Hebrews 11:10). Beloved, this world is not our final destination. There is a glorious city--the City of God, the New Jerusalem--ready and waiting for us. This is an eternal city built by the hand of Almighty God.

As Jesus was preparing to lay down His life on the cross, He told the disciples, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:2-3).

God has given us this glimpse into that beautiful city He has prepared for us in order to strengthen and encourage us to remain steadfast and persevere in faith until we are there, rejoicing together around His throne.

As John's eyes were fastened upon this beautiful holy city of God, he heard a great voice thunder out of heaven, *"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* (Revelation 21:3).

Today, we enjoy intimate fellowship and communion with God through His Spirit living within us, but on that glorious day we will experience ultimate satisfaction and joy when we no longer are separated from Him. We will live forever in His glorious presence for eternity without end! Instead of dwelling in us, He will dwell with us.

Think about it! God Himself in all His glory will come and dwell among us. We will see His face! He will walk and talk with us as He did with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. There will be no more parting. Throughout eternity, He will be the central focus of our attention. We will worship and praise Him! We will sing and dance for joy around His throne! We will serve Him! Old things will pass away:

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. (Revelation 21:4)

...There will be no more tears!
...There will be no more death!
...There will be no more sorrow!
...There will be no more pain!
...Former things will be passed away!

Mothers, fathers, husbands, wives--all of you who have cried tears of anguish and sorrow over loved ones who have turned their backs on God and are bound by sin--there will be no more crying.

Those of you whose bodies have been ravaged by pain and disease--there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more sickness, no more crippled limbs, blind eyes, or deaf ears.

Those of you who have known the grief and sorrow of losing loved ones--death will be forever abolished.

Isaiah prophesied concerning this joyous day:

Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. (Isaiah 51:11)

God has promised that He will wipe all tears from our eyes! The old order of man's existence will pass away. God has planned a new, glorious existence that will last through eternity.

From His throne God declared:

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Revelation 21:5-6)

The great Alpha and Omega has sealed these promises with a declaration that they are true. There is no uncertainty. God has declared it and, in the spiritual realm, these things are already done. These promises are your inheritance. They belong to you now! They are not a figment of man's imagination. They are a reality!

God is going to make all things new. The earth with its pain, sorrow, sin, pollution, and strife will be supernaturally erased from our minds and God will create a new heaven and earth that is pure. Every trace of sin and evil will be forever removed.

First, the promise of making all things new, and then the declaration by the great Alpha and Omega that it was done! There is no doubt or uncertainty. It will happen just as Jesus declared!

CHAPTER EIGHTY THE OVERCOMERS

In startling contrast to the judgment of unbelievers, Revelation chapters 21-22 describe the reward for those who overcome. The great and Almighty Alpha and Omega promises:

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Revelation 21:7)

This promise is not given to half-hearted, compromising Christians, but to those who are faithful and endure unto the end. The glories of heaven and the things God has prepared for us to enjoy throughout eternity belong to the overcomers.

Jesus said it will be the overcomers who will be given the right to enter New Jerusalem, and eat of the tree of life:

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

It is the overcomers who will be clothed in white raiment, and have their names in the Book of Life:

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Revelation 3:5)

It is the overcomers who will be pillars in the temple of God and will have Christ's Name, the Name of God, and the name of New Jerusalem written upon their foreheads:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. (Revelation 3:12)

It is the overcomers who will sit with Christ upon His throne:

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3:21)

It is the overcomers who will eat of the hidden manna:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:17)

It is the overcomers who will not be hurt by the second death of eternal separation from God:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

This glorious future for overcomers is in stark contrast to the fate of unbelievers:

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. (Revelation 21:8)

You may be thinking, "I really want to be an overcomer. But how can I do it? I have so many bad habits. I have so many problems!"

If you are truly a born-again believer, you can be an overcomer. You just need to exercise the authority God has given you. You can overcome because Jesus already overcame all the power of the enemy. Jesus said, "...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus was stronger than the power of the enemy and He has stripped Satan of his armor:

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. (Luke 11:22)

Because of the victory Christ executed, we do not have to be overcome by evil:

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

There is no excuse. You have the power to overcome the wicked one!

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because **ye have overcome the wicked one**. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are*

*strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and **ye have overcome the wicked one.** (1 John 2:13-14)*

John spoke of overcoming in the past tense...*"you have overcome!"* He also declared:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

The power of God within you is greater than that of Satan. It is greater than the world. It is greater than the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. It is bigger than your habit. It is greater than all of your sin:

*...But where sin abounded, grace did **much more abound.** (Romans 5:20)*

CHAPTER EIGHTY-ONE THE NEW JERUSALEM

Suddenly, John heard the voice of an angel saying to him, "*Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife*" (Revelation 21:9) and he was transported in the Spirit to a high mountain, where he saw New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God:

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (Revelation 21:11)

In this awesome vision, John was given a glimpse of a new dwelling place that God has prepared for us. As we examine his description of the New Jerusalem, you will receive a clearer understanding of the new life and new home God has planned for you to enjoy eternity without end.

New Jerusalem will radiate the glory of God:

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.(Revelation 21:11)

There will be no need for light, because God's presence will provide such radiance:

And the city had 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. (Revelation 21:23)

The city will be so full of the brightness of God's glory that it will shine like a beautiful diamond.

The New Jerusalem will have walls that sparkle like diamonds with foundations inlaid with precious stones of every color and hue. On the foundations of the wall will be written the names of the 12 apostles:

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 21:14)

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald. (Revelation 21:19)

Each of the foundations of the city will be different:

1. Jasper: A crystal clear gem that could be a massive diamond.
2. Sapphire: A clear blue gem similar to a diamond in hardness.
3. Chalcedony: A greenish agate with possibly a few stripes of other colors mixed in.
4. Emerald: A bright green stone.
5. Sardonyx: A reddish white onyx similar to the color of healthy fingernails.
6. Carnelian: A fiery red or blood-colored stone from Sardis.
7. Chrysolite: A transparent golden-yellow stone.
8. Beryl: A sea green emerald lighter in color than the third foundation.
9. Topaz: A transparent greenish-yellow stone.
10. Chrysoprase: A yellowish pale green stone similar to the modern aquamarine color.
11. Jacinth: A violet hyacinth-colored gem.
12. Amethyst: A purple-colored stone.

Can you imagine the beauty of all this?

The walls of the city will be 144 cubits (about 200 feet) thick:

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. (Revelation 21:17)

The New Jerusalem will have 12 gates, three on the east, three on the west, three on the north and three on the south:

On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. (Revelation 21:13)

Each gate will be made from one pearl:

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. (Revelation 21:21)

Can you imagine one pearl big enough to be a gate? Each gate will have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel inscribed on them:

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. (Revelation 21:12)

The gates will remain open and an angel will be stationed at each gate. Only the righteous will be allowed to enter the city

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:25-27)

In Bible times, the gates of cities would close at sunset to keep out stray animals and enemy nations. But in the New Jerusalem, there will be no night. There will be no enemies to fear.

All the glory and honor of the nations of the world will be brought into New Jerusalem. Think of the glory of kingdoms like the Roman Empire, the English monarchy, and others. All the glory of every kingdom that has ever existed will be brought into this city:

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. (Revelation 21:24)

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book Of Life will live there. Those who would defile, work evil, or create deception are kept out. This is why it is so important to know for sure that your name is written in the Lamb's Book Of Life. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you need to bow your head right now, ask forgiveness for your sins, and invite Him to come into your heart to rule and reign.

The city and streets of New Jerusalem will be made of pure gold like clear glass:

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. (Revelation 21:18)

The city of New Jerusalem will be shaped like a cube, its length equal to its width and height:

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. (Revelation 21:15-17)

The Holy City will be about 1,5000 miles long and 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high. The city itself would stretch from about the eastern seaboard of the United States to the Mississippi on one side and from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico on the other.

It is hard for us to comprehend the beauty of this glorious city that God has prepared for us because...

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)

Our natural minds cannot comprehend, nor can our natural eyes see these things. Only by His Spirit can we conceive of them and know they await us.

This heavenly city of New Jerusalem is not a myth. It is not an escape from reality. It is reality! Alpha and Omega, Who has no beginning nor ending of days, has declared it to you. Receive this revelation into your spirit! God wants you to be strengthened by it! He wants you to have something to hold onto when the trials and testings come!

CHAPTER EIGHTY-TWO AT HOME WITH GOD

Even more glorious than our new home in New Jerusalem will be the new relationship we will enjoy with Jesus Christ and the Father. We will enter into a new, fuller, unlimited relationship with Christ, beyond what our natural minds can conceive.

The most glorious sight to behold on that day will not be the gates of pearl, the streets of gold, nor the glistening jewels on the walls. The greatest beauty to behold will be Almighty God seated on His throne with Christ at His right hand!

One thing will be missing from the New Jerusalem. John said: *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22)*. In this glorious holy city, there will be no need for a temple because Almighty God and Christ will live with us.

From His very first dealings with Israel, God directed Moses to build a temple where He could come and dwell among them. In the wilderness His "shekinah" glory came in the form of a cloud, and filled the tabernacle. His glory was so great that even Moses could not enter. It was His "shekinah" glory that led them throughout all their journeys (Exodus 40:34-38).

Later, Solomon built a beautiful temple and the glory of God came and dwelt there (2 Chronicles 5). After this temple was destroyed, a second temple (Zerubbabel's temple which Nehemiah and Ezra helped to build) replaced it. This temple was also destroyed and Herod's temple was built. This was the temple demolished in 70 A.D.

Today there is no temple in Jerusalem. All that remains are some of the steps of the temple that Herod built. Since there is no temple at this time in Jerusalem, the Jews believe God's Presence is at the Western (wailing) Wall.

The Jews will one day rebuild the temple. During the Millennial reign, Christ will dwell there and the nations of the earth will come there once a year to worship and learn from Him. When God makes all things new, however, there will no longer be a temple. In New Jerusalem, the temple will be replaced by the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb!

John said: *"...the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22: 3-4)*.

In this holy city, there will no longer be any need for the sun or the moon because the brightness of God's glory and of Jesus Christ will be our light:

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:5)

Man has never seen God face to face. God's power and glory are so pure and altogether holy that no man can look upon His face and live. When Moses went up to meet with God on Mount Sinai, God told him: "*Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live*" (Exodus 33:20). God told Moses to hide in the cleft of a rock, and He would cover him with His hand while He passed by. Moses was only allowed to see God's back as He passed. When Moses came down from the mountain, his face shone so brightly from the glory of God that he had to wear a veil over it (Exodus 34:33).

In New Jerusalem, we will see Him face to face! His presence will permeate the atmosphere. His glory will radiate from the throne and fill the city and we will reign with Him forever and ever!

John records one additional beautiful scene from God's new creation...

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2)

Out of God's throne will flow a crystal-clear river of life. On either side of this river will be the tree of life which will bear fruit every month and the leaves will be for the healing of the nations.

This is a beautiful description of the life of abundance and perfection that God has prepared for His people. We will live at the very source of the life-giving stream that flows from the presence of God. We will drink the pure, sparkling, refreshing water of life! Like a cool, refreshing drink in the middle of the desert, God's abundant life will flow through our beings. We will eat the fruit of the tree of life and live forever!

God is using a physical substance--water--to help explain a spiritual truth. Living water flows pure, clear, and fresh. It possesses life-giving qualities that man cannot live without. This water of life is portrayed as a river that will possess life-giving powers; water that will restore and refresh and satisfy our spiritual thirst.

The reference to the healing leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations, does not mean there will be sickness in Heaven or nations will need

healing. The leaves represent the physical and spiritual well-being of all those who live there.

In this new relationship, not only are we going to see Him face to face, His Name and New Jerusalem will be written in our foreheads. Christ promised to all who overcome that He would write upon them the Name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and His new Name. Just as a son bears the likeness of his father, we will bear His likeness. With His Name upon our heads, we will be identified as His very own possessions forever.

