

1: 1

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:

1: 2

Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

1: 3

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.

We are told the FATHER gave a gift to his SON. This gift was a revelation that John called prophecy. Although the book has been given the title The Revelation of St. John The Divine, it would be more accurate to title it The Revelation of Jesus Christ. The word *revelation* is translated from the Greek word *apokalupsis*. This means the *unveiling* or *disclosure*. Through this unveiling, Jesus begins to disclose or reveal what he is going to do through his Church.

This revelation was given *to shew unto his servants things that must shortly come to pass*. The purpose of this message was to allow the Church to know what the future held for them. The word *must* gives assurance to them of the certainty of this *prophecy*. The term *Shortly* conveyed that these events would soon begin to commence.

Jesus *sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John*. It is believed that the Apostle John received this communication in 95 AD. This angel is not giving merely a simple direction to John. This revelation is further development of what John had been given when he wrote his Gospel. In St. John 1:18 he says, *No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*. This revelation shines more light on Christ's *declaration* as it pertains to *things, which must shortly come to pass*. Jesus sent his angel to reveal these future events by signs or symbols (*signified*).

The opening sentence demonstrates how the book will develop. John was given this revelation by signs. These signs were not given to John as a riddle, for the purpose of enabling half-hearted Christians to play a prophecy guessing game. Believers, under great persecution from hostile civil government and false religion, would quickly recognize these Old Testament pictures as a method of encouragement for them to stay faithful to God. Jesus took these signs and images from the Old Testament and gave them new form, that they might express a greater truth.

Some have thought, due to the signs and images used in The Revelation, that it is a closed book. It is strange that a book called The Revelation should be thought of by so many as closed. The opposite is true! God promises a blessing on those that read it and act upon it (Rev.1 & 22:7). If God wants us to read and put into practice what is contained in this book, it seems clear that he would intend for us to understand it.

The Revelation is only difficult for people who have not become acquainted with God's word. Images from the Old and New Testament will speak volumes to believers who are familiar with them. If a picture is worth a thousand words, this is especially true of The Revelation. The WORD (St. John 1:1) himself takes these ancient images and welds them together into newer and clearer truths. In this book there is a repetition of the same truth, as seen from many different angles. The truth is like a multi-faceted diamond. Whatever direction you turn the stone, the light shines from it (Eph. 3:10 & Zech. 3:9). These signs or symbols are the many facets of the same truth.

The signs are used in dominant themes that keep recurring throughout the book. These dominant themes are taken from the Old Testament. Stories from the Law and Prophets, simple enough for a child to recite, became the material Jesus used to encourage his persecuted saints. A child of God, facing death for their faith, would recognize the comfort in the image of Christ's *feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace* (Rev.1: 15). No other words would need to be spoken. They would know by that image that, as the fourth man in the fire was with the three Hebrew children, Christ would be with them in their fire. This book was not written for curious puzzle solvers with idle time. The one that overcame gave this revelation to John to encourage others to overcome.

The outline of the whole book is given in this opening statement. Rev. 1:9-13 shows that Jesus Christ is the Revealer. Rev. 4:1 - 5:14 shows the revelation is given to him as a book from God's right hand. Rev. 10:1 - 11 shows that an angel brings this book of revelation to John, he eats it, and it becomes the material for his following visions. It is revealed in Rev. 19:9 - 10 and Rev. 22:8 - 9 that the angel is the instrumentality for the remaining visions (Rev.19: 9 - 10; 22:8 - 9). This book is given with complete organization. Every image contains deep meaning. The vivid order of the first verse demonstrates the chain of revelation. The Father gives to the Son, the Son sends his angel, the angel transmits the revelation by signs to John. The angel does not speak of himself, but of Christ. The divine voice speaks through the angel in Rev. 19:9 and 22:8.

John tells us of himself, *Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw* (Rev. 1:2). By telling *all things that he saw, he bare record* (witness). This is not referring to some past event, but to his present writing. In Rev. 1:5, Jesus is called *the faithful witness*. John is giving witness to what God says, and to what **The Faithful Witness** has witnessed of in his

earthly life. John stands as one with *the testimony of Jesus Christ*. All that Jesus testified of, regarding his Father, John serves as his witness. He is the witness of Jesus and Jesus is the witness of his Father.

In Rev. 1:3, a blessing is promised to those that read aloud, as well as those who hear it read and also keep the words of this prophecy. Although this has the appearance of being read only once to a congregation, the importance of this revelation would require much further study.

The *words of this prophecy*, in Rev. 1:3, are further explained in Rev. 22:6, 7, 9,10. John is placed among the Old Testament prophets in these last verses. Jesus gives to him scriptural images from the Old Testament prophets that are reborn into even greater meaning than the original images. John's prophecy puts him in the category of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. They are his brothers in prophecy. There is a vivid difference between what he received and what these Old Testament prophets foretold. He was given a collection of images from the Old Testament that was to be the final masterpiece of all prophecy.

For the time is at hand (Rev. 1:3b) means that it is now the time for the unfolding of these things to begin.

Rev. 1:4 - 8

1: 4

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;

1: 5

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,

1: 6

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1: 7

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.

1: 8

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.

In Rev.1: 1 - 3, John tells us that the book he writes is a revelation. He starts, with verse 4, to make his book a pastoral letter also. The seven churches that John addresses were probably under the apostle Paul's care previously. They are now John's responsibility. The number seven is used over fifty times in this book. Its usage in the Bible seems to indicate perfection or completeness. We can see this thought in the seven days of creation, seven days of the week and by the sacrifices in the Old Testament, many times, consisting of sevens. These seven churches were historical and literal. They also were to represent seven periods of the church.

As was common with the apostles, John makes his greetings Christian by using *Grace unto you, and peace*. Grace is God's unmerited favor and peace is his comforting presence. This common greeting in the epistles (I Cor.1: 1 - 3) was usually followed by *from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. With some changes, this form of greeting remains consistent in most epistles.

John uses this same form, but substitutes *him which is, and which was, and which is to come* and *the seven Spirits before his throne* to replace *God our Father*. The second part of the greeting, and *our Lord Jesus Christ* is replaced with *Jesus Christ*, without the title *Lord*. The title *Lord* finds its replacement in three other titles, and the third title is the nearest replacement to it.

John's usage of *him which is* for the title God our Father is taken from Ex. 3:14 & 15. In Exodus, Moses is told that God's name is **I AM THAT I AM**. **I AM** is given to Moses as the explanation of the Hebrew tetragram, JHVH (the unpronounceable name of God). When given vowels, this tetragram is JeHoVaH. In the King James translation, every time the Hebrew word JHVH is used it is translated LORD with all capitals. This was done to distinguish it from another Hebrew word Adonai, which is also translated Lord, but with only the first letter capitalized. The explanation of **I AM** for JeHoVaH is derived from the Hebrew verb to be, which is **havah**. In Exodus 3:14, the divine name is in the first person form (**I AM HE WHO IS**), whereas everywhere else, JeHoVaH is expressed in the third person form (**HE IS**). The Jewish people came to understand all the tenses of the verb to be as expressive of God's being.

The present tense *is* was put first in Rev.1: 4 because **HE IS**. The present that expresses God is also linked with the past and the future. Therefore, we would expect to see **is, was, and shall be**. But that is not so. We find John using **is, was, and is to come**. We think he should be using the future tense of the verb to be (**the about to be**). Instead, he writes **is to come**. Why does the Spirit use **is to come** or **the coming one**? It is because the dominant theme throughout this book will be God, and his kingdom, are both COMING. God's anointed King COMETH with clouds (Rev.1: 7) and will reign until the last enemy is destroyed. When the last enemy is conquered, then *God himself shall be with them* (Rev.21: 3). Then, he that **is, was, and is to come**, will have **COME! ALLELUIA!**

In Rev.1: 4 *the seven Spirits which are before his throne* is joined with the description of he who sits on the throne (he who is, was, and is to come). In view of the Spirit of God being complete or perfect, it is spoken of as seven Spirits. The image of *seven Spirits* is drawn from

Isaiah 11:2. The mention of the Spirit in plurality is meant to depict the gifts of the Spirit. No doubt, Isaiah's text is the reason for the mention of seven Spirits in Rev.4: 5 and 5:6. God's Spirit can be communicated and distributed. Jesus was anointed with the Spirit (Acts 10:38). In St. John 3:34 we read, *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*. Jesus had the sevenfold Spirit. In Acts 10:38, we understand what is spoken of the Spirit, God, and Christ, as is mentioned in Rev. 1:4. God is the **Anointer**, Christ is the **Anointed** and God's Spirit is the **Anointing**.

Another way to help our understanding of the seven Spirits of God is to see that Jesus has the seven Spirits, which are plural (Rev.3: 1), and he speaks to the seven churches, which are plural (Rev.1: 11). But to each church he says, *hear what the Spirit (singular) saith unto the churches* (Rev.2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). We can see that God's Spirit is his divine life that proceeds from him and can be given to others. His Spirit can be described as one or many. Although the Spirit of God is one (singular) with respect to God's nature and source, it is many pertaining to its capacity to be distributed. John's connection of God's throne with the **seven** Spirits is most fitting in preparation for the mention of the **seven** churches receiving **seven** promises.

The second part of this greeting (Rev.1: 5) that is modeled after the greeting in apostolic letters gives the name of Jesus and the title of Christ, but leaves out Lord (Rev.1: 5). What we do find, instead of the title Lord, are **three other titles**.

Rev.1: 5 gives the first title as *the faithful witness*. John uses an image from Psalms 89:37, where the sun is called a faithful witness. Jesus, as the light (sun) of the world (John 8:12), is also a faithful witness. He then uses an image from verse 27, in this messianic Psalm of God's firstborn, but fuses it together with Christ's resurrection. He is the first to be raised from the dead, never to die again (Col.1: 18).

The title of first begotten from the dead helps us to see the historical order that is established in these **three titles**. In his earthly life, Jesus was God's (1) faithful witness. In his resurrection, he became the (2) first begotten from the dead. At God's right hand (Acts 2:34 - 36), he became (3) the prince of the kings of the earth.

The third title is also taken from Psalms 89:27. The future king (their prince), that is to come from David, is *higher than the kings of the earth*. This third title (prince) in Rev.1: 5 would come the closest to replacing the title Lord, which was left off of Jesus Christ in this greeting.

Imagery drawn from the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt supplies the material for Rev.1: 5b and 6a. Since **Jesus is the firstborn from the dead**, John sees **other firstborns from the dead** (Col. 1:18; 3:1; Hebrews 12:23) that have been saved by the **Great Passover Lamb's Blood** (Ex.12: 1 - 13:1, Cor.5: 7). The imagery of Christ's blood washing away our sins prepares us for seeing him in Rev. 5:6 as the slain Lamb.

After we (the firstborns) have been delivered from Egyptian bondage (sin) by the blood of the Lamb (Rev.1: 5b), the Lamb (in Rev.1: 6a) then makes us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father. The image of a royal priesthood (Ex.19: 6) was given to Israel after they were delivered from Egypt. The Church enjoys sitting together with him in heavenly places now (I Pet.2: 9; Eph.2: 6). But our greater Moses (Jesus) is coming to bring ultimate deliverance for all of his firstborns, and this royal priesthood shall take on eternal enthronement.

Rev.1: 6b gives a closing praise to Jesus that is similar to a praise given to the Father in Gal.1: 5. This shows that praise and glory are to go to the Father and the Son. Since Jesus has exalted us as a royal priesthood unto God (I Pet.2: 9), we should exalt him forever and ever.

Closing praises in the Bible end with an Amen. Rev.1: 6b ends with an Amen also. We see in Rev. 22:20, an Amen followed by *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*. We saw, in Rev.1: 4, that God our Father was called *which is to come*. This is to prepare us for the **overall theme** in the book of Revelation that **God will come and be sovereign over all**.

He will reign first of all through his anointed king (Jesus). Luke 4:24 - 30 reveals that Jesus is the fulfillment of the anointed king. The anointed king, whom God will install, will rule with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:2 & 6). Jesus will share this (ruling with a rod of iron) with those that overcome. (Rev.2: 26, 27). In Acts 2:30 - 36, Peter makes it clear that Jesus is the **christened (or anointed)** king mentioned in Psalm 2:2 & 6 (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9).

Peter also points out that Jesus is the fulfillment of the second Lord that is enthroned at the right hand of the first LORD in Psalm 110:1. Jesus shares this enthronement with those that overcome (Rev.3: 21). Peter states that **God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ** (Act 2:36). We can see that those that overcome share in both these aspects of his enthronement.