At last, we will be at home with God.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-THREE A DIVINE CONFIRMATION

In the closing verses of Revelation, the angel confirms that all the things which John had seen and heard were true. They were not man-made fables, nor were they products of man's natural mind:

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. (Revelation 22:6)

In Revelation 22:7, Jesus pronounces a blessing upon all who keep the things He has revealed:

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

To "keep" means to hear and obey.

Three times in this final chapter of the Book of Revelation, Christ warns, "*Behold, I come quickly.*" In verse twelve, He promises, "*behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me.*" Then, in verse twenty, the very last thing Christ says to the Church is, "*Surely I come quickly*" (Revelation 22:20). Because Jesus will come quickly, we must be alert, watching, and ready to meet Him at all times!

John is so overwhelmed by what he has heard and seen that he falls before the angel to worship:

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 22:8-10)

The angel told John not to worship him and not to seal up the revelation--all the marvelous things he had seen and heard--"*for the time is at hand.*"

When God revealed to Daniel events which would happen in the last days before Christ's return, he was instructed to seal up the vision. The angel, Gabriel told Daniel, "*...shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days*" (Daniel 8:26).

Daniel asked, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:8-9).

Today, God is opening up revelation knowledge as never before concerning the prophecies given in Daniel's vision and unveiling the things that will happen in this end-time hour. These revelations are not being "sealed" from us. They are being revealed to us so that we will be prepared. When Christ returns, it will be too late...it will be judgment day:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (Revelation 22:11)

As a final admonition, Jesus declares, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12, NIV).

When Christ returns, He is bringing His rewards with Him. As we learned in Section Eleven of this study, we will all be judged. Paul said:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

When we stand before Christ, He will judge the works we have done upon the earth. Knowing this, we must live our lives in preparation for that great day when we will stand before Him.

Do not be deceived! Christ knows your works, all of the things that you have done in His Name. In each of His messages to the seven churches, Christ said, "I know your works." He knows your works, good and bad. He also knows the motives behind your works...

- ...if they were done to bring glory and honor to Him.
- ...if they were done with selfish motives.
- ...if they were done because of your love and obedience to Him.

By the revelation of the Spirit, you have been given a glimpse of the home that Christ has gone to prepare for those who belong to Him and are ready for His coming.

...Who are those who will be counted worthy to enter into the holy city of God, the New Jerusalem?

...Who are those who will eat of the tree of life?
...Who are those who will live and reign with Him throughout eternity?

The answer to these questions is found in verse fourteen:

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14)

This verse pronounces a blessing upon those who do His commandments. Do not be deceived! Lip service is not good enough! It is not enough to simply profess to be born again or that you are a child of God. Those who will enter into New Jerusalem are those who have accepted Christ, who have been cleansed by His precious blood, and who are walking in obedience to His Word.

In a final warning, the Spirit urges us not to be left out of what God has prepared:

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (Revelation 22:15)

In a final declaration of authenticity, there is a closing confirmation of the source of all we have received through this glorious revelation:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. (Revelation 22:16)

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FOUR THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT

The invitation has been given to all: God has said: *"...I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Revelation 21:6).*

The question is, how thirsty are you? How much do you want to enter into and enjoy the blessings of New Jerusalem? How much do you want to see Him face to face? How much do you want to reign with Him throughout eternity?

Jesus said: *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).* It is those who are walking in obedience to God who will live forever with Him.

Those who will enter the gates of New Jerusalem will be those whose names are written in the Book of Life:

And there shall in no wise enter into it (New Jerusalem) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27)

Is your name written in the Lamb's Book Of Life?

Christ is coming for a pure, holy Bride *"not having spot, or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27)*. We are commanded to follow after holiness, *"without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).*

Those who do not have on their wedding garment and are not clothed in Christ's righteousness will not be allowed to enter. They will be cast into *"outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:2-14).*

The invitation is open to all who are thirsty--to all who desire Jesus Christ, the Living Water, to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness, to all whose heart's desire it is to do the will of the Father, to those who are willing to lose their lives for Christ's sake.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth 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 man 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 which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22:17-21)

In response to Christ's declaration, "*Behold, I come quickly.*" (Revelation 22:12), the Spirit and Bride say "come!" In verse seventeen, the Spirit and the Bride are in perfect agreement. There is an intense longing and yearning for Christ to return and gather His Bride to Himself

In our journey through the book of Revelation, you have been made aware of the signs of Christ's coming. You have learned of the judgments that will come upon the wicked. You have learned the sequence in which the great end-time events will take place. In this study, you have seen what God has planned for the final destruction of Satan, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all those who oppose Him. You have now been given a glimpse of the glories of that heavenly New Jerusalem where we will live for eternity.

Now, here is the final important question. What are you go to do with the revelation that you have received? Knowing that you are part of the generation that will usher in the King of kings and Lord of lords, what do you think your role in this end-time should be?

In a parable, Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a king who had made preparations for the marriage of his son (Matthew 22:1-14). The king sent forth servants to call all those who would come to the wedding, but those who had been invited were not worthy. They made excuses, ignored the invitation, and killed the servants who delivered the message. The king sent his servants out again. He told them:

Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. (Matthew 22:9)

The time has come. Why do you worry? Why do you hesitate? Why are you fearful? The time has come for you to awake and rise out of your slumber. All things have been made ready and the Lord is sending us forth to gather the final harvest.

Can you not see the hungry, the lost, the dying--those whose hearts are crying out for someone to show them the way to God? How long will you linger? This is the day God has called you forth to go out into the world. He has anointed you, even as He anointed Jesus, to heal, preach deliverance, and overcome the evil one. God is calling you to go forth in His power. He will prepare the way for you. He will lead and guide you. He will sustain you. He has placed a divine calling upon your life. He has placed the responsibility of precious souls in your hands. Be faithful. Be diligent.

It is time for God's people to get up out of the church pews and go out into the "highways and hedges," out where the sinners are. It's time to quit playing church, and be the powerful life-giving force God created you to be!

How should we wait for Christ's return? Here are two powerful true-life examples...

WE MUST LIVE IN A STATE OF READINESS:

In 1914, an expedition led by Ernest Shackleton set out from England for Antarctica. The party hoped to make the first crossing of the continent. They planned to sail to the Weddell Sea and traverse the continent via the South Pole.

With high hopes the party set out in a ship called the Endurance, but the expedition was doomed from the outset. Ice closed in around the ship before the explorers could even reach the Antarctic continent. For nine months, the old ship creaked and groaned under the pressure of the ice. Then, at last, it could take the stress no longer and it split in two leaving Shackleton and his men trapped in a wilderness of ice.

For five months, members of Shackleton's expedition drifted around and then, using small boats they had salvaged from the Endurance, they made their way to Elephant Island. Elephant Island is a windswept wilderness of ice and snow. The nearest human habitation was 800 miles away on the island of South Georgia with a wild, cold sea stretching between.

Shackleton had only an open whale boat to attempt the crossing. Taking five men, he set out. As he waved goodbye to the forlorn party on Elephant Island, he wondered whether he would ever see them again. The men left behind wondered the same thing!

The voyage in the open whale boat was one of the epic crossings of the twentieth century. Despite the mountainous waves with which the tiny vessel wrestled, they managed to make it to the island of South Georgia.

Soon a rescue attempt was organized, but the first try failed. The packed ice closed in and the rescue ship could not find a way through it to Elephant Island. The ship turned back. Second and third rescue attempts had the same results. The ice closed in and the vessels had to return to port. Only after four rescue attempts could Shackleton find a way through to Elephant Island.

As he approached that wilderness of snow and ice, he wondered what he would find. Would anyone still be alive after all those months? Would there be only a few survivors gone mad with the silence and the waiting?

When he landed, Shackleton found every man alive, in good condition, and in good spirits. How had they survived, he wondered? Their secret lay in the leadership of the man Shackleton had left in charge. Every day the leader would say to his men, "Get ready, boys. The boss may come back today."

And so every day they got ready. Every day they prepared themselves. Every day they watched. Every day they waited. And despite the long silence, despite the great odds, one day Shackleton did come back.

Despite the delay...despite the long silence...despite the great odds, Jesus will come back for us. "Get ready...the Boss may come back today!"

WE MUST KEEP OUR EYES ON THE GOAL:

The second true-life example is drawn from the 1954 British Empire Games held in Vancouver, British Columbia. The mile race that was held there is considered to be one of the greatest races of all time. It pitted the two fastest men in the world against each other, Roger Bannister and John Landy.

Following his usual approach, Landy started fast. Unlike most runners, Landy's method was to move to the head of the pack early and by the sheer power of his physique outlast the other runners who would reserve strength for a final thrust at the finish.

From the start, the race was clearly between Bannister and Landy. Soon the other runners were dropping back, leaving Landy out in front with Bannister trailing him. Landy and Bannister were maintaining a blazing pace, one that would surely set a new world record. But who would get to the finish line first?

As the runners came to the final lap, Landy was in front ahead of Bannister, as he had been throughout the race. Ahead of him stretched the finish line. Somewhere behind him was Bannister.

Suddenly, a deafening roar arose in the stands. Landy knew what it meant...Bannister was making a last desperate effort to catch him. The finish line was getting closer and closer and the roar of the crowd was growing louder and louder. Landy knew that Bannister was catching up. But where exactly was he?

Just before crossing the finish line, Landy turned his head so he could see where Bannister was. Seizing the opportunity, Bannister threw himself past Landy and just barely beat him across the finish line. Looking back cost Landy the race!

This famous race, called the "miracle mile," is enshrined in stone in Vancouver.

There are two runners, one turning his head to look back as the other thrusts himself toward the finish line.

As runners in this race of life, we are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Don't be distracted by the roar of the crowd. Don't be distracted by other runners. Don't look back to the old life. Keep your eyes on Jesus...

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

The final words of Christ to His Church are recorded in verse twenty. He said, *"Surely I come quickly."*

John's response to Christ is "Amen," which means "so be it!" Then John adds, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"*

This must become the prayer of the Church today, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"*

It is our prayer, that as you have studied this prophetic revelation that a spirit of anticipation has been released within you. We pray that you are filled with such expectancy that you are listening, looking, and yearning for the day that the trumpet will sound and Christ will come in all His power and glory!

It is our prayer that you will see with your spiritual eyes, as never before, that the Day of the Lord is near and you will be motivated by this knowledge to move out in His power to fulfill your God-given destiny.

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!"

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TWELVE

1. Summarize what you learned about Heaven.

2. What are some of the rewards that will be given to overcomers?

3. Summarize what you learned about the New Jerusalem.

4. What is the blessing given in Revelation 22:7?

5. What is the divine confirmation given in Revelation 22:16?

6. What is the invitation given in Revelation 21:6?

7. What is the response of the Spirit and Bride to Christ's declaration in Revelation 22:12?

(Answers to Self-Tests are provided in the Appendix of this manual.)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE PROPHETIC FAST TRACK

This appendix provides the most frequently asked questions and answers regarding prophecy.

Question: What is the rapture?

Answer: The first phase of Christ's coming is called "the rapture." It has come to mean our Lord's return for true believers who are caught up together with the resurrected saints who have died in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

Question: How can we know Christ will return?

Answer: Christ's return is mentioned more frequently in the Old and the New Testaments than His first coming. It is alluded to in 22 of the 27 New Testament books. (Matthew 24:27; Luke 21:25-28; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 3:13.) While there are disagreements about the time of our Lord's coming, there is little disagreement over the fact that He will return. Paul mentioned the return of the Lord 50 times in his epistles (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Matthew 25:31,32; Revelation 19:15-19; Zechariah 14:4,9; Mark 13:33-37.)

Question: How does the rapture differ from the second coming?

Answer: The Lord's second coming is His public appearance on earth, accompanied with power and glory as well as the angels of heaven. Every eye will see Him at that time, and those who rejected Him will mourn because they will finally realize who He really is and that it is too late to accept Him as Lord. (Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31,46; and Revelation 19:11-21).

Question: What is the Tribulation and when does it occur?

Answer: The time between the rapture and the public phase of Christ's return is a seven-year period termed "the great Tribulation" (see Matthew 24:21; Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 11:1-3; 13:5). It is a time when the Antichrist will rule the world, signing a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years (or 42 months, as Revelation 13 describes it), then breaking that covenant after 3 ½ years, launching the greatest time of desolation in the history of the world. The Tribulation will continue until Christ arrives to set up His Kingdom.