As Christ is seated at the LORD'S right hand and rules with a rod of iron, he will share the seat and rod with those that overcome. In I Cor. 15:24 - 28, Paul also shows Jesus as fulfilling the second Lord's role in Psalm 110:1. In Psalm 110:1, the first LORD (the Father) puts all enemies under the second Lord's (the Son's) feet (his enemies are under his feet, as God makes them his footstool).

In I Cor. 15:26 - 27, Paul joins Psalm 8:5 together with Psalm 110:1. *He (God) hath put all things under his (Christ) feet*. The image of all things put under Christ's feet (I Cor.15: 27) is from Psalm 8:5. Paul marks Jesus as the beginning fulfillment of **man/son of man** (Psalm 8:4).

Christ will share in being crowned with glory and having all things put under his feet with many sons of God (Heb.2: 10). **It is also very important to see that God (the Father) is destined to be all in all" (I Cor.15: 28)**. According to I Cor. 15:24 & 28, after the Son has reigned (this includes those that overcome and who reign with him) and all enemies are put under his feet, that *the Son delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father* (I Cor.15: 24). **God will not accomplish his coming sovereignty UNTIL redeemed Mankind is enthroned with the Son at the Father's right hand**.

The words of Hebrews 2:8 points to where we are in this overall theme of God's coming sovereignty. **BUT NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM**. This comment in Hebrews is made about certain verses that are quoted from the eighth Psalm. The **HIM** that all things are not put under is referring to **man / son of man** in Psalm 8:4.

The eighth Psalm reflects the Genesis story. God gave Adam dominion over all the earth (Gen.1: 26). Through disobedience, Adam lost dominion for Mankind (Gen.3: 17 - 19). We therefore do not see all things put under man's dominion. However, God has destined Man *to rule the world to come* (Heb. 2:5).

The man / son of man of Psalm 8:4 is **not mankind in general**. The writer of Psalm 8 has a **specific community** in mind when he refers to **man/son of man** (v.4). Verse one of Psalm 8 speaks of people who acknowledge The LORD (Jehovah) as **their Lord (the nation of Israel)**. These are **opposite** to those in verse two of Psalm 8 who are **the LORD'S enemies (Gentile nations)**.

To the psalmist, the nation of Israel was thought to be a partial or temporary fulfillment of the **man/son of man** in Psalm 8:4. The chief representative of Israel was the Davidic king. This Psalm has an inscription to king David. The dominion of king David and his successors symbolized for Israel their lofty calling of ruling the nations (the other nations that were Jehovah's enemies - Psalm 8:2).

The glory, honor and dominion that Adam lost were partially or temporarily restored in the nation of Israel. As Adam was called God's son (Luke 3:38), so also the nation of Israel (Ex. 4:22) and king David's son (I Chron.17: 13) were called God's sons. As Adam disobeyed the commandment and lost his dominion from paradise, so also Israel and their king transgressed God's law and lost their kingdom, glory and honor.

God's son (Israel and her king) was driven, like Adam, from their paradise (the promised land). Punishment for disobedience came to Israel in the form of captivity in Babylon. Israel and her king failed to have all things put under their feet, and we see that all things are still **not** put under the feet of **man/son of man**.

In Hebrews 2:9, we do see a representation of Mankind returned to Adam's place of dominion. **BUT WE SEE JESUS, ... FOR THE SUFFERING OF DEATH, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR** (Heb.2: 9). Jesus has been crowned with glory. This happened at his ascension into heaven.

Jesus is the **new Adam** (I Cor.15: 45). In Christ there is a **new creation** (II Cor.5: 17). **Dominion** belongs to this **new Man** (Eph.2: 15; Mat.28: 18). God has a plan for bringing Mankind back into DOMINION again. In Romans 8:9 we are told of Jesus *that he might be the firstborn among many brethren*.

God intends to have many sons who will reign with His Dear Son. They are to be *Conformed to the image of his Son* (Rom.8: 29). *As many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God* (John 1:11). Romans 8:17 says *if children, then heirs; heirs of God (sons), and joint heirs (brethren) with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*.

Notice the similarity between Hebrews 2:10 and what is stated in Romans 8:17, *for it became him (the Father), in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*. The plan is clear! The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings and is now crowned with glory. We that have received Jesus are sons also. We are brethren and will share in his glory if we suffer together with him.

This is where we are in God's plan. His dear Son, having suffered from civil power and false religion, has been enthroned in glory. His brethren (those that overcome) who will share in his glory must therefore also suffer from civil and religious powers until the time of his coming. The message of Revelation to his brethren is be patient in tribulation. Although he is now enthroned, he is waiting for his brethren to be seated with him in glory (Rev. 3:21).

This period of waiting for the saints to share the kingdom is imaged from Daniel 7:1 - 28. This is a long-term prophecy that shows **the Son of man** coming with clouds to receive glory and dominion. It states that eventually all people, nations and languages, should serve the Son of man (Dan.7: 13 & 14).

Psalm 8:1 - 8 furnishes the imagery that Dan. 7 later builds upon. Daniel is being told that although Israel and their king failed to fulfill the promise of Psalm 8, **all is not lost**. Daniel knows only too well the deplorable condition Israel is in. The people of Israel are captive in a strange land. The successors to David's throne are in chains. Daniel sees, in vision, that Israel (God's son) and her king (also pictured as God's son) are under the control of a Gentile world power (Babylon) pictured as a lion (Dan.7: 3 - 4).

Daniel is given an encouraging vision. Even though Israel (God's son) has been banished from their garden (the Promised Land) and no longer has dominion over the beasts (Gentile powers), yet great hope exists. He sees the Son of man coming with clouds to receive a kingdom over all the earth. God's promise to put all things under the son of man's feet (Psalm 8:6) will still come to pass.

The prophecy of Dan. 7 is intended to show that Israel will continue under Gentile domination for a long period of time. Babylon will be replaced by other Gentile powers. Servants of the LORD will suffer under many more beasts (Gentile powers - Dan.7: 17).

Daniel 7 also depicts a horrible little horn on the fourth beast that makes war against the saints (Dan.7: 21). But wait! Who else does Daniel see? **The Son of man!** This war against the saints lasts until the Ancient of days comes and judgment is given to the saints, and they possess the kingdom (Dan.7: 22).

When the saints possess the kingdom, they take the little horn's dominion away and destroy him (Dan. 7:26). Daniel 7:27 states, *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 (rulers) shall serve and obey him*.

The imagery from Daniel 7 can be seen in Rev.1: 5 - 7. Notice the comparison between what Daniel sees and John sees. In Daniel the saints will possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18, 22 & 27). In Revelation the ones washed in the blood of the lamb will be kings (Rev. 1:6a). *Glory and dominion* are given to the Son of man in Daniel (Dan. 7:13 - 14). So also, glory and dominion are given to Jesus (Rev. 1: 6b) who is the prince of the kings of this world (Rev. 1:5b). In Daniel 7:13, the Son of man came with the clouds to receive a kingdom. In Rev. 1:7, it is stated, *Behold, he (the Son of man - Rev. 1:13) cometh with clouds* to receive dominion (Rev. 1:6b).

The image of the Son of man coming with clouds to receive an everlasting kingdom that rules over all must be understood like other symbols of his Church. The Church had a beginning on the day of Pentecost following his resurrection. It experienced great power and glory.

Slowly this great Church suffered a loss of this glory. The Woman of Rev. 12 is a similar symbol to the Son of man and clouds. The Two Witnesses of Rev. 11 picture this also. As the Woman is to return from the wilderness and the Two Witnesses stand up again, so also does the Son of man return with a great cloud of witnesses. There was a manifestation of the Woman, the Two Witnesses and the Son of Man in the time of the first Church and there will be another manifestation of them prior to his literal return.

The Son of man came with a cloud of witnesses in that early Church (Hebrews 12:1). That cloud of witnesses testified of the Faithful Witness (Rev. 1: 2&5). In the days of their testimony (Isa. 8: 16; Rev 11: 7) during the first century, the cloud of witnesses was so great that it brought a great rain of God's Spirit. Through apostasy, the cloud diminished and there was a drought that took place.

The ancient image of clouds, rain and drought is drawn from Elijah's time (1 Kings 16 – 19). Under the idolatrous leadership of Ahab and Jezebel (Rev. 2: 20) there was a drought in Israel that lasted three and a half years (Dan. 7: 25; Luke 4: 24; Jam. 5: 17; Rev.11: 2, 3, 9, 11; 12: 6, 14; 13: 5). At the end of three and a half years of drought, Elijah's servant saw a little cloud rising up out of the sea like a man's hand. Elijah recognized that this cloud would bring a great rain. In Rev. 1: 7, Elijah's little cloud (1 King 18: 44), which became clouds (1 King 18: 45) and Daniel's clouds (Dan. 7: 13) are reborn into a new shape.

Elijah pictures the Church, fleeing into the wilderness from the cruel persecution of Jezebel (an idolatrous power - Rev. 2: 20; 12: 6). The three and a half years (James 5:17 & Luke 4:25) without rain are the same as the three and a half times of persecution, mentioned in Daniel 7:25. These two Old Testament time frames are used in the book of Revelation to picture a false religious power persecuting the true Church (Rev.11: 2, 3; 11; 12: 6, 14; 13:5).

The appearance of a little cloud like a man's hand is the signal to Elijah of a great rain coming (1 Kings 18:41 - 45). This cloud like a man's hand pictures a cloud of witnesses that will bring rain (a great outpouring of God's Spirit - Acts 2:17; Joel 2: 23 & Zech. 10: 1).

The cloud like a man's hand is a type of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Five official gifts of the ministry match the five fingers on the hand (Eph. 4:11). In Jude 1:12, it is stated of false ministers that they are clouds without water, carried about of winds (see Eph 4:14 for winds as doctrines). In Proverbs 25:14, a false gift is likened to clouds without rain. This little cloud like a man's hand pictures a true ministry (representing the Son of man – 2nd Cor. 5: 20) being gathered together as clouds that will bring a great rain of God's Spirit.

Jesus and his Church are signs (Isa. 8: 18; Heb. 2: 13 & Rev. 12: 1). The sign of the Son of man was in that first great cloud of witnesses. As the great cloud of witnesses diminished, so also did the sign of the Son of man. The story of Elijah's little cloud becoming many clouds with a great rain, pictures the sign of the Son of man returning in another great cloud of witnesses (Mat. 24: 30).

When he returns in a great cloud of witnesses, *every eye shall see him* (Rev. 1:7). This image is taken from Isaiah 40:5 *the glory (the cloud) of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together*. All flesh seeing the glory of the LORD was fulfilled in a cloud of witnesses (the apostolic Church of the first century). Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus came into his kingdom (John 14:28; Mat.16: 28). The first century Church was called the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27 & Acts 9:5). As Isaiah 40:5 announced, all flesh saw the glory of the LORD manifested in his early Church. So also, near the end of the Gentile times, a cloud of witnesses, filled with the glory of the Lord, will manifest Christ (Son of man) to all flesh again (Mat.24: 30). All nations will see the Son of man, manifested in a restored Gentile Church that is going forth in Jesus' name.

Only those that look for him will see him when he literally returns (Heb. 9: 28). To be looking for him is to be watching and praying. The majority of this world will not know that he has returned and caught away those that have overcome (who are alive and remain - 1 Thes.4: 13 - 17). He will snatch away his jewels like a thief in the night and most people will not even know what happened (Rev.16: 15; 3:3; Mat.24: 43; Luke 21:27).

Every eye that sees Jesus coming with clouds of witnesses is a way of picturing all peoples of this world seeing Jesus in a ministry and in a people. In Rev.14: 6, we are told of an angel (ministry) preaching the Gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This ministry will attract attention worldwide. Mark 16:20 will be repeated, *They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*. Outstanding miracles will catch the eyes of the world.

As this cloud of witnesses preaches unto the whole world, the eye of the Jew will also see it, and that is what is pictured by the phrase *they also which pierced him* (John 19:30 - 37 & Zech.12: 10 - 14). John fuses the same images from Dan. 7:13 & Zech. 12:10 - 14 together as Matt. 24: 30 does. The Jews were responsible for him being pierced (Act 2: 23 & 36).

Dan. 12:1 depicts the nation of Israel as going through a time of trouble (Joel 3: 1 – 2; Zech. 14: 2). God will deliver them (Dan. 12: 1; Rom. 11: 26) because they will look on him (Jesus) whom they have pierced and they will mourn for him (Zech. 12:10). When it looks like the nations of the world are set to destroy Israel, the Jews will consider that all this evil has come upon them because of what they did to their brother Joseph (Christ - Gen.42: 21).

Hosea 5:15 states that God departed from Israel because of their rejection of his Son and he would wait until they acknowledge their offense. In their affliction they will seek him. They will heed the plea of Hosea 6:1 and return to the Lord and his anointed that they pierced.

The Israelites did not believe that God had sent Jesus. As they are afflicted by the Gentile nations, they will see a Gentile Church mightily used by God. The Jews will finally see the Son of man coming to them in the form of a Gentile Church.

Jesus said they would not see him anymore until they said blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord (Mat. 23: 39). They will recognize a Gentile Church blessed of Jehovah like their patriarchs of Old Testament fame. The Lord's anointed (Son of man) that **they turned their backs on** (Isa. 30: 21) will finally be seen by them in this great cloud of witnesses. Israel's blindness will end when God has reaped the Gentile harvest (Rom. 11: 25).

Israel will not be the only one suffering affliction at the end of the Gentile age. Luke 21:24 & 25 explains that there will be *distress of nations with perplexity*. Zech. 12:10 & 11 shows great mourning in Israel, but the mourning of Israel is added to in Rev. 1:7 (*All the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*).

Weapons of mass destruction will put fear in the hearts of men. The nations will have the desire in their hearts to destroy Israel (Joel 3:1 - 2). In Joel 3:2, the valley of Jehoshaphat is described as the place where God will judge the Gentile nations. This is an obvious comparison to II Chron.20: 23, where the Israelites (pictures Jews that have received their Messiah) are in danger of destruction from other nations (Ammon and Moab pictures Gentile powers), and their ally, Mt. Seir(pictures false religion). King Jehoshaphat and all of Israel do not have to fight. God confuses the enemy and they destroy each other. Israel will be spared. Ammon and Moab (Gentile powers) destroy Edom (false religion) and then destroy each other (Rev.17: 12 - 18).

We know from Rev.3: 10 & 11 that those that overcome, who help to make up these clouds of witnesses, will be caught away at Christ's literal return. The purpose of his return is to set them in his throne with him (Rev.3: 21). When the rod of iron is brought down on this beast power that deceives the whole world (Rev.12: 9; 13: 4; 20:3), all of those that overcome will share that same honor with Christ (Psalm 2:9; Rev.2: 26 & 27; 3:21; Psalm149: 5 - 9). The mourning spoken of in Zech. 12 appears to be true repentance by Israel. The wail of all kindred of the earth is similar to Rev 6:15 – 17, where there is a gnawing distress with a recognition that it is too late to repent.

Rev.1: 7 ends with *Even so, Amen*. This is a stronger Amen than in Rev. 1: 6. It is a stronger statement of desiring Christ's kingdom to come. The Father's statement, which follows the Amen, is a guarantee that it **will** come to pass (Rev 1:8).

In Rev.1: 8, the Father calls himself *Alpha and Omega*. In Greek, these two words are the same as A and Z in our English alphabet. He is the *beginning and the ending* of all. The Father is the Almighty. He is the All-Sovereign. He is *all in all* (I Cor.15: 28).

Rev.1:9 - 20

9

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.

John was a fellow-citizen in the kingdom of Jesus, patiently enduring persecution. Patmos was a small island that served as prison for John. John was exiled because he gave witness to the testimony that Jesus gave of what his Father had spoken. Everything John does is in Jesus.

10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

John found himself in the Spirit on the day of the week that came to be known as the Lord's-day (Sunday). Christ was raised from the dead according to the type in Lev.23: 11, the day after the Sabbath (Sunday, first day of the week). In Mark 16:9, Christ "was risen early the first day of the week" (Sunday). Acts 20:7 states that when the disciples met for a service, it was on the first day of the week (Sunday).

The Spirit causes John to hear a voice. The voice behind him demonstrates that John was not looking for this vision. He was as surprised as Mary was at the garden tomb (John 20:16). The image of a voice like a trumpet is similar to the call Moses received from a trumpet, to come up into the mount to receive revelation from God (Ex.19: 13, 19).

11

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.

The voice John hears directs him to write the things that he sees to the seven churches. He recognizes the voice as coming from a divine person. He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. It is Jesus. In Rev. 3:14, he is the beginning (first) of the creation of God and the last (Amen). The order of the churches reflects how a messenger might deliver the letter, starting at Ephesus and making a circle.

12

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Zech.4: 1 - 2 is clearly the image drawn upon here. Without a doubt, the early Christians viewed this vision as part of the messianic visions in Zechariah. It was only too easy to see the high priest, Joshua (Greek-Jesus), as picturing Jesus Christ. Once again, the ancient image in Zechariah is reshaped to express an even greater truth in the book of Revelation than it did in Zechariah. Zechariah sees one candlestick. It

is the single candlestick in Jerusalem's temple. This candlestick has seven lamps fed from seven branches. John sees seven candlesticks, not one.

13

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

The change in the application of the image continues. In Zechariah, the candlestick of the temple gets **center place**. There is an olive tree growing on the right and on the left of this single candlestick. Golden oil flows from each tree through golden pipes, to provide oil, feeding the seven lamps. The two oil-trees stand for the two anointed branches, Joshua (Greek-Jesus), the **high priest** (Ex, 30:30), and Zerubbabel, **the prince** (II Sam. 5:3). The **anointing** for their office provides needed **oil** for the candlestick. The **candlestick** stood for **the word of the Lord**, which encouraged them to continue building the temple Zech. 4:6). The **word of the Lord**, through these **two anointed offices**, gave **the light** that was needed.

The **center place** in John's vision is **Jesus**, our **Priest** and **Prince** (Heb. 6:20 - 7:1). He is in the midst of the seven candlesticks (the churches). Christ's clothing is depicting his priesthood (Ex. 28:1 - 8; Ezk. 44:17), but angelic appearances are also portrayed this way (Dan.10: 5). The reason angelic characteristics can image divinity is that they come with a message from God. They represent God, not themselves. In describing Christ with angelic images (Dan. 10:6), it may be that what John understands is: this is the angel of Christ's presence (Rev. 1:1), as Christ is the Angel of God's presence (Isa. 63:9). Jesus is doing his priestly duty. He is making sure the lamps are trimmed and bright (Ex. 30:7). Being in the **midst** symbolizes **his presence** in the churches (Matt. 28:20; 18:20). These seven churches represent seven stages of the Church. This represents that Jesus will always be with the Church. He is watching over his churches with scrutiny. He is ready to reprove, punish, reward and protect.

The description of one like unto the Son of man is reaching back to Rev. 1:7. We see the image of the Son of man (Jesus) coming to the Ancient of days (The Almighty). This is drawn from Dan. 7:13.

14

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

The description given of the Son of man (head & hair white) is like that of the Ancient of days in Dan. 7:9. This is not confusing if we recognize that, at times, the Almighty is described like the Son of man (Ezk. 1:26). They are not the same persons, but they are Father and Son. It is no surprise that they share characteristics. His head and hair white like wool and snow depicts his purity (Isa. 1:18).

The description of Christ's divine majesty is drawn from several Old Testament images (Ezk 1:27; Dan.10: 6). The fire that is in his eyes reflects judgment (Rev. 2:18 & 23). He has divine knowledge, which pierces to the innermost secrets of the heart. Moses said, the Lord is a consuming fire, a jealous God (Deut.4: 24). As Jesus looks over the periods of the seven churches, he has the ability to see the faithful and the apostate for generations to come.

15

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Dan. 10:6 supplies the images to illustrate Christ's divine majesty. His feet were like fine brass that burned in a furnace. This image causes one to remember the three Hebrews in the furnace. The fourth man walking in the fire with them was the Son of God (Dan. 3:25). Jesus went through the fire and became its master (Heb. 4:15). Zech. 3:2 supplies the image of Joshua (Greek-Jesus) as a brand plucked from the fire. Feet as fine brass, tried in the fire was an image established in Ezk. 1:7 and Dan. 10:6. Normally, gold is spoken of as tried in the fire (Rev. 3:18). His feet are brass, in continuance of the established image, but they are **fine** (a very precious mixture), not at all common. Feet like brass is also imaged in Micah 4:13. The Israelites were to tread down their enemies in judgment. Jesus is the appointed judge of the world (Acts 17:31). He possesses the ability to tread down all opposition.

The image of his voice like many waters depicts the mighty voice that spoke the worlds into creation. His great voice will raise the dead (John 11:43 - 44). We that believe and have received his Spirit have already heard his mighty voice (John 5:25).

16

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

We are told, in Rev. 1:20, that the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. This is the ministry, who watch carefully over the churches. They cannot be third heaven messengers. Consider the following: What need would an angel from heaven have of a letter from

John here on this earth? How would John get that letter to third heaven? The contents-of the letters are wholly concerned with people here on earth in the churches.

The word angel means messenger. The context reveals whether it is a messenger sent from third heaven or a man on this earth sent by God (Isa. 42:19; Acts 13:3 - 4). In Gal. 4:14, we are told that the Galatians received Paul as an angel of God on this earth, not as from heaven (Gal. 1:8). Malachi calls men on the earth messengers of God (Mal. 2:7 & 3:1a - John 1:6). Malachi also calls Jesus a messenger (Mal. 3:1b).

Paul marks ministers here on this earth as angels (II Cor.11: 13 - 15 & 23). We should notice that the word angel is found in the title *Evangelist* (Eph. 4:11). Jesus holds his ministry in his right hand. In the Bible, the right hand depicts special honor and protection of God (I Kings 2:9; Psalm 138:7). Jesus upholds and guides his ministry with his right hand. This represents a true ministry as compared to a false ministry.

The sharp two-edged sword in his mouth is an image from Isa. 11:4. This not only represents the word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb 4:12), but from Isa. 11:4, we see his hand of judgment also (Isa. 49:2; Rev. 2:16; 19:15 & 21).

Christ's countenance shining as the sun in his strength is imaged from Mal. 4:2. Jesus marked himself as Malachi's Sun of righteousness in John 8:12. Christ was spoken of as a great light (Matt. 4:15; Isa 9:1 - 2). Jesus is the True light (I John 2:8). From I John 2:8, we can see that John is thinking of Gen. 1:14 - 18. The Moon (Old Testament) ruled over the night (darkness).

At Christ's resurrection, the darkness and the moon faded away as the Sun of righteousness arose. The Moon does not give a true light. It is a reflected light, which emanates from the light of the sun. There is a face of a man in the Moon, so to speak. That face is Jesus. All of the Old Testament was merely a shadow of good things to come and not the very image (Heb. 10:1). Christ is the express image of God's person (Heb. 1:3). Compared to Jesus, all other prophets were as stars twinkling in the heavens. The Law was a pale Moon. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines from the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6).

He, whose countenance shines as the sun, is in the midst of the seven churches. The seven churches as seven candlesticks are circled around their Sun. The seven stars twinkle in his right hand, but the brightness of the sun shines out from his face. The seven candlesticks and their stars orbit around their Sun. The churches impart a candlelight, compared to the Sun providing the sunshine in their midst. Jesus said the Church would be the light of the world (Mat. 5:14).

The Gospel of John tells us that John the Baptist was a burning lamp that gave witness to Jesus (John 5:33 - 35). Jesus is the True Witness (Rev. 3:14). He is the True Light (I John 2:8; John 8:12). All other witnesses compared to him are burning lamps. The burning lamps as witnesses of Jesus shine around the Sun, the True Witness (John 1:4 - 9). They shine brightly, but he outshines them all!

We see in Rev. 1:13 the imagery from Zech. 4, that seven candlesticks are watched over by Jesus, their high priest. He serves in his dual office as prince and priest. In his office as priest, he makes sure that the lamps are receiving enough oil and giving sufficient light. As the Sun among the seven lamps, he is the True Witness among the seven witnesses. The two offices of prince and priest are symbolized by the two oil-trees in Zech. 4. The two oil-trees symbolize Jesus as the True witness in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament (John 5:39 - 47; 1 Pet. 1:10 - 12). The oil, from both the Old and the New Testament, produces the light of the seven lamps (Psalm 119:105).

The two oil-trees of Zech. 4 stood for the two anointed offices of prince and priest. In John's vision, the Anointed One (Jesus) gives his oil to the seven lamps. He gives the lamps oil by granting them understanding of the Old and New Testaments, which are the two oil-trees (Luke 24: 7, 32, 44 - 45). Peter uses a similar thought in I Pet. 1:12. The Spirit of the Anointed One (Jesus) was on the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament preachers were anointed with the Spirit as well.

17

And when I saw him, I 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:

The startling appearance of Jesus with a sword coming out of his mouth and his brilliant Sunshine dazzling John's eyes caused him to lose his strength. To pass out like he did and then be brought back to himself is similar to what happened to Daniel (Dan. 8:17 - 18; 10:8 -10).