Question: Who are the 144,000?

Answer: Revelation 7:1-17 describes 144,000 protected believers who get saved during the Tribulation. They are joined by a great multitude of people from every nation on earth who have received Christ. These bold witnesses will produce the greatest spiritual harvest in history (Joel 2:28-32).

Question: What are the trumpet judgments?

Answer: Following the opening of the seventh seal come seven trumpet judgments, in which God pours out His wrath on plants, the seas, the fresh water, all creation, and men. Each new judgment is sounded with a trumpet call and each is more severe than the preceding one.

Question: Who are the two witnesses?

Answer: During the Tribulation, God will establish in Jerusalem two witnesses endowed with supernatural powers. Their exact identity is unknown. They will be hated by evil people everywhere and will eventually be killed by the Antichrist. Three days after their martyrdom, with the world watching, they will rise from the dead and ascend into heaven (see Revelation 11:1-14).

Question: Who is the Antichrist?

Answer: The "beast" in Revelation 13 is the head of the coming world government. He will assume power during the Tribulation, taking total control of people on earth. Depicting himself as a savior, he will actually be a destroyer. He will demand worship, blaspheme God, and attack the saints.

Question: Who is the False Prophet?

Answer: The False Prophet will establish a false religion (Revelation 17). He will perform false miracles, even apparently healing the Beast of a mortal wound, and will deceive people into thinking he has power. Eventually he will set up an idol of the Beast and require everyone have the mark of the Beast (Revelation 13).

Question: What is the mark of the beast?

Answer: It is a mark required by the one-world government in order for anyone to buy or sell anything. It will identify those who have accepted Satan's system.

Question: What is the significance of the number 666?

Answer: Seven is the number of God and 6 is the biblical number of man. The three-fold repetition indicates that the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan are merely creatures and not God.

Question: What are the seven bowl judgments?

Answer: Revelation 15 and 16 describe seven angels sent to pour out God's wrath upon the earth. Each pours out a bowl, which causes terrible conditions on the earth. God judges the land, seas, fresh water, skies, government, holy land, and the entire earth. Yet with all these judgments, people still reject God.

Question: What is the battle of Armageddon?

Answer: Revelation 16:12-21 describes how Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet institute a war on the Mount of Megiddo and its surrounding plain. The armies of the world come to fight the army of God and are slaughtered (see Revelation 19:11-21).

Question: What happens at the end of the Tribulation?

Answer: Christ returns again to earth in power and glory to rule and reign personally. This is usually called "the second coming" or "the day of the Lord" (Revelation 19:11-21). All those who hate God will gather together to war against Him under the leadership of the Antichrist, but our Lord's awesome power will consume them. Satan will be bound, concluding the seven-year Tribulation, and ushering in the Kingdom over which Christ will reign.

Question: What is the Millennium?

Answer: The Millennium is a thousand-year period of time during which Christ will rule the earth in a Kingdom established for those left on earth who refused to accept the mark of the Beast. With Satan bound, the curse on the earth will be lifted (see Isaiah 9:6,7; 65:1-25; Daniel 2:31-45).

Question: What happens after the Millennium?

Answer: In spite of the ideal conditions in the Millennium, millions will rebel at the end of this period (Revelation 20:7-9). Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit to deceive the nations, and sinful man will reject God. At that point, God will judge everyone. The dead will be resurrected, and those who died without God will face judgment (Revelation 20:5,6; Daniel 12:1,2).

Question: What is the great white throne judgment?

Answer: The great white throne judgment occurs at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, after Satan has led his failed insurrection. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire and every person is called to account before Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:11-15; 1 Peter 2:22; John 5:22; Matthew 10:26; Hebrews 4:13; Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Question: What is the Lamb's Book Of Life?

Answer: The Lamb's Book Of Life is the book in which are entered the names, of those who have received Him and are guaranteed eternal life. The other Book of Life contains the names of all living people (Revelation 3:5; 21:27).

Question: What is Satan's final destiny?

Answer: He will be cast into the lake of fire, along with the Beast and the False Prophet, to be tormented eternally (Revelation 20:10).

Question: What is the destiny of those whose names are not in the Lamb's Book Of Life?

Answer: Those who do not have their name written in the Lamb's Book Of Life will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity (Revelation 20:12-15; John 5:24).

Question: How could God send anyone to Hell?

Answer: He doesn't send anyone to Hell. They choose to go there (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 15:50). Unless a person is born again, he or she cannot enter heaven.

Question: What is Heaven like?

Answer: Heaven is a holy and beautiful place that reflects the ultimate glory of God. There will be no more night, pain, sickness, or sorrow, and all the inhabitants will serve the Lord for all eternity (Revelation 21 and 22).

APPENDIX TWO INTERACTIVE STUDY ON THE CHURCHES OF REVELATION

Use the following interactive study to go into further detail on the messages to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2-3.

Church: Write the name of the church being addressed.

Characteristics of Christ: To each of the seven churches, Christ revealed a different aspect of His character. Record what Christ says about Himself in this column.

Commendation: Record the commendation Christ gives each church.

Change: Summarize the things that Christ warns must be changed in the church.

Correction: Summarize the corrective action each church is admonished to take.

1. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

2. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

3. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

4. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

5. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

6. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

7. Name of church: _____

Characteristics of Christ described: _____

Commendation: _____

Things they should change: _____

Corrective actions they should take: _____

APPENDIX THREE FURTHER STUDY ON THE RAPTURE

The doctrine of the rapture is revealed in many passages of the New Testament. Take time to study the following scriptures before you continue with this book. Check off each passage as you complete it:

- Luke 21:34-36
- John 14:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 15:23,51-58
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-8
- Ephesians 5:27
- Philippians 3:11,20,21
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-17; 5:9,23
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1,7,8
- Colossians 3:4
- James 5:7-8
- 1 John 2:28; 3:2
- 1 Peter 5:4.

FOUR ERRONEOUS VIEWS ABOUT THE RAPTURE

The position...	It holds that...	And can be refuted by...
No rapture	The Church becomes so victorious on earth that we will usher in the Millennial Kingdom.	2 Timothy 3:13 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
Partial rapture	Some believers who are more righteous will be raptured, others will remain behind.	1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 Ephesians 2:8-9 1 John 1:7 1 Corinthians 12:13
Mid-tribulation	It occurs mid-way through the Tribulation.	2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 Romans 8:1 Matthew 25:13
Post-tribulation	It occurs at the end of the Tribulation.	Daniel 9:27 Matthew 24:15 Revelation 19:11-21

APPENDIX FOUR OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

The people of Israel became a nation, were redeemed from slavery in Egypt, and God brought them into their own land. They were given a law to live by, but they were constantly failing in their commitment to God.

With idol worship, civil war, immorality, and unconcern, Israel needed to be recalled again and again back to the purpose of their existence. The prophets were men raised up by God to call the people back to God. Several of these books were written during a time period when the nation of Israel was divided into two separate kingdoms known as Israel and Judah.

Prophet	Propheesied To	Dates	Basic Theme
Jonah	Assyria	Before Captivity (800-650)	God loves the Gentiles
Nahum	Assyria	Before Captivity (800-650)	Doom of Ninevah for its brutality
Obadiah	Edom	Before Captivity (800)	Doom of Edom for its treachery
Hosea	Israel	Before Captivity (750)	God's love for adulterous Israel
Amos	Israel	Before Captivity (750)	God's love for adulterous Israel
Isaiah	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	Messiah is coming
Jeremiah /Lamentations follow	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	Judgment now, glory to
Joel	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	Judgment will fall like a plague
Micah	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	God's people on trial
Habakkuk	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	The just shall live by faith
Zephaniah	Judah	Before Captivity (800-606)	God's day is coming
Ezekiel	Judah	During Captivity (606-536)	God is not finished with Israel
Daniel	Judah	During Captivity (606-536)	God's hand in world events
Haggai	Judah	After Captivity (536-400)	The danger of halfheartedness
Zechariah	Judah	After Captivity (536-400)	The glory of Messiah
Malachi	Judah	After Captivity (536-400)	The danger of hardheartedness

APPENDIX FIVE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC BOOKS

This prophetic study has centered on the New Testament prophetic book of Revelation. This Appendix contains outlines of Old Testament prophetic books that will enable you to continue your study of Biblical prophecy. The Old Testament books of the prophets include the following:

ISAIAH: Warns of coming judgment against Judah because of their sins against God.

JEREMIAH: Written during the later decline and fall of Judah, this book tells of coming judgment and urges surrender to Nebuchadnezzar.

LAMENTATIONS: Jeremiah's lament over Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL: Warns first of Jerusalem's impending fall and then foretells its future restoration.

DANIEL: This book provides both historic and prophetic teaching essential in understanding Bible prophecy.

HOSEA: This book reveals Israel's recurring unfaithfulness, judgment, and restoration.

JOEL: Recounts plagues which foreshadow future judgment.

AMOS: During a period of material prosperity but moral decay, Amos warns Israel and surrounding nations of God's coming judgment on their sin.

OBADIAH: God's judgment against Edom, an evil nation located south of the Dead Sea.

JONAH: The story of the prophet Jonah who preached repentance in Ninevah, capitol of the Assyrian empire. The book reveals God's love and plan of repentance for the Gentiles.

MICAH: This prophecy concerning Israel's sin also foretells the birthplace of Jesus 700 years before the event happened.

NAHUM: Tells of the impending destruction of Ninevah which was spared some 150 years earlier through Jonah's preaching.

HABAKKUK: Reveals God's plan to punish a sinful nation by an even more sinful one. Teaches that "the just shall live by faith."

ZEPHANIAH: Judgment and restoration of Judah.

HAGGAI: Urges the Jews to rebuild the temple after a 15-year delay due to enemy resistance.

ZECHARIAH: Further encouragement to complete the temple and continue spiritual development. Foretells Christ's first and second comings.

MALACHI: Warns against spiritual shallowness and foretells the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus.

ISAIAH

AUTHOR: Isaiah

TO WHOM: Judah

PURPOSE: Correction and reproof.

KEY VERSE: 53:6

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Rebellion leads to retribution. Repentance leads to restoration.

MAIN CHARACTERS: Isaiah, Hezekiah

OUTLINE

Part One

- I. Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem: 1:1-12:6
 - A. General introduction: 1:1-31
 - B. Millennial blessing by cleansing: 2:1-4:6
 - C. Punishment for Israel's sins: 5:1-30
 - D. The prophet's call and commission: 6:1-13
 - E. The prophecy of Immanuel: 7:1-25
 - F. The prophecy of the Assyrian invasion: 8:1-22
 - G. Messianic prediction and warning: 9:1-21
 - H. Punishment of Assyria: 10:1-34
 - I. Restoration and blessing: 11:1-16
 - J. Worship: 12:1-6

- II. Prophecies against foreign nations: 13:1-23:18
 - A. Babylon: 13:1-14:23
 - B. Assyria: 14:24-27
 - C. Philistia: 14:28-32
 - D. Moab: 15:1-16:14
 - E. Damascus: 17:1-14
 - F. Land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: 18:1-7
 - G. Egypt: 19:1-25
 - H. Egypt and Ethiopia: 20:1-6

- I. Dumah: 21:11-12
 - J. Arabia: 21:13-17
 - K. Valley of vision: 22:1-25
 - L. Tyre: 23:1-18
- III. Prophecy of the establishment of the Kingdom: 24:1-27:13
- A. The Tribulation: 24:1-23
 - B. The character of the Kingdom: 25:1-12
 - C. The testimony of restored Israel: 26:1-27:13
- IV. Prophecy concerning Judah in relation to Assyria:
- A. The fall of Samaria: 28:1-13
 - B. Warning to Judah: 28:14-29
 - C. The attack of Zion: 29:1-4
 - D. The attacker frustrated: 29:5-8
 - E. Reasons for the trial: 29:9-16
 - F. Blessings of final deliverance: 29:17-24
 - G. Warning against an Egyptian alliance: 30:1-14
 - H. Exhortation to rely on God for help: 30:15-31:9
 - I. The day of the Lord: 34:1-17
 - J. The Kingdom blessing: 35:1-10