By laying his right hand upon John, he symbolized his great commission to service. Jesus is raising John up for a great task. In this book of Revelation, John will be given new expressions of the ancient images. They will bring forth even greater truths. John is told not to fear. These ancient images will be handled by the **First** word of God and by the **Last** word of God. He is the Beginning of what God has to say and the Amen (Rev.3: 14).

18

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.

When Jesus touched John and raised him up, this symbolically leads into Christ's death and resurrection. When Jesus says he was dead and is alive for evermore, he is giving assurance to all that he is the resurrection and the life (Rev. 11:25). No one needs to fear death if they are **in him** that is alive for evermore (I Cor. 15:22).

Jesus holds the keys of hell and death. The image of holding keys is drawn from Isa. 22:22. He is over his Father's house and has the ability to grant entrance into life or leave one outside in death (II Tim. 1:10; Matt.16: 18 -19). More will be said regarding this image in Rev. 3:7. Since he has conquered hell and death, he provides the release from these to all that trust him (I Cor. 15:55; Acts 2:24 - 32).

19

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

John is instructed to write what he has seen. This is corresponding to what is said in Rev. 1:11 (what you see). These statements are conveying both what is now and what will take place later. In other words, write the things that you have already seen, the things that you are seeing right now and the things that you will be seeing. Since Jesus is Lord of all, there should be no fear. Record the realities that are happening now and what will be in the future. John is to be shown images that will portray the battle between good and evil, which is present in his time as well as in the future.

20

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

This mystery is something that was hidden from man's understanding and God has now revealed the secret (Eph. 3:3 - 5). When Jesus gave the understanding that the stars were angels, he expected John and other believers to immediately get it. Those first century believers knew that the word angel meant messenger. It was someone sent to carry a message. The context determined whether it was someone sent from heaven (God's abode) or a human sent here on the earth. These angels of the churches were human ministers, sent by God to give guidance to their respective churches. See comments on Rev. 1:16 for further explanation.

The symbol of a star meant a lamp in **heaven**. The seven lamps (candlesticks) on the **earth** each stood on their own base. The stars are in Christ's right hand. The seven lamps are standing on the earth surrounding Christ. The churches are burning lamps as they witness to the world of Christ (John 5:32 - 35). The earth is the realm in which the Church witnesses. Therefore, the seven lamps are seen as each based here on the earth.

The seven stars represent a more direct contact with Christ. They are seen in Christ's hand. We comprehend the Church being on earth and in heaven at the same time (Eph 1:3; 2:6; Col. 3:1 - 5; John 3:13). To be in Christ is to be in a heavenly place. The Church is not in third heaven (God's abode - II Cor. 12:2; Heb. 9:24). Since the stars (ministers) are those whom the message is addressed to, it demonstrates that Christ speaks to the Church through them (I Cor. 11:1 - 3). The stars (angels) are the ones that Jesus speaks these messages to, but the churches are the ones to whom the Spirit speaks.

Jesus is the high priest trimming the candlesticks. He sends the stars from his right hand to the candlesticks. The stars are his messengers (angels), sent to the churches. The stars (ministers) represent him to the churches (II Cor. 5:18 - 20; Luke 10:16). The candlestick does not trim itself. It does not provide its own oil. It stands there and burns according to how well it is maintained.

The stars are lights, similar to the candlesticks. Starlight is brighter than candlelight. They differ from each other in how they are maintained. Jesus holds the seven stars in his right hand. He watches directly over his stars. He is the only one in the vision who holds seven lamps (seven stars). He is the one that maintains their (stars) light. The seven candlesticks are each their own seven branched candelabra. The seven candlesticks are watched over by the stars (ministers). It is comparable to how the Chief Shepherd works through the under-shepherds to feed his flock (1 Pet. 5:1 - 4). As the stars (ministers) are one in Christ's hand, so also in this way, the seven individual candlesticks (churches) experience their unity in Christ through the unity of the ministers in Christ's hand.

Introduction to the seven churches of Asia

In these messages to the seven churches of Asia, Jesus is revealing to John a panoramic view of the trials and triumphs of his church. Through Old Testament symbolic images, Jesus is telling his people to remain faithful despite long-term apostasy. John, therefore, definitely had these seven literal churches in mind while writing these things. On the canvas of John's Age, in the colors of his environment and by the circumstances that existed in his time, he proceeded to picture the future great crisis of the world. John was shown situations existing during his time, which corresponded with things that would unfold in the future. For example, not participating in Emperor worship was being punished. The crisis of his day corresponded with a greater crisis in the future; the forces of righteousness and unrighteousness pitted against each other.

In John's time, the Church was facing a devastating persecution by the civil power of Rome, under the leadership of the Caesars. The Spirit pictured beforehand, in these visions, that the future church would face similar persecution as what was transpiring in John's day. The Church, following John's day, would find itself violently opposed by each period's prevalent world power. The final outcome of this long term enmity would result in Christ having a company of redeemed to reign with him. Together they will put down all enemies, including death. It is important to keep this overall picture in mind when reading about these literal churches.

The current events in these seven churches serve as a foreshadowing of events that were to unfold down through history. Jesus was revealing in these seven messages that a great apostasy would develop among Gentile Christians. The messages also showed the continuation of a righteous seed. The true church did not stop with the apostles of the first century church. Unsung heroes and unknown soldiers have always continued on the scene, up to this very day. Jesus has never forsaken his church (the remnant), no matter how few they may have been in number.

In Isaiah 1:9, the prophet speaking of his nation, *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*. Paul the apostle quoted this verse in Romans 9:29 and used a seed [instead of] a very small remnant. This very small remnant or seed, in its initial application, was speaking of a natural seed of faithful Israelites. They continued to be true to God, notwithstanding other Israelites who would turn to pagan idolatrous worship and forsake the Lord. Isaiah's point is that Israel would have a continuing righteous seed or remnant, and not become extinct as Sodom and Gomorrah had.

Isaiah continues to show, in chapter 59:21, how this very small remnant would survive in Israel. The Lord said he would make a covenant with Israel. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. This represented the righteous remnant of Israel, those that stayed in covenant with the Lord, in spite of the unfaithfulness of others in Israel. Daniel and three other Hebrew men stayed true to God, even behind Babylon's cold walls of exile. They would not eat the King of Babylon's meat, nor drink his wine. They would not bow to the king's image, even if it meant being cast into the fiery furnace. These faithful Jews were sustained between the destruction of Solomon's temple and it's rebuilding. Daniel 1:17 said God gave *Daniel and his three brethren knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams*. Without the assistance of a reigning monarch or the security of a strong capital city, and even in the absence of a fully functioning temple with priests, this strong remnant remained faithful to the LORD.

Genesis 49:10 said, *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*. This was a promise that there would always be someone from the tribe of Judah giving the law, even from behind Babylon's walls. Judah's royal seed were Babylonish captives Dan. 1: 1 – 21). Daniel and his three Jewish brethren were of the *king's seed* (Dan. 1: 3 & 6).

The Gospel of Matthew records the kingly seed of Judah continuing on behind Babylon's walls. In Matthew 1:11 - 12, we are told that David's descendant, Zorobabel, was born in Babylon. He was the man that led them in the rebuilding of the temple. Matthew 1:1 - 16 gives the continued seed of Judah to Joseph (step-father of Jesus). Luke 3:23 - 38 continues the seed to Mary (mother of Jesus). Both were a continuation of the righteous seed of Judah. The pious people portrayed in Luke's first two chapters (Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Simeon and Anna) were the continuation of the faithful seed of the nation of Israel until Christ came.

There is a second application to Isaiah 1: 9 that pertains to a spiritual Israel and a spiritual tribe of Judah. Romans 2:28 - 29 lets us know *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*. These who made up the church became spiritual Jews through the new birth of the Spirit. Peter told the nation of Israel on the day the Church began that Jesus was now seated in the heavens on David's throne and had a kingdom of people here on the earth (Acts 2:29 - 36).

In Revelation 1:13 & 16, this one that is greater than King David is seen watching over the seven candlesticks (the churches) and holding the seven stars (ministers) in his right hand. This pictures Jesus offering words of encouragement and correction to spiritual Israel (Gentile churches). His prophetic words to these churches are intended to let his faithful remnant know that he is still in their midst (Matthew 28:20, *lo, I am with you always*).

He upholds a ministry in his right hand and still guides them, even behind Spiritual Babylon's walls. In Romans 9:6 Paul said, *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*. Jesus wants his spiritual tribe of Judah to take great comfort in knowing, that as it was with the natural nation of Israel, so will it be with the spiritual nation. A seed will be preserved. Leadership from his right hand will continue just like it did during many times of apostasy by the natural nation of Israel.

His message to each church period is I'll be there. I'll be there. I'll not only give you strength for the battle, but I'll be there to show you how to surmount each hurdle. He has promised to be with his church. His Church is empowered to overcome false apostles, spiritual apathy, false Jews, food and drink on idolatrous tables, invitations to spiritual fornication, fiery trials, the seductions of a false prophethood, a defiling environment, the hatred of the synagogue of Satan, and even a lukewarm spiritual existence.

Jesus expects those that overcome to be produced from each Church period. He knows that, at times, there will only be a very small remnant. However, he promises to be there, and to help them overcome. He promises to share his throne with those that overcome. In the future, they will assist him in putting down all enemies of God. With this spiritual remnant theme as a background, the purpose Jesus had in writing a letter to each of these churches is clearly visible.

The revelation given to Jesus tells us about evils coming against the churches and in what manner the churches would overcome them. The many visions following these seven messages were to provide encouragement to those persecuted saints. Knowledge of their membership in the heavenly synagogue was intended to strengthen saints against the synagogue of Satan. They were to know that Nicolaitanism within the Church was the powerful device of a false prophet. These accompanying visions gave the understanding that laxness and toleration of a lukewarm Church was equivalent to the drunken cup of Jezebel. The faithful remnant was to be assured that non-violent resistance to a pagan world empire would culminate in a victory over their enemies. Christ, with these faithful witnesses, would put down all enemies.

2: 1

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;

2: 2

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:

2: 3

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

2: 4

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

2: 5

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.

2: 6

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

2:7

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.

Rev 1:4 *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;*

Rev 1:11 *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.*

John is sending a *book* to the seven churches of that day in Asia. These seven churches were located in the western end of Asia Minor, near the Aegean and Mediterranean seas. These were not the only churches in the region. The Cities of Colosse (Col 1:2), Hierapolis (Col 4:13), and Troas (Acts 20:6 - 7) also had churches in that vicinity.

The seven churches were predominately Gentile churches. These churches had been under the care of Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul had been killed by this time, and the apostle John had begun watching over these Gentile churches. By the end of the first century, the Gospel was definitely progressing westward. Gentiles made up the majority of the church. Acts 13:46 reveals the Gospel turning to the Gentiles.

These seven literal churches were used by God to exemplify seven stages or time periods of the church in general. They represented certain characteristics present in each church of that day, as well as symbolizing the Church, down through the future, in seven stages. The churches in 1:11 are named as though a messenger, carrying this book, would start at Ephesus and make a circle arriving back at Ephesus.

The specific problems dominating each Church period do not cease with each time period. Rather, they continue to exist and worsen until a final judgment is given to all apostasy at the end of the Gentile times (Luke 21:24).

The angel of the Church in Ephesus pictures a ministry watching over the flock of God. Christ gives instruction to his first Church, which came into existence on the day of Pentecost, following his resurrection. Although the letter is written to the **leadership** of the first Church, in Rev. 2: 7, the Spirit is speaking to **the churches**. Praise and blame are given for either the brightness or the dimness of the lamp. A lamp does not care for itself. In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, it is not the lamps that receive the blame, but those in charge of the lamps. If the churches are as candlesticks, the illustration exhibits their performance as a witness (or illumination) unto the world. While both leadership (stars) and saints (the churches) share responsibility for the brightness or dimness of the candlestick, there is additional responsibility placed upon the ministers, as caretakers and overseers.

The candlesticks are referred to first in 1:12, and then mention is made of the stars in 1:16. In explaining the mystery of these, the order is reversed in 1:20 and 2:1. It is natural to first address that which has been mentioned last, thus reversing the order. This is the same pattern the Spirit uses to begin addressing each of the seven churches. Jesus reaches back to what was most recently mentioned in 1:19, 20 and repeats his command to write to the angels and churches.