Connecting Link

Chapters 36 through 39 are a historical transition from the Assyrian to the Babylonian period:

- I. Sennacherib's invasion: 36:1-37:38
- II. Hezekiah's sickness and recovery: 38:1-22
- III. Arrival of Babylonian envoy and captivity: 39:1-8

Part Two

- I. Comfort of the Exiles in the promise of restoration: 40:1-66:24
 - A. The promise of restoration: 40:1-11
 - B. The basis of comfort: God's character: 40:12-31
 - C. The reason for comfort: 41:1-29
 - D. The Comforter: 42:1-25
 - E. The results of the comfort: 43:1-47:15
 - I. The nation restored: 43:1-45:25

- 2. The downfall of idols of Babylon: 46:1-13
 - 3. Downfall of Babylon: 47:1-15
 - F. Exhortation of comfort for those who are delivered from captivity: 48:1-22
- II. Comfort of the exiles with the prophecy of Jesus the Redeemer: 49:1-57:21
- A. Call and work: 49:1-26
 - B. Obedience and faithfulness: 50:1-11
 - C. Redemption of Israel: 51:1-52:12
 - D. Atonement and exaltation: 52:13-53:12
 - E. Israel's restoration: 54:1-17
 - F. Worldwide salvation: 55:1-13
 - G. His warnings and promises: 56:1-57:21
- III. Comfort of the exiles with the prophecy of the future glory of Israel: 58:1-66:24
- A. Obstacles to the restoration and their removal: 58:1-59:21
 - B. Glory of Jerusalem in the Messianic age: 60:1-22
 - C. Blessings of the Messiah for Israel and the world: 61:1-11
 - D. God's love for Jerusalem and its results: 62:1-12
 - E. Christ's conquest of Israel's enemies results in acknowledgment of past national deliverances: 63:1-14
 - F. Prayer of the remnant: 63:15-64:12
 - G. God's answer: 65:1-25
 - H. Blessings of the Messianic Kingdom: 66:1-24

JEREMIAH

AUTHOR: Jeremiah

TO WHOM: Judah

PURPOSE: To warn of the coming judgment of captivity and call for repentance.

KEY VERSES: 33:3 and 1:7-8

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: National disasters and deteriorations are often due to disobedience to God.

MAIN CHARACTER: Jeremiah

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: The Prophet's call: 1:1-19
- II. Prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem: 2:1-45:5
 - A. Prophecies during the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim: 1:1-20:18
 1. First prophecy: Sin and ingratitude of the nation: 2:1-3:5
 2. Second prophecy: Destruction from the north: 3:6-6:30
 3. Third prophecy: Threat of exile: 7:1-10:25
 4. Fourth prophecy: The broken covenant and the sign of the girdle: 11:1-13:27
 5. Fifth prophecy: 14:1-17:27
 - a. The drought: 14:1-15:21
 - b. The unmarried prophet: 16:1-17:18
 - c. The warning concerning the Sabbath: 17:19-27
 6. The sixth prophecy: The sign the potter's house: 18:1-20:18
 - B. Prophecies at various periods before the fall of Jerusalem: 21:1-39:18
 1. Punishment upon Zedekiah and the people: 21:1-29:32
 2. Future Messianic Kingdom: 30:1-33:26
 3. Zedekiah's sin and loyalty of the Rechabites: 34:1-35:19
 4. Jehoiakim's opposition: 36:1-32
 5. Jeremiah's experiences during the siege: 37:1-39:18
 - C. Prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem: 40:1-45:5
 1. Jeremiah's ministry among the remnant: 40:1-42:22
 2. Jeremiah's ministry in Egypt: 43:1-44:30
 3. Jeremiah's message to Baruch: 45:1-5

III. Prophecies against the nations: 46:1-51:64

- A. Against Egypt: 46:1-28
- B. Against Philistia: 47:1-7
- C. Against Moab: 48:1-47
- D. Against Ammon: 49:1-6
- E. Against Edom: 49:7-22
- F. Against Damascus: 49:23-27
- G. Against Arabia: 49:28-33
- H. Against Elam: 49:34-39
- I. Against Babylon: 50:1-51:64

IV. Appendix: Fall and liberation: 52:1-52:34

- A. The fall and captivity of Judah: 52:1-30
- B. The liberation: 52:31-34

LAMENTATIONS

AUTHOR: Jeremiah

TO WHOM: Jews who were captive in Babylon

PURPOSE: To produce repentance necessary for spiritual restoration.

KEY VERSES: 3:22-23

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God is faithful in both judgment and mercy.

MAIN CHARACTER: Jeremiah

OUTLINE

- I. The condition of Jerusalem: 1:1-22
Note the following verses of indictment: 1:1,3,8,9,17
- II. Punishment from God: The results described: 2:1-22
 - A. God had destroyed every home in Judah: 2:1-2
 - B. Every fortress and wall was broken: 2:2
 - C. His bow of judgment was bent across the land: 2:4
 - D. The Temple had fallen: 2:6
 - E. Judah's enemies were given freedom to destroy: 2:15-16
 - F. Bodies of the people lined the streets of Jerusalem: 2:21-22
- III. The prophet of God: 3:1-66
 - A. The affliction of the prophet: 3:1-19
 - B. The assurance of the prophet: 3:21-27, 31-33
 - C. The advice of the prophet: 3:40-66
- IV. Description of conditions continued: 4:1-22
 - A. Children are thirsty: 4:4
 - B. Youth treated badly: 5:13
 - C. Rich were in the streets begging: 4:5
 - D. Formerly mighty princes were now thin with blackened faces: 4:7,8
 - E. Women had cooked and eaten their own children: 4:10

- F. False prophets and priests were blindly staggering through the streets:
4:14
- G. King Zedekiah had been captured, blinded, and carried into captivity: 4:20

V. The prayer of the prophet: 5:1-18

It was a prayer of:

- A. Remembrance: 5:1
- B. Repentance: 5:16
- C. Recognition of God: 5:19
- D. Renewal: 5:21

EZEKIEL

Author: Ezekiel

To Whom Judah

Purpose: Ezekiel warned of the coming captivity, then prophesied to the captives after it occurred.

Key Verse: 22:30

Life And Ministry Principle: The Lord orders historical events so that the nations will know He is God.

Ezekiel is relevant to us because:

1. It reveals who God is "I am the Lord" repeatedly.
2. He lived in a time of disintegrating society as do we.
3. Shows how God uses "all means" to reach people. See also I Corinthians 9:22. He drew, used oracles, danced, and used poetry.
4. Shows that even in captivity to the enemy, God can use us (1:1)

Main Character: Ezekiel

He is called "son of man" repeatedly in the book (more than 90 times). He was frail as man, but his name means "God strengthens."

OUTLINE

Part One: Prophecies Before The Siege Of Jerusalem

Chapters 1-24

Six years before the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel began his prophecies of warning to Judah.

- I. The prophet's call and commission: 1:1-3:27
 - A. The vision: 1:1-28
 - B. The word of the Lord: 2:1-3:27
- II. Prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem: 4:1-24:27

- A. Destruction predicted: 4:1-7:27
 - 1. By sign and symbol: 4:1-5:17
 - 2. By prophecies: 6:1-7:27
- B. Jerusalem's sin and punishment: 8:1-11:25
 - 1. Vision of sin: 8:1-18
 - 2. Punishment: 9:1-11:25
- C. Necessity of punishment: 12:1-19:14
- D. Last warning before the fall: 20:1-24:27

Part Two: Prophecies During The Siege Of Jerusalem

Chapters 25-32

These prophecies were directed at Judah's enemies.

- I. Prophecies against surrounding nations: 25:1-32:32
 - A. Against Ammon: 25:1-7
 - B. Against Moab: 25:8-11
 - C. Against Edom: 25:12-14
 - D. Against Philistia: 25:15-17
 - E. Against Tyre: 26:1-28:19
 - F. Against Sidon: 28:20-26
 - G. Against Egypt: 29:1-32:32

Part Three: Prophecies After The Siege Of Jerusalem

Chapters 33-48

- I. Events preceding the establishment of the Kingdom: 33:1- 39:29
 - A. The wicked purged: 33:1-33
 - B. False shepherds give way to the true shepherd: 34:1-31
 - C. Restoration of the land: 36:1-15
 - D. Restoration of the people: 36:16-37:28
 - E. Judgment of Israel's enemies: 38:1-39:24
 - F. The restored nation: 39:25-29
- II. The Millennial Kingdom: 40:1-48:35
 - A. The temple: 40:1-43:27
 - B. The worship: 44:1-46:24
 - C. The land: 47:1-48:35

DANIEL

AUTHOR: Daniel

TO WHOM: The Jewish captives

PURPOSE: To show how God rules the affairs of men.

KEY VERSE: 12:3

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God is sovereign and He honors those who honor Him.

MAIN CHARACTER: Daniel

OUTLINE

- I. Introductory background: The reasons for Daniel's prosperity: 1:1-21
- II. Visions and events under Nebuchadnezzar: 2:1-6:28
 - A. The image and interpretation: 2:1-49
 - Four kingdoms or world empires:
 - 1. Babylonian: 606 B.C.
 - 2. Medo-Persian: 538 B.C.
 - 3. Grecian: 330 B.C.
 - 4. Roman: 63 B.C.
 - B. The fiery furnace: 3:1-30
 - 1. The king's command: 3:1-7
 - 2. The stand of God's men: 3:8-23
 - 3. Judgment and deliverance: 3:24-30
 - C. Nebuchadnezzar's tree vision and its meaning: 4:1-37
 - 1. The dream: 4:1-18
 - 2. The interpretation: 4:19-27
 - 3. The fulfillment: 4:28-37
 - D. Belshazzar's feast: 5:1-31
 - 1. The feast: 5:1-4
 - 2. The judgment: 5:5-9
 - 3. The search for an interpreter: 5:10-16
 - 4. The interpretation: 5:17-29
 - 5. The fulfillment: 5:30-31

- E. Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den: 6:1-28
 - 1. An evil plan: 6:1-9
 - 2. Daniel's response: 6:10-20
 - 3. Deliverance from the den: 6:21-28

- III. Visions under Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus: 7:1-12:13
 - A. The four beasts and interpretation: 7:1-28
 - 1. They arise from a great sea: 7:1-3
 - (a) Beast like a lion: Babylon: 7:4
 - (b) Beast like a bear: Medo-Persia: 7:5
 - (c) Beast like a leopard: Greece: 7:6
 - (d) Beast like a monster: Rome: 7:7
 - 2. The little horn (Antichrist): 7:8
 - 3. Kingdom of God: 7:9-14
 - 4. Interpretation: 7:15-28
 - B. The ram and the goat and interpretation: 8:1-27
 - 1. The introduction: 8:1-2
 - 2. The vision: 8:3-14
 - (a) The ram is Medo-Persia: 8:3-4
 - (b) The goat is Greece: 8:5-14
 - 3. Revelations concerning Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist: 8:15-27
 - C. The seventy weeks: 9:1-27
 - 1. Introduction: 9:1-2
 - 2. The prayer: 9:3-19
 - 3. The seventy weeks: 9:20-27
 - D. Preparation for the final revelation: 10:1-21
 - 1. Introduction: 10:1-3
 - 2. The man clothed in linen: 10:4-6
 - 3. Daniel's response: 10:10-12
 - 4. Conflict of Gabriel and the Prince of Persia: 10:13
 - 5. Reason for the angel's coming: 10:14-21
 - E. Vision of events from Darius to the end of time: 11:1-12:13
 - 1. The revelation of events to come: 11:1-12:3
 - 2. The command to seal the book: 12:4
 - 3. A final conversation with the messenger: 12:5-13

Daniel's Visions Of Gentile Powers

<u>Empire</u>	<u>Statue</u>	<u>Metal</u>	<u>Daniel 2</u>	<u>Animal/Personage</u>	<u>Daniel 7</u>
Babylon	Head	Gold	v. 37-38	Lion with Eagle's Wing	v. 4
Medo-Persia	Breast/Arms	Silver	v. 39	Bear with 3 Ribs	v. 5
Greece	Belly/Thighs	Bronze	v. 39	Leopard with 4 wings	v. 6
Rome	Legs	Iron	v. 40	Dreadful Beast	v. 7
Revived Rome	Feet/Toes	Iron/Clay	v. 41-43	Ten Horns	v. 7
Kingdom Of God		Stone	v. 44-45	Son of Man	v.13, 14,27

HOSEA

AUTHOR: Hosea

TO WHOM: Northern kingdom of Israel.

PURPOSE: To alert Israel to her sinful condition and bring her back to God.

KEY VERSE: 4:1

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Experience fosters understanding and compassion.

MAIN CHARACTERS: Hosea, Gomer, Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, Lo-Ammi

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: 1:1
 - A. Word of Lord.
 - B. To Hosea, son of Beeri
 - C. In days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah--kings of Judah; and in the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel.

- II. The symbolic example: 1:1-2:23
 - A. Israel rejected: Hosea's marriage and birth of children.
 1. Charged to take a wife of whoredom: 1:2-3
 2. Jezreel symbolizes the overthrow of Jehu's dynasty: 1:4-5
 3. Lo-ruhamah: God will no more have mercy on Israel: 1:6-7
 4. Lo-ammi: Utter rejection of Israel: 1:8-9
 - B. Israel comforted: 1:10-11
 - C. Israel chastised: 2:1-13
 1. Condemnation of sinful conduct: 2:1-7
 2. Punishment more fully explained: 2:8-13
 - D. Israel restored: 2:14-23. God promises ten things:
 1. God would woe and win her again: 2:14
 2. He would speak to her heart: 2:14
 3. He would restore the fruitfulness of the land: 2:15
 4. He would give her a door of hope: 2:15
 5. He would restore her youthful song of joy: 2:15
 6. He would recognize her as wife: 2:16
 7. He would banish remembrance of other gods: 2:17
 8. He would provide and protect: 2:18

9. He would betroth her in loving-kindness: 2:19-29
10. He would have mercy on her: 2:23

III. Redemption of an adulterous wife: 3:1-5

- A. Hosea's experience: 3:1-3
- B. Israel's parallel experience: 3:4-5

IV. The triumph of divine love in the restoration of a repentant nation: 4:1-14:9

- A. Israel's guilt: 4:1-19
 1. The general charge: 4:1-5
 2. Willful ignorance: 4:6-11
 3. Idolatry: 4:12-19
- B. The divine displeasure: 5:1-15
 1. Guilt of priests, people, princes: 5:1-7
 2. Judgment will follow: 5:8-15
- C. The repentant remnant: 6:1-3
 1. Return, but without heartfelt repentance: 6:1-3
- D. The response of God: 6:4-13:8
 1. God is not deceived: 6:4-11
(Dew in hot country used as example of Israel's repentance: It doesn't last long)
- E. National government corrupt: 7:1-7
- F. Foreign policy corrupt: 7:8-16
- G. Consequences of national corruption: 8:1-14
Charges causing God's judgment:
 - Transgressing His law: 1
 - Setting up kings and princes without God's direction: 4
 - Idolatry: 4-6
 - Seeking help from other sources: 9
 - Sinful altars: 11
- H. The apostasy and its punishment: 9:1-9
- I. As God found Israel and as they became: 9:10-17
 1. Wine and fig are allegory of Israel: Fig national Israel; wine is spiritual Israel: 9:10
 2. One physical effect of prostitution in the natural world and spiritual world is childlessness: 9:11-14.
- J. Puppet kings and gods: 10:1-3
- K. Righteousness becomes poison: 10:4-5
- L. Assyria used in judgment: 10:6-7
- M. The terror of judgment: 10:8
- N. Persistence in rebellion: 10:9-15

- O. Ingratitude for God's love: 11:1-7
 - P. Israel's Canaanitish ways: 11:12-12:14
 - Q. Idolatry the basis of destruction: 13:1-8
- V. The final restoration: 13:9-14:9
- A. Distrust in God: 13:9-1.
 - B. Call to repentance: 14:1-3
"Calves" means fruit of the lips.
 - C. Promise of healing and Epilogue--Israel repents, God hears: 14:4-9

JOEL

AUTHOR: Joel

TO WHOM: Judah

PURPOSE: To warn Judah of their sin and need for repentance and inform of God's future plans for the nation. A first judgment (1:2-2:17) precedes a greater judgment to follow (2:18-3:21).

KEY VERSES: 2:28-29

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Even in the midst of corrective judgment, God plans future blessings for His people.

MAIN CHARACTER: Joel. He is the son of Pethuel and his name means "Jehovah is God."

OUTLINE

- I. The prophet presented: 1:1
- II. A type of the "day of the Lord": 1:2-20
 - A. The locust plague: 1:2-7
 - B. The people exhorted to repent: 1:8-20
 - 1. The elders (leaders): 1:2
 - 2. Old and young: 1:2-3
 - 3. Drunkards: 1:5-7
 - 4. Whole nation: 1:8-12
 - 5. Priests (ministers): 1:9
 - 6. Husbandmen: Laborers: 1:10-12
 - C. Exhortation to repent: 1:13-14
 - D. "Day of Jehovah": Prayer for mercy: 1:15-20 Note that we are to . . .
 - 1. Hear: 1:1
 - 2. Awake: 1:5
 - 3. Lament: 1:8
 - 4. Be ashamed: 1:11
 - 5. Gird in sackcloth: 1:13
 - 6. Sanctify a fast: 1:14
 - 7. Call a solemn assembly of repentance: 1:15
 - 8. Cry unto the Lord, like a virgin to had lost her husband: 1:14,19

- III. The "day of the Lord": 2:1-32
 - A. The invading northern army: 2:1-10
Some believe literal locust, but literal locust would not be called the northern army. Proverbs 30:25-27 shows ants are also pictured as a people.
 - B. God's army at Armageddon: 2:11
 - C. The repentant remnant: 2:12-17
 - 1. Rend the heart, not the garments: 2:12-14
 - 2. Sincerely repent and fervently pray: 2:15-17
 - (a) Rending of garments: The sign had replaced the reality. God tells them to rend their hearts: Psalm 51:17.
 - D. God's response to the remnant: 2:18-29
 - 1. Repentance: 2:18
 - 2. Restoration: 2:19-27
 - 3. Outpouring of Spirit: 2:28-29
 - 4. Judgment on the wicked: 2:20,30-31
 - 5. Escape of the remnant in Zion: 2:32
 - E. Signs preceding the "day of the Lord": 2:30-32

- IV. The judgment of the nations: 3:1-16
 - A. Israel restored: 3:1
 - B. The nations judged: 3:2-3
 - C. The Phoenicians and Philistines especially condemned: 3:4-8
 - D. The nations challenged to war and judgment: 3:9-16
Name of the valley in 3:12 means "Jehovah judges."

- V. The prophecy of the Kingdom blessing: 3:17-21
 - A. The exaltation of Jerusalem: 3:17
 - B. Judah's prosperity: 3:18
 - C. Egypt and Edom's desolation: 3:19
 - D. Jerusalem's exaltation explained: 3:20-21

AMOS

AUTHOR: Amos

TO WHOM: Israel

PURPOSE: To call Israel back to God.

KEY VERSE: 4:12

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: The call to the nations is still "Prepare to meet thy God."

MAIN CHARACTER: Amos

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: 1:1-2
 - A. A herdsman named Amos: 1:1
 - B. A layman: 7:14
 - C. A dresser of sycamore trees: 7:14-15
 - D. From Tekoa: Wilderness, barren, void of vegetation 18 miles from the Dead Sea.
 - E. His prophecy was given in the days of Uzziah the King of Judah and Jeroboam the King of Israel.
- II. Judgment upon nations neighboring Israel: 1:3-2:3
 - A. Damascus 1:3-5
 - B. Philistia: 1:6-8
 - C. Phoenicia: 1:9-10
 - D. Edom: 1:11-12
 - E. Ammon: 1:13-15
 - F. Moab: 2:1-3
- III. Judgment on Judah and Israel: 2:4-16
 - A. On Judah: 2:4-5
 - B. On Israel: 2:6-16

- IV. God's indictment of the family of Jacob: 3:1-9:10
 - A. Three addresses of condemnation: 3:1-6:15
 - 1. Judgment is deserved: 3:1-10
Note: 3:8: The lion is still roaring. Hope has not yet vanished.
Judgment is decreed: 3:11-15
 - 2. Judgment is deserved: 4:1-11
Judgment is decreed: 4:12-13
 - 3. Judgment is deserved: 5:1-15
Judgment is decreed: 5:16-6:14
 - (a) First woe: 5:18-27
 - (b) Second woe: Chapter 6
 - B. Five symbolic visions of punishments: 7:1-9:10
 - 1. The locust: 7:1-3
The Lord repents: Not of evil, but He respond to us on the basis of our response to Him.
 - 2. The drought: 7:4-6
 - 3. The plumb line with a historical reference: 7:7-17
The plumb line tests the building. One chosen, one not because one would not believe the Word.
 - 4. The fruit basket: 8:1-14
 - 5. The Lord standing on the altar: 9:1-10
- V. Hope for a brighter future: 9:11-15
 - A. Christ's return and establishment of the Messianic reign: 9:11-12
 - B. Millennial prosperity: 9:13
 - C. Israel restored: 9:14-15

OBADIAH

AUTHOR: Obadiah

TO WHOM: The nation of Edom.

PURPOSE: To warn of God's punishment for sin.

KEY VERSE: 1:4

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God brings down that which has been sinfully exalted.

MAIN CHARACTER: Obadiah. Means "servant or worshiper of the Lord." Shortest O.T. book. He was God's messenger to Edom, descendants of Essau.

OUTLINE

- I. Edom's destiny prophesied: 1:1-9
 - A. The message is from the Lord to Obadiah regarding Edom: 1:1
 - B. Unconquerable Edom will be conquered: 1:2-4
 - 1. Edom will be small and despised among the nations: 1:2
 - 2. Deceived by pride: 1:3
 - 3. Brought down by God: 1:4
 - C. Edom will be completely plundered and deserted: 1:5-9
 - 1. Thieves and robbers: 1:5
 - 2. Hidden treasure sought: 1:6
 - 4. Edom deceived and trapped: 1:7.
 - 5. Wise men destroyed: 1:8
 - 6. Mighty men dismayed and Edom cut off: 1:9

- II. The cause: 1:10-14
 - A. Violence: 1:10
 - B. Hostile attitude: 1:11
 - C. Joy at the calamity of others: 1:12
 - D. Boasting in times of other's distress: 1:12
 - E. Spoiling God's people: 1:13
 - F. Preventing escape of fugitives: 1:14
 - G. Betrayal: 1:14

- III. "The day of the Lord" when judgment will come on all heathen nations, not only Edom: 1:15-21
 - A. Judgment on Edom and all nations: 1:15-16
 - 1. As you have done, you will receive: 1:15
 - 2. As they have done, they will receive: 1:16
 - B. Salvation of the house of Jacob: 1:17-20
 - 1. Deliverance and holiness in Mt. Zion: 1:17
 - 2. Houses of Jacob, Joseph, Esau: 1:18
 - 3. Possessions: 1:19-20
 - C. The Millennial Kingdom of Jesus: 1:21
"And the Kingdom shall be the Lord's": The final word of all prophecy.

JONAH

AUTHOR: Jonah

TO WHOM: The nation of Ninevah to warn of the consequences of disobedience to God.

PURPOSE: The purpose was not only to evangelize Ninevah, but to document for Israel that salvation was not for the Jews only.