Jesus knows completely and in detail our level of productivity. He describes himself as holding the angels (stars) in his right hand and walking in the midst of the candlesticks. Since he is walking in the midst of the candlesticks *he knows our works*. Our works are accomplished through *labor* and *patience*. This is relative to Galatians 6:9, where saints receive the instruction, *let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*. However, it is good that *they are not patient with or can't put up with them that are evil* (sinful Christians), but have tested and critically appraised men that claim to be apostles, and have proven them to be liars (I John 4:1, II Cor. 11:13 - 15).

Paul founded the Church of Ephesus (Acts 18 - 20). There was a great spiritual work done in Ephesus (Acts 20:17 - 38). It is interesting to note that to the Ephesian church, Christ commends works. It is true that Paul emphasized in Eph 2:8 - 10 not of works, but of grace we are saved. However, *after becoming saved by grace*, we are then admonished to go on unto good works.

The mention of false apostles is significant of the first century Church. There can only be **false** apostles if there are **true** apostles existing in a specified time. There was a true ministry, with the God given ability to detect and expose false leaders. This Church did not become weary or faint in their spiritual labor. Yet, even so, Christ speaks a rebuke to this Church. This angel or star had fallen from the heavens and left his first love. They had been loyal. Nevertheless, they were showing the initial signs of losing their spiritual glow, and their zeal for enthusiastic living was beginning to wane (II Tim 4:2-4, II Thes 2:7, Acts 20:29).

The natural city of Ephesus was known as the light of Asia. It was a great commercial center. It was also the center of Roman government in that province of Asia. So, correspondingly, this great Church was a light to all the world in the first century. This stage lasted from approximately 30 AD to 100 AD. Note, in Rev 2:4 & 5, the usage of first love and first works. This, along with the mention of apostles, indicates that this represents the first stage of the church. This is describing how they had left the devoted love they initially had for Christ (Rev 2:2). They had forgotten him days without number (Jer. 2:2). Although they still loved the Lord, their spontaneous glow was gone. First love hangs on every word of one's lover (Ex 19:8). They were simply not as thrilled with Christ as they once had been. They were admonished to repent, lest Christ remove the candlestick from their midst. He pleads with them to return to a vibrant relationship with him.

Although Christ had something against them, they also had something in their favor. They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which the Lord said he also hated. Historically, this group of people, called Nicolaitans, existed in John's time. The origin of the name could be Nicolous. It appears that they took a stand for compromise with paganism regarding idolatrous custom and sexual immorality (Rev 2:14 - 15). They practiced positive immorality in the name of spiritual liberty. They surrendered their Christian character in the name of false freedom. The Ephesian church was commended for not allowing the standards to be lowered. As time passed they were affected by this false teaching (II Pet 2:19).

Another definition of Nicolaitan is achieved by breaking down the word in the Greek. Niko meaning to conquer and Laos meaning the people or laity. It is representative of men who tried to establish an ecclesiastical order. Possibly, these may have been the false apostles who were attempting to establish an ivory tower separation between the leaders and the saints. Christ hates this. I Peter 5:3 explains that leaders are not to be lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock.

The exhortation to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches emphasizes that what Christ is saying is by the Spirit, and the Spirit is saying the same things Christ is recorded to be speaking (St John 16:13 - 15). This was a favorite expression of our Lord Jesus (Mat 11: 15 & 13: 9, 43). There are those who do not have ears to hear, since they are not born of the Spirit and consequently cannot understand the things of God (I Cor. 2:9-12).

Others who are born of the Spirit, but have lost their first love, are described as dull of hearing (Heb 5:11). They are not interested in what their Lord has to say. There are still others, born of the Spirit, who are not hearers only, but doers of the word. They hear and do the will of their Lord. This exhortation to hear refers to the great promise Christ is making to those that overcome. The first explanation given regarding the Nicolaitians seems to coincide with this promise of eating of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This appears to be a reward bestowed upon those not eating the forbidden fruit presented by the Nicolaitans. It parallels Eve being deceived by the serpent (compare verses 14 and 20).

Jesus of course is the tree of life (St John 15:15 & 6:57). As long as believers abide in Christ they have life (I Cor. 12:13). After being baptized into Christ, we are to walk in him (Col 2:6). Recognize that to walk in Christ and to walk in the Spirit are one and the same (Gal 5:16 - 17). Genesis 2:17 is similar to Romans 8:13. In Romans 8: 2 the two laws are comparable to the two trees in Paradise. Those that overcome are promised eternal life.

Paul explains paradise in II Corinthians 12:1 - 5. Paul is relating his own personal testimony in the third person. At the time of his conversion and Holy Spirit baptism, he was put in Christ (verse 2). Verse 4 tells of the same experience and uses the paradise imagery. We can understand this paradise vision better by looking back to the previous chapter (II Cor.11: 1 - 4).

In II Cor. 11: 2, Paul pictures himself as a father who has promised his daughter (the Corinthian church) to be married to Christ. He is concerned that the Corinthians will listen to another gospel, which will corrupt their minds from a wholehearted devotion to their espoused husband (Christ). False apostles, mentioned by Jesus to the church of Ephesus, existed in paradise (the Corinthian church in Christ). Paul uses the Garden of Eden imagery to draw a parallel between Eve, who was deceived by the serpent and these false apostles deceiving the church. The tree of life was available to Eve, along with the forbidden tree.

In Romans 8:2, we are told of two laws; the law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. The two laws represent the tree of life and the tree of good and evil. Romans 8:13 says, *if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*. As long as we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. This is how we eat of the tree of life. If we do not eat of the forbidden fruit, we will continue to eat of the tree of life, and live forever.

2: 8

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

2: 9

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.

2: 10

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

2: 11

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.

The Church in the city of Smyrna symbolizes the second time period of the Church. Jesus drops back to 1:17 - 18 to further describe himself as he that was dead, and is alive. In addition to the Spirit revisiting the first chapter's vision for this description of Christ, it utilizes the Ephesus message as a model for the next message sent unto Smyrna. The following phrases (in *italics*) are repetitively used as models:

*These things saith; I know thy works; which say they are;
and are not; he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit
saith to the churches; and to him that overcometh.*

False apostles, causing problems in Ephesus, prepare us for false Jews in Smyrna. These who are Jews in the natural sense are not true Jews in the spiritual sense. They are not part of the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5: 5, Rom 2:28 - 29).

The Roman Empire tolerated the religious practices of the natural Jews. Christianity was a new religion, however, and did not receive the umbrella of protection, which the Jewish synagogue enjoyed. The Jewish people denounced Christians as heretics and excluded them from the privileges and the acceptance they were enjoying within the Roman society. This brought tribulation and poverty upon the Christians.

The natural Jews blasphemed by declaring as false, the works of God amongst the followers of the Lion of Judah. Jews of the flesh were persecuting the spiritual Jews (Gal 4). They became adversary (Satan) to the LORD and his anointed. They continued to fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 2:2, to join together with the kings of the earth and be against the LORD and his anointed. Although the natural Jews' religion was accepted as legal by the Roman government, it was Satanic or ADVERSARY to Christianity.

As a result of being ostracized, the Christians were poor. Nevertheless, their Lord recognized them as rich in spiritual things. Jesus tells them not to fear any of these things. He was assuring the people that he was aware of the present, but was not defeated by it. He calls them to continue in steadfast trust.

The Devil was the Roman Empire, which launched a bloody persecution against the Christians under Emperor Diocletian. This tribulation started in 284 AD and ended in 313 AD. The last 10 years of this imperial persecution were the most severe. Christians were hunted in caves and forests. They were burned and thrown to wild beasts. There was a determined resolve to systematically eliminate Christians. They were not to fear. The same Jesus who had laid his hand on John, had raised him as from death, and said Fear not, (Rev 1:17) was the one who held the keys to all prisons. They were to be tested for 10 days, like Daniel and his companions (Dan 1:12, 14, 19). Soon afterward, (like Daniel) they were promised a higher promotion (a crown of life).

The promise made to those that overcome is, though you may face natural death (second death), your soul will not be hurt. Just like the three Hebrew children (Dan 3:25, 27) were thrown into the fiery furnace, they were not hurt. Death to this body will not hurt the soul, because Jesus has the keys to open the prison and loose our souls from the physical death. They are promised that no harm will come to their soul, just as the fourth man in the fire loosed the three Hebrew children and they were not hurt from their fire. The ones who threw them in were hurt. This shows there will eventually be a fire to destroy such persecutors. Those that overcome in this time of severe persecution, including being physically put to death, will be rewarded with the crown of life.

Peter spoke of Jesus in Acts 2:24, whom God had raised up having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be held by it. Therefore, since Jesus was loosed from death, he holds the keys to loose the soul of the faithful that overcome from the body of this death (Rom 7:24).

2: 12

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

2: 13

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.

2: 14

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 stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

2: 15

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

2: 16

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

2: 17

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.

The church of Pergamos pictures the third stage of the Church. The name Pergamos means *marriage*. The name shows that, starting with Emperor Constantine in 323 AD, many in the Church began a union with the Roman Empire. Constantine was responsible for ending the severe persecution of Christians. Constantine claimed to be a Christian and said that Christ had made him Emperor. He seemed to have an ulterior motive in advancing Christianity. He desired to weld his Christian and pagan subjects together into one people.

This third message of Christ models all the forms taken **by** the second message **from** the first message, with one exception. The statement ***them which say they are Jews and are not*** is dropped, and the phrase ***but are the synagogue of Satan*** is developed (Rev. 2: 9b). In this third stage, no longer is there merely a congregation of Satan fighting against the true Israelites, but a satanic throne (the uniting of civil and religious powers) is being established. Constantine promoted Christian leaders that were carnal. False religious forces obtained the backing of civil government. The kind of Christianity, which Constantine put his approval upon was a far cry from true Christianity. The first two stages of the Church were greatly persecuted. A diluted and watered down version of Christianity (the third stage) won the acceptance of the Roman Empire.

The synagogue of Satan (false Jews), now a watered down Christianity, grew and continued to persecute the Church (true Jews), pictured by Antipas. Antipas is representative of true Jews (the faithful remnant) who resisted the marriage of Church and State. The name Antipas means Anti (against)-pas (father). In other words, they were Christians who were against this ivory tower mentality of **exalting** Christian leaders.

This further developed what Paul spoke of in II Thessalonians 2:7 as *the mystery of iniquity*. This mysterious iniquity begins as *a falling away first* and advances to the man of sin that is revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (II Thes 2:3-4). Anti-pas, meaning against pa or father, was a class of Christians who were opposed to the setting up of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Jesus said in Matthew 23:9, 12, *call no man your father upon this earth: for one is your father which is in heaven...whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased*.

This church period initially prepared the way for this office of the *Man of Sin*. He would not originate the great *falling away* (apostasy), but he was to be the creation and culmination of this defection. He would continue and perpetuate this apostasy. The one called *FATHER* (Pas) would be a succession of men over a period of time, in a religious office of the same general character, determined to be exalted above all (Dan 7:8, 20, 21, 24, 25).

To Ephesus there was a play on the name Nicolaus. Niko (Victor), Laus (Laity), meaning Victor over the People. The Lord makes a second play on the name Victor over the People with the name Balaam (Rev. 2: 14). Ba (Master), Laam (Laity), meaning Master over the people and is shown as a false prophet (Matthew 23:10). A Balaam type leadership developed that was Lord's over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5: 3). They ruled over the flock with gain of money as their purpose (1 Pet. 5: 2 & II Pet. 2: 15).

It is no surprise that Christ takes as his title, from Revelation 1:15 - 16, *the two-edged sword*. This characteristic of a sword comes from the last words of the previous message, *shall not be hurt of the second death* (Rev 2:11). Therefore, Christ shows himself as the one who possesses the ultimate power of the sword. He is the one to fear (Matt 10:28). Many false leaders feared civil powers rather than God.

Nevertheless, in the Old Testament Balaam was slain by the sword when the Israelites sought revenge against the Midianites for seducing them at Baalpeor (Num. 31:8). Jesus utilizes the story of Balaam, in which a false prophet tries to curse the Israelites per King Balaak's request, but is stopped and is not successful (Num. 22 - 24). Balaam then gives advice to the Moabite women to seduce Israel and invite them to join in their lewd idolatrous feast.

The Balaam story fits the third stage of the Church. Balaam, as a false prophet, taught the people to cease from eating the miraculous manna (the true word of God) and eat pagan food (false doctrine) from idolatrous feast tables. This false prophet seduced Christians. Many in the Church joined themselves to the ways of the world and, in so doing, they were not faithful to Christ (II Cor. 11:1, 2).