KEY VERSES: 3:1-2

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Salvation is not restricted by race, culture, or other barriers: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

MAIN CHARACTER: Jonah

OUTLINE

- I. The first commission: 1:1-2:10
 - A. Divine call: Arise, go, cry: 1:1-2
 - B. Disobedience of Jonah: He arose and fled: 1:3
 - C. Results of disobedience: 1:4-17
 - 1. Caught in a storm: 1:4-6
 - 2. Found guilty: 1:7
 - 3. Thrown overboard: 1:8-16
 - 4. Swallowed by a great fish: 1:17
 - D. Jonah's prayer: 2:1-9
 - 1. Remembers the distress of life: 2:3,5-6
 - 2. Realizes the direction of God's hand: 2:3
 - 3. Recognizes it is the desire of the Lord to answer prayer: 2:2,7
 - 4. Requires rededication and repentance: 2:9
 - 5. Results in deliverance: 2:10
 - E. Jonah's deliverance: 2:10
- II. The second commission: Arise, go, proclaim: 3:1-10
 - A. Obedience: He arose, went, cried: 3:1-4
 - B. Results of obedience: 3:5-10
 - I. The people believed: 3:5

2. They repented: Fasting for man and beast, sackcloth and ashes:
3:5-9
3. The city was preserved: 3:10

III. The prophet's problem: 4:1-11

- A. The wrath of the prophet: 4:1-5
- B. The reproof of God: 4:6-11

MICAH

AUTHOR: Micah

TO WHOM: Israel and Judah

PURPOSE: A call to repentance to avoid judgment.

KEY VERSE: 6:8

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God judges the oppressors of His people.

MAIN CHARACTER: Micah

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: 1:1
The messages are from the Lord to Micah who lived in Moreseheth during the reigns of kings Jotham, Ahaz , and Hezekiah--all kings of Judah. The prophecies concern Samaria and Jerusalem.
- II. General prophecy of judgment: 1:2-2:13
 - A. Judgment against Samaria: 1:2-8
 - 1. Announcement of judgment: 1:2-4
 - 2. Destruction of Samaria: 1:2-8
 - B. Judgment against Judah: 1:9-16
 - C. Judgment upon oppressors: 2:1-11
 - 1. Arrogance and violence of the nobles: 2:1-5
 - 2. False prophets who would silence the true prophets: 2:6-11
 - D. Mercy upon a remnant: 2:12-13
- III. The establishment of the Messianic Kingdom: 3:1-5:15
 - A. Judgment on wicked rulers, false prophets, and the nations: 3:1-12
 - 1. Sins of the civil rulers: 3:1-4
 - 2. Sins of the false prophets: 3:5-8
 - 3. Rulers, prophets, and priests: 3:9-11
(Note: Study the reasons for unanswered prayer in chapter 3 and the differences between true and false prophets in chapter 3)
 - B. Character of the Kingdom: 4:1-5
 - C. Setting up the Kingdom: 4:6-13

1. Restoration of the former dominion: 4:6-8
 2. Into Babylon before restoration: 4:9-10
 3. Deliverance of Zion and destruction of the enemy: 4:11-5:1
 - D. The first advent and rejection of the King: 5:1-2
 - E. The interval between the King's rejection and return: 5:3
 - F. Events upon His return: 5:4-15
 1. He will provide food for the flock: 5:4
 2. He will be peace of His people: 5:5-6
 3. He will provide power to His people: 5:7-9
 - (a) The remnant as dew: 5:7
 - (b) The remnant as a lion: 5:8
 - (c) The remnant triumphant: 5:9-15
- IV. The Lord's problem with His people and His final mercy: 6:1-7:20
- A. The people's ingratitude and wickedness: 6:1-7:6
 1. Ingratitude for blessings: 6:1-5
 2. Righteous conduct is God's requirement, not outward sacrifice: 6:6-8
 3. God's threat of judgment: 6:9-14
 - B. The prophet's intercession: 7:7-20
 1. Confession of the nation's guilt: 7:1-6
 2. Confession of faith: 7:7-13
 3. Prayer for renewal of grace: 7:14
 4. The Lord's answer: 7:15-17
 5. Doxology: 7:18-20

NAHUM

AUTHOR: Nahum

TO WHOM: The city of Ninevah.

PURPOSE: To warn of judgment on Ninevah, capitol of the Assyrian empire which took God's people into captivity.

KEY VERSE: 1:2

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Beware, God avenges evil.

MAIN CHARACTER: Nahum

OUTLINE

- I. Prophecy of destruction, part one: 1:1-14
 - A. Introduction: 1:1
 - B. Source of destruction: God Himself: 1:2-9
 1. Vengeance and God's mercy: 1:2-3
 2. His terrible anger against sin: 1:4-6
 3. The greatness of His mercy: 1:7
 4. The pursuer of His enemies: 1:8
 - C. Reason for destruction: Sin: 1:9-14
 1. God's faithfulness in the present crisis: 1:9-11
 2. Destruction of Assyria: 1:12-14
 3. Rejoicing in Zion: 1:15
- II. Promise to Judah: They no longer need fear this cruel nation: 1:15
- III. Prophecy of destruction, part two: 2:1-3:19
 - A. The siege and destruction of the city: 2:3-13
 1. Assault upon Ninevah: Doom of the city: 2:1-7
 - (a) Furious preparation for battle: 2:1-4
 - (b) Hopelessness of resistance: 2:5-6
 - (c) The city as a queen is captured: 2:7
 2. Flight of the people and spoiling of the city: 2:8-13
 - (a) The inhabitants flee: 2:8-10
 - (b) The destruction is complete: 2:11-13
 - B. Reasons for Ninevah's fall: 3:1-9

1. Description of the battle: 3:1-3
 2. The cause: Her sins: 3:1-6,16,19
 3. The uncovering of her shame is of God: 3:5-7
- C. The fate of No-amon is to be the fate of Ninevah: 3:8-11 (See Jeremiah 46:25; Ezekiel 30:14)
- D. Inability of Ninevah to save the city: 3:12-19
1. Fall of outlying strongholds: 3:12-13
 2. Siege and destructions of the city: 3:14-19a
 3. Universal joy over the fall of Ninevah: 3:19b

HABAKKUK

AUTHOR: Habakkuk

TO WHOM: Judah

PURPOSE: Awaken Judah to their spiritual needs and warn of impending judgment from God.

KEY VERSE: 3:2

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: The just shall live by faith.

MAIN CHARACTER: Habakkuk

OUTLINE

This book divides easily into three sections according to chapters. Habakkuk records a spiritual burden (chapter 1), a vision (chapter 2), and a prayer (chapter 3), all of which relate to the judgment of Judah by God through the Chaldean nation.

- I. Topic sentence: 1:1
- II. Habakkuk's first complaint: 1:2-4
Note that God gave the burden and concern. He did not complain against God, he complained to God. He is a man who believes, yet questions.
 - A. The prophet's questions: 1:2-3a
See Psalm 132; 73.
 - B. The moral and civil conditions of Judah: 1:3b
 - C. The prophet's conclusions: 1:4
- III. The Lord's reply: 1:5-11
 - A. The marvelous work announced: 1:5
 - B. The Chaldeans and their might: 1:6-11
- IV. Habakkuk's confidence in the Lord: 1:12
- V. Habakkuk's second complaint: 1:13-17
- VI. The waiting prophet: 2:1
- VII. The Lord's answer: 2:2-4

- A. The vision to be written plainly: 2:2
- B. The vision surely to come: 2:3
- C. The vision: 2:4

VIII. The five woes: 23:5-19

- A. Introduction: 2:5-6a
- B. The five woes upon the Chaldeans: 2:6b-19
 - 1. The first woe: 2:6b-8
 - 2. The second woe: 2:9-11
 - 3. The third woe: 2:12-13
(Earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord: 2:14)
 - 4. The fourth woe: 2:15-18
 - 5. The fifth woe: 2:19

Note: In the woes: Greed leads to covetousness which leads to injustice which affects others and results in idolatry.

IX. Habakkuk's psalm: 3:1-19

- A. The title: 2:1
- B. The plea: 3:2
- C. The Lord's answer: 3:3-15
- D. Habakkuk's response: 3:16-19a
- E. The musical ascription: 3:19b

ZEPHANIAH

AUTHOR: Zephaniah

TO WHOM: Israel

PURPOSE: To warn Israel and all nations of the judgment of God.

KEY VERSE: 3:17

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God is mighty to save.

MAIN CHARACTER: Zephaniah

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: 1:1-3
 - A. The messenger: 1:1
A message of the Lord to Zephaniah during the reign of Josiah.
 - B. Summary of the message: 1:2-3

- II. A look within: 1:4-2:3
 - A. The fact of judgment: 1:4-14
 - 1. Judgment on four kinds of worshipers: 1:4-7
 - False worshipers
 - Divided loyalties
 - Backslidders
 - Those who never come to the Lord.
 - 2. Judgment on sinners of every rank: 1:8-13
 - Princes: Leaders.
 - Those clothed in foreign apparel: Rich, wealthy, shown by imported clothing.
 - Those that leap on the threshold: Cheat, burglarize, fill homes with violence and deceit.
 - The indifferent: Settled on lees. Neutral position.
 - B. The nature and results of judgment: 1:14-18
 - 1. It is at hand: 1:14
 - 2. Even the mighty are brought low: 1:14
 - 3. Dark day of distress, waste, desolation: 1:15-16
 - 4. Distress, blood, flesh as dung: 1:17

- 5. No deliverance: 1:18
- 6. Day of the Lord's anger: 1:2-3
- C. The name of judgment: Day of the Lord: 2:1-3
- D. Hope in judgment: 2:3

III. A look around: Judgment coming on all nations: 2:4-3:7

- A. Philistine cities: 2:4-7
- B. Moab and Ammon: 2:8-11
- C. Ethiopia: 2:12
- D. Assyria and its capitol, Ninevah: 2:13-15
- E. Judgment on Jerusalem: 3:1-7
 - 1. Note the condition of Jerusalem:
 - (a) Filthy, oppressing, polluted: 3:1
 - (b) Disobedient: 3:2
 - (c) Evil secular leaders: 3:3
 - (d) Evil spiritual leaders: 3:4
 - 2. Note the mercies of God: 3:5-7

IV. A look beyond: After judgment, healing will come: 3:8-20

- A. God's purpose accomplished: 3:8
- B. From among the heathen, God's remnant will come: 3:9-10, 12-13
- C. Judgment on those who were once enemies of God: 3:9-13
- D. Israel's Messiah manifested as King: 3:14-20
Slack hands are symbol of despair.

HAGGAI

AUTHOR: Haggai

TO WHOM: Israel, after the exile; particularly the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem.

PURPOSE: To inspire Israel to new zeal for God and make the leaders aware of their responsibility to rebuild the temple of worship.

KEY VERSE: 1:5

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: Building God's Kingdom should be a priority of the true believer.

MAIN CHARACTER: Haggai

OUTLINE

- I. First message: A summons to rebuild the temple (given on the first day of the sixth month) 1:1-15
 - A. The date: 1:1
 - B. The message: 1:2-11
Addressed to "this people"--a term of estrangement.
 1. The people's procrastination: 1:2-4
 2. It's consequences: 1:5-11
 - C. The people's response: 1:12-15
 1. Obedience and fear of the Lord: 1:12
 2. The work of encouragement: 1:13
 3. The work begun: 1:14
 4. The date: 1:15

- II. Second message: Prophecy of the Millennial temple which would be greater than the temple they would now build (given the 21st day of the seventh month) 2:1-9
 - A. The date: 2:1
 - B. The message: 2:2-9
 1. The temples compared: 2:2-3
 2. The answer to discouragement: 2:4-5
 3. The universal shaking and later glory of the temple: 2:6-9
Be strong and work: Spiritual strength is given for a purpose.

- III. Third message: Promise of present blessing on the rebuilding of the temple (given the 24th day of the ninth month) 2:10-19
 - A. The date: 2:10
 - B. The message: Sin is contagious: 2:11-19
 - 1. The priests questioned: 2:11-13
 - 2. The application: 2:14-19

- IV. Fourth message: Prophecy of future destruction of Gentile world powers (given the 24th day of the ninth month) 2:20-23
 - A. The date: 2:20
 - B. The message: 2:21-23
 - 1. Overthrow of earthly power: 2:21-22
 - 2. Zerubbabel the signet: 2:23

ZECHARIAH

AUTHOR: Zechariah

TO WHOM: Israel

PURPOSE: To inspire Israel to finish the temple.

KEY VERSE: 13:1

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE: God controls the affairs of men and nations.

MAIN CHARACTER: Zechariah (means “the Lord remembers”)

Introductory notes: This book is called the book of revelation of the Old Testament. This is the longest of the minor prophets. It is divided into 8 visions, 4 messages, and 2 burdens.

OUTLINE

- I. Introductory call to repentance: 1:1-6
 - A. Made in the eighth month during the second year of Darius.
 - B. Based on the fact that prophets before exile were refused, judgment came, and Israel should have learned by experience.

- II. Prophecies by vision: 1:7-6:8
 - A. The man among the myrtle trees: 1:7-17
(Israel outcast, but not forgotten by God.)
 - B. The four horns: 1:18-21
(The overthrow of Israel by her enemies.)
 - C. The man with the measuring rod: 2:1-13
(The coming prosperity of Jerusalem.)
 - D. Joshua the high priest: 3:1-10
(Israel's sin removed by Jesus, the Branch.)
 1. Joshua was symbolic of priesthood. Polluted garments of priesthood.
 2. Two-fold charge: Walk in my ways and keep my charge.
 3. Three-fold promise: Thou shalt judge my house, keep my courts, I will give you access to my presence.
 - E. The candlestick and the two trees: 4:1-14
(Israel is God's future light-bearer.)

1. The first question and explanation: 4:1-10
 2. The second question and explanation: 4:11-14
- F. The flying roll: 5:1-4
(Wicked governments cursed by God)
1. The roll measured 30 x 15 feet.
- G. The woman in the ephah: 5:5-11
(Wickedness removed on divine wings)
- H. The four chariots: 6:1-8
(God's judgments.)
- III. Illustrative prophecies: 6:9-8:23
- A. The returning Jews: 6:9-15
Five things declared concerning the Branch (Jesus):
1. Grow up out of his place as a root out of dry ground in the midst of a corrupt age: Isaiah 43:2.
 2. Will build the spiritual temple of God: 1 Peter 2:5, Ephesians 2:21, and Hebrews 3:6
 3. He will bear the glory.
 4. He will be a priest upon His throne: Hebrews 7:25 and Revelation 3:21.
 5. Counsel of peace will be between them.
- B. Vanities of the people: 7:1-8:23
1. Fast days of Israel and obedience to the Word: 7:1-17
 - (a) Occasion of the prophecy: 7:1-3
 - (b) Fasting not essential, but hearing is: 7:4-7
 2. First half of the Lord's answer to the question of fasting: 7:8-14
 - (a) What God requires of the fathers: 7:8-10
 - (b) Refusal of the fathers to hearken: 7:11-14
 3. The second half of the Lord's answer: 8:1-23
 - (a) The time of redemption: 8:1-8
 - (b) Message of encouragement: 8:9-17
 - (c) Fasting to be changed to rejoicing: 8:18-23
God had only instituted the day of atonement. The other days had grown out of self-pity.
- IV. Direct prophecies: 9:1-14:21
- A. The first prophecy: The first coming and rejection of Jesus: 9:1-11:17
1. Fall of the heathen world and deliverance of Zion: 9-10
 2. Good and foolish shepherds: 11:1-17
 - (a) The humiliated land: 11:1-3
 - (b) The good shepherd: 11:4-14

- (1) His loving care: 11:4-6.
 - (2) The people's lack of appreciation: 11:7-8
 - (3) Withdrawal of the good shepherd: 11:9-14.
 - (c) The foolish shepherd: 11:15-17
 - (1) His conduct: 11:16-16.
 - (2) His overthrowing: 11:17
- B. The second prophecy: The second coming and acceptance of Jesus: 12:1-14:21
 - 1. Future deliverance and conversion of Israel: 12:1-13:9
 - (a) Deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem: 12:1-9
 - (b) Spirit of grace and lamentation: 12:10-14
 - (c) A fountain of grace for salvation: 13:1-6
 - 2. The return of Jesus: 14:1-21
 - (a) Judgment and deliverance: 14:1-5
 - (b) Complete salvation: 14:6-11
 - (c) Destruction of enemy nations: 14:12-15
 - (d) Conversion of heathen nations: 14:16-19
 - (e) Everything unholy removed: 14:20-21

MALACHI

AUTHOR: Malachi

TO WHOM: Israel

PURPOSE: To call the nation to repentance and return to righteousness.

KEY VERSE: 2:2

LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE:

Repentance (attitude) + Returning (action) = Restoration

Both attitude (repentance from sin) and action (returning to God) are necessary for forgiveness (restoration to righteousness before God).

MAIN CHARACTER: Malachi (means “my messenger”)

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: 1:1-5
 - A. The messenger: 1:1
 - B. The message: 1:1
 - C. The recipient of the message: Israel: 1:1
 - D. God's love for Israel: 1:2-5
 1. Essau and Jacob: 1:2-3
 - (a) “Essau have I hated”--the result of choice by Esau.
 - (b) God is not speaking of two men, but of two nations.
 - (c) He does not select according to the flesh, but according to His purpose: Romans 9:8-13.
 2. God and Edom: 1:4-5
 - (a) Edom boasted that they would rebuild, but their destiny is not in their own hands. God said He would tear down.
- II. A message to the priests: 1:6-2:9
Malachi is a layman, and not one of them according to 1:6 and 2:1.
 - A. Their neglect in religious duties: 1:6-2:4
 1. Worthlessness of sacrifices: 1:6-14
 2. Better to shut the temple than engage in worthless worship: 1:9-10

- 3. Superior service among the Gentiles: 1:11
 - 4. Weariness in worship: 1:12-13 contrasted with wonderful worship in 1:11.
 - 5. The curse of God: 1:14-2:4
 - B. Their faulty teaching of the law: 2:5-9
 - 1. Covenant with Levi and the ideal priest: 2:5-7
 - 2. The apostate priests and their disgrace: 2:8-9
- III. A message to the Jewish laymen: 2:10-4:3
- A. A charge of treachery: 2:10-16
 - B. Warning of judgment: 2:17-3:6
 - 1. Their questions: 2:17
 - 2. God's refining fire: 3:1-3
 - 3. Purification of the priest and people: 3:3-5
 - 4. God does not change: 3:6
 - C. A call to repentance: 3:7-12
 - 1. The people's unfaithfulness and God's curse: 3:7-9
 - 2. God's reward for their respect and faithfulness: 3:10-12
 - D. Divine indictment for sin: 3:13-4:3
 - 1. Complaint: 3:13-15
 - 2. Separation of the righteous from the wicked: 3:16-18
 - 3. Utter destruction of the wicked: 4:1
 - 4. Exaltation and glorification of the righteous: 4:2-3
- IV. Concluding warning: 4:4-6
- A. Keep the law of Moses: 4:4
 - B. Look for the second coming of Jesus: 4:5-6

APPENDIX SIX ANSWERS TO SELF-TESTS

SELF-TEST ON INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1. The word prophecy means to speak forth.
2. The three basic kinds of prophecy are a message of inspiration from God; prediction of future events in God's eternal plan; and interpretation for man of the acts of God.
3. God commissioned His prophets as:
Interpreters who explained God's acts to men.
Spokesmen who voiced God's truth.
Prophets who predicted future events in God's plan.
4. God spoke through prophets in the following two ways: The spoken word and acted prophecies.
5. God is the source of true prophecy.
6. Three purposes of prophecy are to authenticate God's message; to confirm God's messenger; to instruct believers.
7. It is important to study prophecy because:
 1. All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for study.
 2. Prophecy brings understanding of past, present, and future events in God's plan.
 3. Understanding of God's plan for the future prevents deception.
 4. There is a special blessing pronounced on those who study Biblical prophecy.
8. Five basic keys that will help you understand prophecy are:
 1. Jesus is the basic theme of prophecy.
 2. The Bible interprets itself.
 3. The rule of double reference.
 4. An understanding of prophetic perspective.
 5. Prophecy is conditional in nature.
9. Prophecy in the Old Testament centers on the nation of Israel, nations surrounding Israel, prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, and the world's destiny.

10. Prophecy in the New Testament centers on future events prior to the end of the world.

SELF-TEST ON INTRODUCTORY TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. Two reasons Jesus didn't just put everything He had to say regarding prophecy in plain words are:
 1. Symbols were used in the writing style at the time the prophecies were written.
 2. The mysteries of God are revealed through parables and symbols to His people.
2. Six rules for interpreting the book of Revelation are:
 1. Study "in the Spirit," not with natural reasoning.
 2. Accept that it can be understood just as it is written without changes or additions by man.
 3. Accept the meaning of the words as literal unless the text clearly indicates otherwise.
 4. Always keep in mind the times and circumstances under which the prophet recorded God's message.
 5. Remember that sometimes future events are described as if they were continuous and successive, but there may be years between.
 6. Keep in mind the "law of double reference."
3. It is a message to both the Church and each individual.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION ONE

1. Three purposes of spiritual keys are:
 1. The keys to the Kingdom of Heaven give us command over the enemy, Satan.
 2. The keys authorize us to exercise discipline and order in the Kingdom of God.
 3. The keys give us the ability to open or shut the door to knowledge of the Kingdom of God.
2. Five reasons why it is important to study the book of Revelation are:
 1. You receive a blessing when you study it.
 2. It is necessary for spiritual maturity, as it is part of the Word.
 3. It enables you to understand the future and how it relates to the past and present.
 4. Prophecy authenticates the Word of God.
 5. Prophecy affects the way we live.

3. Four major things God wants to accomplish in your life through this study are:
 1. You will learn how to accurately interpret biblical prophecy by using the keys to the Kingdom God has placed in your hands.
 2. You will be prepared to face the future from a position of knowing. You will no longer be confused, fearful, or doubting.
 3. You will be able to face every negative circumstance you may encounter in the future with power and authority because you will know your destiny as a 100% conquering, victorious child of God.
 4. You will rise up in these end-times to take your God-given position of power, authority and dominion as we reap together the greatest spiritual harvest this world has ever witnessed.
4. The word revelation means the unveiling or uncovering.
5. The statement is false.
6. "...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).
7. The seven-fold blessing of Revelation includes:
 1. A blessing is pronounced upon those who read, hear, and keep those things written in the book of Revelation.
 2. A blessing is pronounced upon those who die in the Lord.
 3. A blessing is pronounced upon those who are spiritually diligent in keeping themselves from sin.
 4. A blessing is pronounced on those who partake of the marriage supper of the lamb.
 5. Those who are part of the first resurrection of the righteous are blessed.
 6. Those who keep the words of this prophecy--who hold fast these truths and warnings--are blessed.
 7. God's blessings are upon those who do His commandments--those who conform their lives to His Word.
8. Compare your summary to the description in Chapter Nine of this manual.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TWO

1. The three divisions of Revelation that provide a general outline of the book are:
 - The things which were.
 - The things which are.
 - The things which are to come.
2. The four-fold application of the study of the seven churches is as follows:

1. It can be applied to the churches to which it was originally addressed.
 2. It can be applied historically.
 3. It can be applied corporately to the Church today.
 4. It can be applied individually.
3. The dangers illustrated by each church in Asia are:
1. Ephesus: The danger of diminishing love.
 2. Smyrna: The danger of fearing suffering.
 3. Pergamos: The danger of doctrinal compromise.
 4. Thyatira: The danger of moral compromise.
 5. Sardis: The danger of spiritual death.
 6. Philadelphia: The danger of failing to advance.
 7. Laodicea: The danger of lukewarmness.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION THREE

1. Compare your summary to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
2. Compare your summary to 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.
3. Nine reasons why you need to know about the rapture are:
 1. God doesn't want you to be ignorant concerning the rapture.
 2. Knowing about the rapture gives you hope.
 3. It provides comfort.
 4. It takes away the sting of death.
 5. It assures you of final victory.
 6. It helps you be steadfast, unmoveable, and abounding in God's work.
 7. It assures you that your labor for the Lord is not in vain.
 8. Understanding the end-times affects the way you live.
 9. If you know the facts, you won't be taken in by scoffers in the last days.
 10. You can prepare for it.
4. Five common views about the timing of the rapture are:
 1. There will be no rapture.
 2. There will be a partial rapture.
 3. The rapture will occur mid-way through the Tribulation.
 4. The rapture will occur at the end of the Tribulation.
 5. The rapture will occur prior to the seven years of the Tribulation.
5. Ten scriptural evidences for a pre-Tribulation rapture are:

1. God's wrath cannot be outpoured on the earth until the Church is removed.
 2. From Revelation chapter 4 on, we see the saints in Heaven, already robed and crowned.
 3. The Tribulation is judgment on those who have rejected God and His Word. possibly go through the Tribulation.
 4. Christ's Bride accompanies Him back to earth for the final battle.
 5. The "time of Jacob's trouble."
 6. The Millennium population.
 7. The end of the Church age is recorded in Revelation. In Revelation 4:1, the Spirit tells John "come up hither." After this command to "come up hither," the Church is not mentioned in scripture at all.
 8. The examples of Noah and Lot.
 9. The Tribulation will primarily concern Israel and the nations.
 10. God promises to keep us from the hour.
6. Seven major purposes of God in rapturing the Church are:
1. To fulfill Christ's promise to return and receive the saints to Himself.
 2. To resurrect the dead in Christ from among the wicked dead.
 3. To take the saints to heaven where they will receive judgment for works done in the body, receive their rewards, and partake of the marriage supper.
 4. To change our mortal, corruptible bodies to immortal, incorruptible bodies.
 5. To present the saints to God the Father so we can be forever with Him.
 6. To enable us to escape the Tribulation.
 7. To remove the power Holy Spirit which is hindering the spirit of lawlessness, thus permitting the revelation of the Antichrist and the fulfillment of final prophecies.
7. Ten major things that will happen before Christ returns to earth include:
1. False christs and false prophets will arise and there will be strong deception.
 2. There will be wars and rumors of wars.
 3. There will be great famines, pestilence, and earthquakes on earth.
 4. There will be persecution, offenses, and betrayals.
 5. There will be great signs in the heavens.
 6. There will be a great, unprecedented Tribulation.
 7. Iniquity will abound and the love of many will wax cold.
 8. Conditions similar to the days of Noah and Lot will exist.
 9. There will be fearful sights and signs on earth-so great men will die from fear.
 10. The Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to all nations before the end will come.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION FOUR

1. Compare your summary to the discussion in Chapter Twenty-Seven of this manual.
2. The four beasts in the throne room were:
 1. A lion representing the king of beasts in the Gospel of Matthew where He is called the King of the Jews.
 2. A ox representing a beast of burden in the Gospel of Mark where He is called a servant.
 3. A man representing a human in the Gospel of Luke where He is called the Son of Man.
 4. An eagle representing the one who rules the sky in the Gospel of John where He is called God.
3. Jesus Christ, the Lamb, was worthy to open the book.
4. The prayers of God's people caused the angels to be released.
5.

The Seal	What It Is	What It Represents
1	Rider on a white horse	False christs
2	Rider on a red horse	War
3	Rider on a black horse	Famine/pestilence
4	Rider on a pale horse	Death
5	Altar with souls	Cry of the martyred
6	Signs in heaven and earth	Great day of the Lord is at hand.
7	Seven angels with trumpets	Seven more judgments are to be poured out.
6. Between the sixth and seventh seals is the sealing of the 144,000.
7. Compare your summary to the discussion on the 144,000 in Chapter Thirty-Two of this study.

SELF-TEST FOR SECTION FIVE

1. The seven trumpets and what they represent.
 1. The first trumpet: One-third of vegetation on earth is destroyed.
 2. The second trumpet: One third of ocean life and ships are destroyed.
 3. The third trumpet: One third of fresh water is poisoned.
 4. The fourth trumpet: One third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.
 5. The fifth trumpet: The first woe: A hellish invasion of demonic forces upon the earth-appearing as locust.

6. The sixth trumpet: The second woe: A second hellish invasion of demons upon the earth-an army of horsemen.
 7. The seventh trumpet: The third woe: The great Tribulation is ushered in.
2. During the heavenly interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets the seven thunders sound.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION SIX

1. We know that Revelation 11:1-2 refers to the Tribulation temple because the old temple was destroyed; there is no current temple; the Millennial temple will not be built until after Armageddon; the instructions to measure.
2. Compare your summary on the Tribulation time-line to the discussion in Chapter Forty-One of this study.
3. Compare your summary about the two witnesses to the discussion in Chapter Forty-Two of this study.
4. Six specific purposes for the Tribulation are:
 1. To finish transgression.
 2. To make an end of sins.
 3. To make reconciliation for iniquity.
 4. To bring everlasting righteousness.
 5. To seal up the vision and prophecy.
 6. To anoint the most Holy.
5. Those who will go through the Tribulation are those who are not born-again, those who have rejected Jesus Christ.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION SEVEN

1. The sun-clothed woman represents Israel.
2. The dragon represents Satan.
3. The man-child represents Jesus Christ.
4. Michael, represents the angels.
5. The beast out of the sea represents the world dictator.
6. The beast out of the earth represents the false religious leader.

7. The 144,000 represents the remnant saved out of the Tribulation.
8. Jesus Christ is represented by the lion and is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION EIGHT

1. The first angel in Revelation 14 preached the Gospel, giving mankind a final opportunity to repent.
2. The second angel in Revelation 14 announced the fall of Babylon.
3. The message of the third angel in Revelation 14 warned of the coming destruction on those who take the mark of the Antichrist.
4. Compare your description of the victory celebration in heaven in Revelation 15 to the discussion in Chapter Fifty-Six of this manual.
5. The contents of the first vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 were malignant sores.
6. The contents of the second vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 were the sea turning to blood
7. The contents of the third vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 were the rivers and drinking water sources turned to blood.
8. The contents of the fourth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 were the sun scorching with intense heat.
9. The contents of the fifth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 was darkness.
10. The contents of the sixth vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 was the River Euphrates drying up and demonic forces loosed in the earth.
11. The contents of the seventh vial poured out by the angel in Revelation 16 were a great earthquake, Jerusalem divided, and the fall of Babylon declared.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION NINE

1. Compare your summary about the identity of Babylon to the discussion in Chapter Fifty-Nine of this manual.

2. The scarlet-colored beast described in Revelation 17 is the same beast described in Revelation 13:1--the Antichrist.
3. A ten-nation alliance formulated by the Antichrist.
4. Christ will overcome this alliance by Christ's blood sacrifice; death being swallowed up in victory; deliverance of pre-Tribulation believers from the hour of temptation; saving a remnant during the Tribulation; the battle of Armageddon; the final judgment.
4. Compare your summary concerning the fall of Babylon to the discussion in Chapter Sixty-Two of this manual.
6. The fate of the apostate church includes a double return of the evil they commit; economic devastation; loss of that which was lusted after; loss of joy; spiritual darkness; sudden and total destruction.
7. Ten characteristics of an apostate church:
 1. The apostate church will reject sound doctrine.
 2. The apostate church will be materially rich, but spiritually poor.
 3. The apostate church will be full of Christians who follow after their own lustful desires.
 4. The apostate church will have a form of godliness, but will deny the true power of God.
 5. The apostate church will be full of Christians who have lost their first love.
 6. The apostate church will reject God's prophets.
 7. The apostate church will deceive the nations.
 8. The apostate church will be filled with evil, sorcery, and fornication.
 9. The apostate church will compromise to avoid persecution.
 10. The apostate church will be filled with those who have fallen away.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TEN

1. Compare your summary about the marriage supper of the Lamb to the discussion in Chapter Sixty-Six of this manual.
2. You can prepare for this event by putting on the wedding garment; keeping your garment unspotted from the world; being continually cleansed through the Word; rekindling the fire of your bridal love for Christ; fulfilling your spiritual responsibilities.
3. The rider on the white horse in Revelation 19:11-16 is Jesus Christ.

4. The four major purposes Jesus will fulfill when He returns as the Warrior Messiah are:
 1. He will smite the nations.
 2. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron.
 3. He will tread the winepress of God's wrath.
 4. He will fight and win the war of Armageddon.

5. The end-time invasion of Israel: Ezekiel 38-39
 Opposing forces: An alliance of nations come against Israel.
 Purpose of this war: An attempt to annihilate the Jewish people.
 Battlefield: Mountains of Israel.
 Timing: Sometime after Israel has been restored as a nation which happened in May, 1948.
 Major events: A great earthquake, pestilence and hailstones, fire and brimstone.
 Outcome: God will supernaturally intervene on Israel's behalf and destroy the invading armies.

6. The battle of Armageddon: Revelation 19:11-21 and 16:12-16
 Opposing forces: The Antichrist, False Prophet, and their forces including an army of two million from the east will war against Christ and His army of saints from Heaven.
 Purpose of this war: To destroy the Antichrist and the False Prophet and pour out God's wrath in judgment upon the wicked who have refused to repent.
 Battlefield: Megiddo.
 Timing: After the Great Tribulation.
 Major events: A great earthquake in Israel; the Lord will strike all those who fought against Jerusalem with a plague; the Euphrates River will dry up
 Outcome: Christ will personally lead the heavenly forces against the enemy; God's wrath will be poured out upon the wicked; Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

7. The final rebellion and destruction of Satan: Revelation 20
 Opposing forces: Satan leading a multitude against the beloved city.
 Purpose of this war: To eradicate every trace of sin once and for all.
 Battlefield: In Israel--the beloved city of Jerusalem.
 Timing: After the Millennial reign of Christ.
 Major events: God will supernaturally intervene and rain down fire from heaven, defeating all enemies.
 Outcome: All those who have rebelled against God will be devoured by the fire from Heaven. Satan will be cast into the lake of fire with the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

8. Compare your summary about the Millennial reign of Jesus to the discussion in Chapter Seventy of this manual.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION ELEVEN

1. The past resurrection is that of Jesus Christ from the dead.
2. The present resurrection is the spiritual resurrection of believers in Jesus.
3. The future resurrection is the resurrection of all who are in the graves.
4. The doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus is vital to the Christian faith because if there is no resurrection our preaching is in vain; it is necessary to believe in the resurrection of Jesus in order to become a true believer; it confirms Jesus as the Son of God; it confirms that we are justified; it means death is defeated.
5. Some of the evidences of the spiritual resurrection of believers are: death to sin resulting in a new life style; living with a new Mater; a new life purpose.
6. The two future resurrections of the dead are:
 1. The resurrection of the just.
 2. The resurrection of the unjust.
7. Compare your summary about the strategy of final judgment to the discussion in Chapter Seventy-Four of this manual.
8. The five judgments discussed in Chapter Seventy-Five of this manual are:
 1. Judgment for past sin.
 2. Present judgment.
 3. Judgment of the believer's works.
 4. Judgment of Satan and His evil forces.
 5. Judgment of the wicked.
9. Compare your discussion of Hell to the description in Chapter Seventy-Six of this manual.
10. Five crowns that will be awarded in Heaven are:
 1. A crown of life.
 2. A crown of glory.
 3. A crown of rejoicing.
 4. An incorruptible crown.
 5. A crown of righteousness.

SELF-TEST ON SECTION TWELVE

1. Compare your summary about Heaven to the discussion in Chapter Seventy-Nine of this manual.
2. Some of the rewards that will be given to overcomers include inheriting all things; being given the right to enter New Jerusalem and eat of the tree of life; being clothed in white raiment with their names in the book of life; being pillars in the temple of God; having the name of God, Christ, and New Jerusalem written upon their foreheads; sitting with Christ upon His throne; eating of the hidden manna; not being hurt by the second death of eternal separation from God.
3. Compare your summary about the New Jerusalem to the discussion in Chapter Eighty-One of this manual.
4. The blessing given in Revelation 22:7 is to *“those who keep the prophecy of this book.”*
5. The divine confirmation given in Revelation 22:16 is a final confirmation of the source of this revelation: *“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things...”*
6. The invitation given to all in Revelation 21:6 is to all who are spiritually thirsty.
7. The response of the Spirit and Bride to Christ’s declaration in Revelation 22:12 is *“Even so, Come Lord Jesus.”*