Pergamos has taken up the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, as some in Ephesus had. Christ uses the same form of rebuke that he used in Ephesus. He tells them, *I have something against thee...repent...or else I will come unto thee* (Rev. 2: 4 – 5). In the Ephesian message, the threat is developed from the title of Christ (Rev. 2: 1). He who walks in the midst of the candlesticks will remove the Ephesian candlestick out of his place (Rev. 2: 5). So also here, from the title in Rev. 2: 12, he who has the sharp two-edge sword will make war (fight) on those of Pergamos with the sword of his mouth (Rev. 2: 12 & 16). He that has the sword will eventually fight against them, and will slay Balaam with that same sword (Rev 19:15, Numbers 31:8).

We should not be surprised to see the judgment of Christ's sword on Balaam and the Nicolaitans. In similar fashion, the angel of the Lord stood to slay ancient Balaam with a drawn sword in his hand (Numbers 22:31). Balaam would have been killed had his donkey not been wiser than him. The donkey (an unclean animal: the gentiles) speaking represents people during these Church periods that could see judgment coming. Warnings came from unexpected sources. That which had been a faithful support, but received no recognition, declared and forewarned of the danger ahead.

Balaam's donkey pictured these unknown supporters who saw trouble ahead for mad prophets and spoke up. Deceived leadership refused to listen to warnings from insightful voices (II Pet. 2: 15 & 16).

Christians becoming involved with idolatrous worship did not remain as a chaste virgin unto Christ. Rather, they joined themselves in spiritual fornication to civil ungodly connections. In Jewish tradition, Balaam became the evil foreshadowing of those who taught the Jews to engage in worship of idols, which included the eating of food and sacred prostitution. Balaam was responsible for combining the ways of the profane (Moab) with the ways of the holy (Israel).

Immoral practices and a mind that makes no critical distinctions produced believers that were not saints in the time of Pergamos. They were enamored with Constantine's lavish acceptance of the Church, and forsook their dedication to the Lord.

The mentioning of a false prophet (Balaam) together with an ungodly king (Balaak) provides us the necessary symbols for this developing apostasy, which begins in the time of Constantine. This practice of mixing religious and civil together will eventually develop into a world- wide religious power.

The promise of hidden manna is given to those who overcome or resist the wiles of Balaam (Mixing holy with profane - Numbers 25:18). Those that overcome did not forsake the manna (truth) of God's provision for idolatrous meats (Doctrines of Devils – I Tim 4:1). Therefore, it is only right that they should enjoy hidden manna as their reward. Although we are now eating of the tree of life (Jesus - St. John 6:30 - 63), we will eat of it more fully and perfectly as those that overcame in heaven (Rev 3:7).

We presently eat of spiritual manna that is on the table of shewbread in the holy place (Ex. 25: 30 & Lev. 24: 5 – 6). The hidden manna is awaiting us in the third heaven, which is pictured by the holiest of all. There is something reserved for those that overcome. It is pictured by the golden pot of manna that is hidden in the ark of the covenant (Ex. 16: 33 & 34 & Heb. 9: 4). The ark pictures the presence of God. Those that overcome will be blessed with knowing God face to face (1 Cor. 13: 12).

The manna was a small, white, round thing with an unknown name scattered on the ground (Ex 16:14, 15, 31). The white stone with an unknown name seems to be an echoing of the manna description. Jesus was once tempted to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3). He refused. He resisted the temptation with words from Deut. 8: 3 that had manna, bread and the word of God as a central theme. There seems to be some kind of an echoing image from this temptation that Jesus overcame.

In John's day, an accused man, being acquitted or justified, would have Greek jurors handing in a white stone to demonstrate that the accused had overcome the charges. Dan 7:22 shows judgment is given in favor of the saints. This heavenly ballot (white stone) is awarded to the victor with a new name written in it.

In Genesis 32:27 - 28, Jacob prevailed over the angel and had power with God. It was at this time that God changed his name from Jacob to Israel, meaning a prince of God. Those that overcome will be a prince with God and will be given this new name because he is now in a new relationship with God. Abraham and Peter were renamed (St. John 1:42). Isaiah 62:1 - 2 and 65:15 depicts God as renaming his servants. Those that overcome will be in a new relationship with God as princes. The new name that no one knows except the one that receives it, pictures the new relationship that each person that overcomes will have with God. Jacob not only had a new name after wrestling with the angel but a new relationship with God. So also, those that overcome will be princes with God and experience an even deeper relationship with him.

Revelation 2:18-29

Thyatira

538AD-1798AD

2: 18

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;

2: 19

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.

2: 20

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

2: 21

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

2: 22

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

2: 23

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 everyone of you according to your works.

2: 24

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.

2: 25

But that which you have already hold fast till I come.

2: 26

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

2: 27

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.

2: 28

And I will give him the morning star.

2: 29

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The church of Thyatira covers the fourth period of the Church from 538 AD to the 16th century. It represents what is historically referred to as the Dark Ages. The concept of a worldwide religious political empire is developed from Pergamos.

Jesus reaches back to the very first piece of his model vision, in Rev. 1:13 - 15, and **changes one like unto the Son of Man to the Son of God**. The change shows that though he is *one like unto the Son of Man* (human form), he is truly the *Son of God* (Divine). He addresses the churches as the *Son of God*. The change also reflects his *feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace*. This alludes to the mysterious fourth man, like unto the Son of God, who was observed walking about freely in the fiery furnace, and ultimately leading the three Hebrew children safely through the fiery furnace of their martyrdom (Dan. 3:25).

Unless there is repentance, the one *who hath eyes like a flame of fire* will execute his judgment, demonstrating that I am he, which searcheth the *reins and hearts* (Rev 2:23).

It is possible that the emphasis on *works* in Revelation 2:19 is revealing that the Church of the Dark Ages over emphasized works alone and were teaching that works without love was sufficient (I Cor. 13:3). Jesus held similar things against Thyatira as he did Pergamos. Thyatira permits idolatrous food (false teaching), fornication (joining of holy with profane), and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. *That woman Jezebel* represents a false Church that was developing. She calls herself a *Prophetess* because she exalts her oral (tradition) teaching above the written word. This woman (the false Church) esteemed herself as a prophetess, because she exalted her ideas above (Mat. 15: 1 - 9) what God had already given through the twelve apostles (the New Testament record). Isaiah had said that we should seek for God through what God had recorded in *the law and the testimony*, and if other teachings *speak not according to this word* (God's written word), *it is because there is no light in them* (Isa. 8: 20). This woman is a direct echo of I Kings 16 - 22 and II Kings 8 - 9.

The historical Jezebel of I and II Kings was a royal patroness of Old Testament idolatry. In II Kings 9:22, she is accused of *many whoredoms and witchcraft*. By supporting lewd, pagan Baal worship, she was guilty of literal as well as spiritual infidelity, and therefore committed adultery against the Lord of Israel. The Jezebel that Jesus accuses, and those who *commit adultery with her*, was unfaithful to Christ and his doctrine. In doing so, they are *flirting* with the world and its idolatrous ways.

In I Timothy 4:1 - 3, a prophecy by Paul speaks of some *departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy*. Some of these lies and devilish doctrines were *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*. Spiritual Jezebel instituted these two teachings. She required that anyone in a leadership position could not marry and commanded the people to not eat certain meats. Jesus prophesied in Matthew 13:33 that this same woman would hide leaven (false doctrine) in the bread (the word of God - Matt.16: 6, 11, 12; Luke 12:1; Mark 8:15; I Cor. 5:6 - 8).

In I Kings 18:19, we see false prophets eating from *Jezebel's table* and a remnant of true prophets, fed with bread and water, hiding from her. Just as the bread and water typified the word and Spirit of God (St. John 6:48, 6:63, 4:14, 7:37 - 39), which brought life, so also the food on *Jezebel's table* brought death to the soul. Her food was like the foolish woman of Proverbs 9:17 - 18: whoever eats of her bread and water are among the dead.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans was of the same character as Balaam and Jezebel's doctrines. They involve the servants of God being beguiled into ungodly unions and immoral practices. The Dark Age church involved Christ's servants in the practice of idolatrous pagan worship. This woman (Jezebel) has been caught in adultery repeatedly and, each time, Jesus has given her the opportunity to repent, like the woman in St. John 8:3 - 11. God raised up many voices calling for her judgment (her stoning).

Them that commit adultery with her are those civil ungodly powers of the earth that give their support to her. Eventually, this woman and her lovers are *cast into a bed of great tribulation* (Rev. 2:22). The implication is to the bed of pain from which a son of Jezebel never came down alive (II Kings 1:4). How just! She is imprisoned in pain on the bed she has defiled (Hebrews 13:4). Those that she produced (her children) will also be destroyed by *the death* (Rev 2:23), a judgment that recalls Jehu's persistent vengeance on Jezebel's seed (II Kings 9:21 - 26). This *tribulation* is future judgment on a false religious political empire.

In I Cor. 2:10, we are told that God's Spirit reveals the *deep things of God*. The deep things are the mysteries (2:7) hidden in his word. However, Jezebel's synagogue of Satan also has *deep mysteries*, which is a Nicolaitan phrase (*The depths of Satan*). This indicates that her teachings are unintelligible (tradition contradictory to written word). She explains this by stating that they are mysteries beyond understanding. This false church proclaims that the reason one cannot understand her teachings is that it is not possible for them to be understood, as they are *deep (profound) mysteries*. However, Paul said in Romans 1:20, *the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*. The things of God can be clearly seen and understood. The so-called profound and incomprehensible teaching of Jezebel is nothing more than *profound piffle*.

After Jesus has emphasized that he doesn't want his Gentile church in Thyatira to *commit fornication or to eat things sacrificed unto idols*, he then said, *I will put upon you none other burden*. The words here are so close to those in Acts 15:10 and 28, that it appears to be a direct reference. Jesus is applying a literal rule that was given to the Gentile churches. In a spiritual sense, the rule is clear! Stay away from joining the holy with the profane, and be careful not to follow teaching of false gods. II Thes. 2:10 - 12 and II Timothy 2:15 - 21 apply here also. If you believe a lie, you will be damned.

In the Thyatira period, there were those that held fast to Christ and his teachings, despite Jezebel and her seductions (Rev. 2: 25). Jezebel was not successful in seducing all believers. There were individuals who were specially favored, like Daniel and the three Hebrew children. They remained faithful and undefiled behind spiritual Babylon's walls, without the aid of the Jewish nation. The historical Jezebel persecuted Elijah, yet God gave him food and drink by the brook in a time of drought (I Kings 17:1 - 7). Elijah pictures the faithful remnant that God miraculously provided for, during Jezebel's persecution.

During Jezebel's reign, Elijah was *sustained* also in a *Gentile widow woman's house by God's hand* King 17:8 - 16): *The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail*. This illustrates that there has always been sufficient Gospel meal available to *the righteous seed* (I Kings 17:16). It was not present in abundance, but there was always enough truth to preserve the faithful.

Elijah thought all the true prophets had been slain and believed he was the only one left (I Kings 19:14). God told him he had seven thousand that had not bowed the knee unto Baal or kissed the false god (I Kings 19:18). These faithful kissed the *SON OF GOD* (Psalm 2:12) instead of Baal. There were 100 prophets of the Lord who were hidden away in a cave and fed bread and water instead of eating at Jezebel's table (I Kings 17:13, 19). What a stunning image is created in Elijah! Despite the DARK AGE period, those that overcame were shining like Elijah.

The Son of God is able to tread down the enemy because his feet are like fine brass. He is the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7. *The Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son...I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance...thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*. King Jesus shares his throne and treading power with those that overcome (Rev. 2: 26 - 27).

The phrase, *even as I received of my Father*, in Rev. 2: 27, connects with his self-description in verse 18 as the Son of God. This further connects Thyatira with Psalm 2: 7. His mention of the Father also reaches back to Rev. 1:5 & 6 where Jesus is said to make *the blood washed saints kings unto the Father*. The Son receives his kingship from his Father (Psalm 2:6). Those that overcome will receive their ruling power from the Son (Rev. 2: 26). The Son will give them power over the nations

In Rev 2:26 & 27, Jesus establishes Psalm 2 as an important theme. The theme of Psalm 2 will be built upon throughout his book. The *anointed Son of David*, in Old Testament prophecy, is the foundation for Psalm 2. In Psalm 2:9, the anointed Son is enthroned with a rod (or sceptre) of iron. Jezebel's teaching is the same as Balaam's doctrine. It is fitting that Jesus would use the words of this false prophet (Balaam). Balaam was forced by the Spirit of God to say he could see the future Israelite kingdom pictured as a sceptre and a star (Num. 24:17). We know that according to Genesis 49:10, *the royal sceptre shall not depart from Judah*. Balaam's prophecy, accordingly, foretells that the Judean kingdom would start in King David under the symbols of a sceptre and a star. Christ, having used the sceptre (rod) in verse 27, and having those that overcome share in his rod (sceptre); shares the other symbol of a "star" (verse 28). Jesus signifies the star as the morning star because Balaam's star shall come out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. This supports the image of the Rod or shoot (branch) springing forth from Jesse, or David, in Isaiah 11:1.

Several other images, in Jer. 23:5, 33:15, Zech 3:8 & 6:12, establish the thought of the rod (sceptre) or branch rising up, to spring forth from or growing up out of it. Thus, it was only natural for John the Baptist's father, Zacharias, to prophesy, *the day spring from on high hath*

visited us, to give light to them that sat in darkness (Luke 1:78 & 79). A further text showing a king as the morning star is given, in Isaiah 14:12, where the morning star denotes the shining glory of the King of Babylon. As we can see, day spring and rod (branch or shoot) can signify the same thing. So we discover, in Balaam's prophecy, that the branch, rod or sceptre is the star also. It would be natural to ascertain that star to be the morning star or day spring. We see a last application of sceptre and star produced, in the Matthew 2:1 – 10. It is the story surrounding the birth of Jesus himself. He that is born king (with a sceptre) of the Jews has a star watching over him. This star denotes his glory as a king. Those that overcome are marked as kings when Christ gives them the morning star. By Christ giving them the morning star it means he will share his glory with them (Philippians 3:21; Romans 8:16 - 18).

Revelation 3:1-6

Sardis

1500AD-1900AD

3: 1

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.

3: 2

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before god.

3: 3

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.

3: 4

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.

3: 5

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.

3: 6

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The church of Sardis represents the fifth era of the church. The name Sardis means *escaping ones* or *those that came out*. Jesus describes himself to this church as *he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars*. The Spirit establishes a pattern, in the first four messages, which consists of drawing upon the descriptions of Christ mentioned in the first chapter. To the first church, he reaches back to the last things mentioned in the first chapter (1:19 - 20). The pattern is consistent in the second (1:17-18), the third (1:16) and finally the fourth (1:13-15). The fifth (Sardis), however, reaches back to Revelation 1:12, and has "seven candlesticks." The candlesticks were used in the self-description of Christ given to the first church (2:1). We are able to discern that Sardis begins a new cycle of Christ's self-descriptions, based upon the same pattern of the first four, but with different perspectives.

The Spirit reaches back to the original model of the first chapter vision for each of the four preceding churches. Now, he reaches back further (1:12), as the seven candlesticks are mentioned to the fifth church. Since the reference to the seven candlesticks takes us back to what was used in Revelation 1:20, with the first church, the Spirit reuses the seven stars, but adds the seven Spirits to the stars, and omits the seven candlesticks.

Jesus does something a little different in his Sardis self-description from what he used in his self-description to Ephesus. In Ephesus, he emphasized that he held the seven stars in his right hand, as the stars were ministers watching or tending to the seven candlesticks. In Sardis, he relates the seven stars as ministers, and that he breathes out seven instructions for how they are to watch after the candlesticks. The Spirit (Gen. 2:7 & John 3:8) is equivalent to the breath of God. Jesus' words are spoken by God's breath. In Genesis 2:7, the breath of God is termed the "breath of life."

Jesus said he has the seven spirits of God (John records Jesus breathing on the disciples in St. John 20:22), because God has designated him as the life giver or Spirit giver. Since Jesus fills people with the Spirit, he breathes life into our souls (John 5:25). In I Corinthians 15:45, *the last Adam* (Jesus) *was made a quickening spirit* (a life giving spirit). He who breathes out these admonishing words to the churches is calling for Sardis to obey his words, which are *breathed out* unto them.

The Spirit is not visible, according to John 3:8, but is like the wind. You can **hear** the wind and **see** its **results**. Jesus continues to develop the **relationship** between the life-giving breath of the Spirit and the star by saying, *thou has a name that thou livest and art dead*. **This reveals that many in this period (1500-1900) were not baptized with the Spirit**. Many could grasp the importance of faith and water baptism, but not Spirit baptism. **They believed that their soul was alive unto God, but Jesus was saying that, without the breath of God, they actually were dead**. His admonishment to the Sardis period was *don't sleep or stay dead, but awake out of death* or be watchful. If a person is *watchful*, they are not sleeping or dead, but have become awake or alive. Jesus' warning is explaining that if they do not awake or *watch*, he will *come as a thief*. Jesus frequently said in the Gospels watch, don't sleep, lest I come, as a thief upon you (Matthew 24:42 - 44).

His instruction to strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die communicates their need to encourage those who are alive by the Spirit. They are alive by the Spirit but are weak. If they seek more of his Spirit they will be strengthened by God's might (Eph. 5: 18). Without the indwelling of the Spirit, He has *found thy works not perfect* (complete) *before God*. We cannot see our work for God completed without the Spirit in our lives (Rom. 8:13; II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 6:1 *Go on to perfection - completion*).

Those that are ready to die are so weak in the strength that the Spirit imparts; they don't have enough power to complete the work God has given them to perform. They are to *remember therefore how thou hast received* the Spirit (Jesus) and *walk ye in him* (Col. 2:6). They are to *hold fast and repent* (Col. 2:3). Col. 2:7 says we are to be rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, as ye have been taught. He admonishes that if we find ourselves weak in the Spirit, we are to repent and seek, from the Spirit, strength. If we don't watch, or come more alive by the Spirit, we will not be ready when he comes. He makes evident that there are only a *few names* in the Sardis period *that have not defiled their garments*. Only a *few* are *worthy to walk with him in white*.

The Sardis period will be regarded by many as a church that had great *names* of people, thought of as alive to God, but many of whom Jesus says are really dead, because they do not have the Spirit.

Death, sleeping, and defiled garments are perceived by Jesus as the same type of spiritual apathy noted in Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira. Many have *defiled* themselves with the Nicolaitan teachings. They have compromised the holy with the profane. They have become unholy through association with those that are dead (spiritually).

In II Corinthians 6:14 & 7:1, Paul warns of being *yoked with unbelievers, infidels and idols...separate and touch not the unclean thing...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting (bringing to completeness) holiness*. Paul is quoting from Isaiah 52:11 and is also alluding to Numbers 19:1 – 22, where it deals with how to become clean after touching a dead body. In Luke 11:44, Jesus gives the spiritual application to Numbers 19. He explained that false religious leaders were as unmarked graves, and that by associating with them men would become *defiled*, not even being aware that they had touched death. Hebrews 9:11 - 14 shows that Christ's sacrifice fulfills the true application of Numbers 19 for purifying us from defilement with false religion.

Many believers were defiled in the Sardis period, by joining together with ungodly civil government. Even though this church was noted for escaping out of the synagogue of Satan, many committed spiritual fornication in becoming one with heathen kings, and eating from their tables after escaping. Also, breaking the gentile rule of Acts 15 (spiritually) was still producing a defiling effect.

Those who overcome these deadly and defiling influences will keep their name in *the Book of Life* (Luke 10:20; Mal. 3:16; Isa. 26:14). A person's name will remain permanent (not temporary) in the *Book of Life* only under certain conditions. They must watch (to come awake or alive) and stay awake or alive (Rom. 6:10). They are *strengthened* (Eph. 6:10, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might) and they are not defiled (Eph. 6:11, "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to resist the wiles of the devil"). These are those who refuse to compromise with the idolatrous ways of worship of the heathen (Num. 25:18, wiles & beguiling).

The parallel between the white robe that is to be given and the permanent enrollment in the Book of Life discloses that both images are articulating the same thing (Eternal life). We must diligently *watch, keep awake or alive* that we may not become *defiled*, and therefore to ultimately receive our white robe. In like manner, we must diligently *watch, stay awake or stay alive* in order to not diminish in strength (being weak) and *die* (Romans 8:13). For if a person becomes without strength they will not be able to resist the wiles of the devil and will die. Because they are dead, their name will be blotted out of the Book of Life. It is not eternally profitable to have a name that you live, yet are really dead. Rather, to have your name remain in the Book of Life, because you are very much alive and have stayed alive and undefiled. If we keep ourselves alive unto God, our name will remain in the Book of Life. Jesus said he would confess the name of those that overcome before his Father and before his Father's angels (Rev. 3: 5).

There, in heaven's courtroom, Jesus clothes those that overcome with a white robe, and reads their name (confesses their name) from the Book of Life as a permanently enrolled citizen of the eternal City of God.

Revelation 3:7-13

Philadelphia 1900AD-His Return

3: 7

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:

3: 8

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.

3: 9

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.

3: 10

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.

3: 11

Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

3: 12

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.

3: 13

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The message to the church of Philadelphia represents the sixth period of the Church. This period begins in 1900 and ends at Christ's catching away those that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord (I Thes. 4:13 - 18). The name Philadelphia means *city of brotherly love*. Brotherly love comes from God's Spirit having been poured out into our hearts (Rom. 5: 5). The first fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5: 22). The Church of Philadelphia experienced a great outpouring of God's Spirit.

Jesus describes himself to this church as *he that hath the key of David* (Rev.3: 7). He is continuing with the pattern set forth in Sardis, where a fresh series is applying the first four self-descriptions. The Spirit reaches back in Revelation 1:17 – 18, and utilizes the remainder of Christ's self-description, which was not used in his title to Smyrna. Having the keys of Hell and Death, though not directly quoted, is alluded to with the usage of key of David.

The Spirit uses Isaiah 22:22 as the Old Testament image and background for *Have the keys of Hell and Death*. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, alluded to Isaiah 22:22 as was recorded in Matthew 16:18-19. *Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, 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.*

Jesus, in Matthew 16:18 - 19 and Revelation, sees the key of David as the key of life and death. He is reflecting back upon his final words to the previous church of Sardis. There (Rev. 3:5) he said, he had the authority to leave or *blot out* their names in the book of life. He has the key to open the door to the kingdom of heaven, or to shut the door on them.

In Isaiah 22:22, a faithful servant becomes the key-bearer in place of an unfaithful one. After the same idea, only reborn in himself, Jesus titles himself *he that is holy, he that is true*. None of the others before him were the *true* key-bearers. Even Isaiah's Eliakim was not the *true* key-bearer.

Possibly Eliakim had the authority to admit people into, or to shut them away from, an audience with the King. This was put symbolically on Eliakim's shoulder (compare Isaiah 9:6). He was *over the house* (Isa. 22:15). Christ is the *Holy and true* key-bearer over the house of David. Whereas, in John 9:1 - 10:9, we see men acting as though they have authority over David's house, but who are merely impostors. They were shutting the door on Christians, but Christ was opening a door that no man can shut. He that has the *key of David* has opened a door into the king's house for all God's people. He opened this door through pouring out his Spirit and by his Spirit, creating brotherly love. This love of the Spirit opened people's hearts towards one another and removed man made walls.

As in Jesus' earthly ministry, so also through the centuries, there have been those pretending to be *key-bearers of the house of David*. They excluded Spirit filled people from their midst and shut the door on them. The *true* key-bearer comforted these that were cast out. He told them *behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it*. These imposter *key-bearers* are seen as *the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie*. In its first application, these false Jews are representative of people who have not received God's Spirit (Romans 2:28 & 29). He gives a promise that he will *make them to come and worship before their feet and to know that he has loved them*. Those pretenders are then forced to recognize that Jesus truly has loved the Philadelphians, whom they hated. He causes them to seek for the same Spirit. They were forced to inquire from those whom they shut out, concerning how to become spiritually circumcised of the heart.

The true Jews (Spirit filled) had *a little strength* (power) to begin with. Jesus reverses this by making the synagogue of Satan to worship before the Philadelphians feet. Spirit filled people received very little respect in the beginning of the 20th century. Jesus has reversed this. It has now become honorable to be associated with those that were once shut out.

However, there is a further application. Not all Spirit filled people continued to fulfill everything that Jesus commended them for. Those that did not keep his word, were not faithful to guard the true message. They began to be false key-bearers. They began to shut out other spirit filled people. They denied the Lord's name and *took on another name*. By doing this, they also became a part of the synagogue of Satan. Jesus told them *no man can shut* this open door. Men have tried to shut the door but without success.

The true members of the Church of Philadelphia are not only Spirit filled, but guard the true message. They have not taken any other name but the name of Jesus. The promise of the true key-bearer is to those who have kept the word of my patience, he will keep them from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly (Rev. 3: 11). The nearness of Christ's coming is urged upon this Church. He will catch these away with him to be *kept* from this hour of worldwide trial (Isaiah 26:20). Prior to this *keeping*, Jesus will cause Satan's synagogue to recognize that he has

loved this faithful and Spirit filled church. Many will be given the opportunity to leave the synagogue of Satan, and worship God with the Philadelphians.

The synagogue of Satan will recognize how Jesus has loved the church of Philadelphia. This will motivate many of God's servants to come out of this false system into the Philadelphia Church. In Psalm 87:2 we are told, the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Solomon's Song 6: 8 & 9 says, There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, my love, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.

Jesus built his message to Philadelphia upon how he will turn the situation around for them. As the true key-bearer, He opens to the Philadelphians a door, which no man can shut. We can see how he reverses, or turns around, their condition to their favor. First, *thou hast a little strength*, means they didn't have much recognition. He makes the false Jews to recognize that these (true Jews) are dearly beloved. Secondly, since they *kept his word*, Jesus says, I also will *keep these from the hour of temptation*. Thirdly, because they had *not denied his name*, he will make them a pillar in the temple of his God and will write upon him the name of his God and the name of new Jerusalem and his new name. Those that acknowledge Jesus' name now, will in eternity be acknowledged as belonging to him, for he will inscribe the divine name upon them. We may also recall, that to those that overcame in Sardis, *he will confess their name before my Father and before his angels*. As the true key-bearer, he opens the door to the king's throne room and announces the name of those that overcome.

When Jesus tells them *to hold that fast which thou hast (Rev.3: 11)*, he is referring back to keeping or guarding the true message. Only those that *continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)* will be kept from the hour of temptation (a world-wide trial). In Malachi 2:7 we are told, *the priest's lips should keep knowledge, for he is the messenger (angel) of the Lord of hosts*. The message of Malachi is imaged here in *keeping his word*. As the law of truth was in his (Levi's) mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips, so also his successor's lips should *keep knowledge (Malachi 2:6 & 7)*. *Keeping the same truth to continue in succeeding priests' lips that was in their father's lips*, has reference back to the same incidents we saw imaged in the other churches.

The Nicolaitan, Balaam, Jezebel and Satanic teachings are greatly imaged from the Israelites defiling themselves with pagan worship at Peor (Numbers 25:1 - 18). Malachi is echoing from Baal-Peor's image. He is remembering when the grandson of Aaron, Phinehas, took a javelin and slew a pagan woman and an Israelite man that were joined together in idolatrous fornication (Numbers 25:6 - 9). In Numbers 25:10-13 we are told that because this Levite (Phinehas) was zealous for the Lord, he was given a covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

Succeeding priests *did not* keep this zeal for separation of holy from the profane. The angel of the church of Philadelphia was commended for this. They had *kept his word*. The Lord had promised, *my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever (Isaiah 59:21)*.

In II Thessalonians 2:10 - 12 Paul emphasizes that if we don't have a love for the truth, *God shall send us strong delusion that we should believe a lie and be damned, who had pleasure in unrighteousness*. Paul then says, in verse 15 of II Thessalonians 2, **stand fast and hold the traditions, which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle**. While there were many Israelites who attended the pagan feast in Numbers 25, there was also a Phinehas, who was zealous for separation of the holy from the profane, and turned back the plague from destroying all Israel.

The Philadelphian Church was encouraged by Jesus not to let *any man take thy crown*. Jesus had promised the *crown of life* to those that would overcome in the church of Smyrna (Revelation 2:10). **A thief could steal the crown of life** promised to them. Beware lest ye also, being *led away with the error of the wicked*, fall from your own *steadfastness*. Peter said in II Peter 3:17. *The error of the wicked (false teachings) will lead you to fall from your own steadfastness*.

This shows that if a person gives heed to false teachings they will not remain steadfast in Christ. The promised crown is only given to those who remain *faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10)*. A person must remain faithful to the truth all the way to the end of their life. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by false teachers that will steal our crown of life.

In John 10:1, 8 & 10, Jesus warned of thieves, robbers and murderers. He was speaking of those that were false shepherds, who would *lead God's sheep astray*. A man can take away my promised crown, if by his instruction I cease to hold fast to the truth. A man that is not authorized by Jesus (the door) to lead his sheep is a *robber* and will steal your promised crown of eternal life away from you (see II Timothy 4: 8 & James 1:12).

Those that overcome will be made a pillar in the (eternal) temple of my God. Jesus is using the image of the temple that Solomon built. In Matthew 12:42, Jesus says of himself, a *greater than Solomon is here*, and in Mat. 12:6, *in this place is one greater than the temple*.

In the book of Acts, Luke is inspired to show that the spiritual temple, built by a greater than Solomon, was imaged by that ancient temple. The dedication of Solomon's temple was matched in the *spiritual house built of lively stones, where a spiritual holy priesthood offered up spiritual sacrifices that were acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:4 - 9; I Timothy 3:15; I Corinthians 3:16 & 17)*. It is evident that Luke was showing the comparison between the dedication of Solomon's temple and Christ's spiritual temple.

- II Chron. 5:12, 120 Trumpets and 120 Disciples, in Acts 1:15;

- II Chron. 4:4, 12 Oxen and 12 Apostles in Acts 1:16 - 26;

(For Oxen as ministers see I Cor. 9:9 & 10)

(Apostles are sent into all the world);

12 oxen bear a molten sea that holds to its brim 3,000 baths of water (II Chron 4:2 - 5) and 12 Apostles bear witness to Christ (the molten sea, Acts 1:18);

3,000 souls are baptized (Holy Spirit Baptism) into Christ (the laver) (Acts 2:41);

120 Trumpets and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising the Lord, then the house was filled with a cloud (the glory of the Lord), so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud (II Chron 5:12 - 14);

120 Disciples were continually in the temple praising God (Luke 24:53)...the 120 were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound (Acts 2:4) from heaven...and it filled all of the house (Acts 2:2), and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4). The apostles were speaking in tongues and many thought they were drunk, and finally the glory of God settled down, so that Peter could explain or *minister* (Acts 2:4 - 16).

We, as saints, now make up the living stones of this spiritual temple of God. We can be spiritual *pillars* in the church today. Those that overcome will someday be *pillars* in the eternal temple of God forever.

Being a fixed and permanent part of this eternal temple is symbolized by *shall go no more out*. In Psalm 144:14 we are told, *Nor going out*, which reflects the concept of being captured and taken away into exile. We are *strangers and pilgrims* in exile that are heading for the eternal home (I Peter 2:11). We are living in exile here on this earth. We are citizens of another land (heaven). When we make it to heaven (our home) we will be safe and secure. There will be no fear of being a pilgrim or stranger anymore. The symbol of a permanent fixture is also imaged from the promise that Eliakim received *I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place* (Isaiah 22:23).

The promise of writing the name of God upon this *fastened pillar* in the temple echoes, again, back to Solomon's temple. In I Kings 8:43, we are told of Solomon's prayer. *This house, which I have built, is called by thy name*. Another statement Solomon made was *the name of the Lord is a strong tower* (Prov. 18: 10). A pillar in Solomon's temple with personal names inscribed on it is an image drawn from I Kings 7:21, where twin pillars had personal names engraved on them. The right pillar was named *JACHIN* meaning, *he shall establish*. The one on the left, *BOAZ* meaning, *in it is strength*. Those that overcome are established in Christ (Col. 2:7) and made strong in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10). This pillar is God's servant, so he bears his name. He bears *the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God*.

In describing this New Jerusalem, Ezekiel 48:35 records the name given for this new city as *Jehovah-shammah*, which is *the LORD is there*. We see the LORD'S name in the city's name. The Temple is the same as the city. The city is the temple of God. The redeemed surround and worship God, as pillars in a temple and walls of a city (Rev. 4: 4 & 6; 21: 9 - 27).

In his letter to Pergamos, Jesus used Isaiah 65:15 as the ancient image for giving those that overcome a new name written in a white stone. The new name is for the victor, as we see from Genesis 32:24 - 31. It is fitting that the prince of those that overcome should be given a new name, also.

In Isaiah 65:16, God makes himself known by a new name, *the God of truth*. As he titled himself, *the holy and true, he is the true fulfillment of all of God's promise*. He fulfills all images and symbols. All others are not true compared to him. As the sun is the true light and the moonlight is not true light, but reflected light, so also are all other means of God shining his light. They are not true, compared to his Son (1 John 2:8, Malachi 4:2.)

Jesus says, because you have acknowledged my name in this world, I will acknowledge you as mine by inscribing my divine name of *truth* on you in the eternity. Paul said, *as God is true (faithful)...all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen* (II Cor. 1:18, 20).

I John 5:20 says, *we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the TRUE GOD and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. AMEN.*

We are in the TRUE GOD, by being in his Son Jesus Christ. Idolatry (natural or spiritual) must not be tolerated among those that worship the TRUE GOD.

Revelation 3:14-22 Laodicea 1900 - Destruction Gentile World

3: 14

And unto the angel of the Church of Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

3:15

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

3: 16

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

3: 17

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:

3: 18

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.

3: 19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

3: 20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

3: 21

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.

3: 22

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Jesus describes himself to the last Gentile Church as *THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD* (Rev. 3: 14). By calling himself, THE AMEN, he is referring back to his last statement to the Philadelphian church; *I will write upon him my new name. The God of truth* (Isaiah 65:16) *hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life* (I John 5:20). The word Amen means *faithful and true*. The name *Amen* is a good choice for describing himself to the last Gentile Church. Jesus is the Amen to all God has said to the seven churches.

This seventh self-description draws inspiration from the same original descriptions by which the third Church (Pergamos) was inspired. Except that it uses *his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength*, (1:16) in place of Pergamos' usage of the *sword*. We can see a further connection between the seventh and the third church, in that Antipas is called Christ's faithful martyr (witness), in Rev 2:13, but Jesus calls himself *AMEN, THE WITNESS, FAITHFUL AND TRUE* (Rev 3:14).

Psalm 89:37 (a messianic Psalm) speaks about the sun and moon as a faithful witness. Jesus uses this Psalm in his beginning description of himself at the start of his book.

- Rev 1:5 (faithful witness), Psalm 89:37 (faithful witness);
- Rev 1:5 (first begotten), Psalm 89:27 (my first born);
- Rev 1:5 (Prince of the kings of the earth), Psalm 89:27 (higher than the kings of the earth).

These comparisons demonstrate how Jesus used the messianic theme to characterize himself. As the sun is a *faithful witness*, so also Jesus, *shining as the sun*, is a *faithful witness*. Another messianic Psalm (72:17) links this concept of the sun and moon as faithful witness with his name continuing as long as the sun. Within Proverbs 8:22, wisdom personified has a messianic application, The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

The *faithful witness* whose *name continues as long as the sun*, and was *with God in the beginning* (St John 1:1, Proverbs 8:22) leads right into the beginning of the creation of God. The faithful and true witness of God is the beginning (first) and Amen (last) to God's work.

The Church of Laodicea is mentioned last because it will carry on past the time of the Philadelphian church being caught away with Christ. It represents those pictured by the synagogue of Satan (Rev 3:9) in the Philadelphia vision. Laodicea will not be kept from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev 3:10). Hope exists for the church of Laodicea, because many will leave her luke-warmness and come and worship before the feet of Philadelphia (Rev 3:9).

Near the end of the *times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24), the Gentile Church shall exist with wheat and tares growing up simultaneously. The tares will be gathered which will picture a religious political empire. They are gathered for the purpose of being burned (destroyed, spit out of his mouth). The wheat is gathered together into his heavenly barn (Mat 13:30). This compares with *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall try them on the earth* – Rev 3:10.)

Comparing the end of the Jewish world to the end of the Gentile world enables us to comprehend how Philadelphia and Laodicea co-exist. Before judgment came to Israel, the righteous remnant in Israel passed the torch of truth to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). In reverse manner, the Gentile church is prophesied to pass the torch to Israel (Rom. 11:31).

As Peter, the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:8), gave a drink of water (Spirit) to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44 & 45), so also, Samson (the Jews) will receive a drink from the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15 – 19). The unclean animal (donkey) pictures the Gentiles. (See also Balaam's donkey in Rev. 2:14 and Num. 22:28). The jawbone (donkey's mouth) pictures a Gentile ministry that will quench Samson's (the Jews) thirst with the water of life. Water of life will flow to the Jews from the preaching (out of their mouth) of a Gentile ministry. Notice that Lazarus, in Luke 16:24, is asked to dip the tip of his finger (one gift of the five fold ministry, Eph 4:11; five fingers of the hand; I Kings 18:44, cloud like a man's hand gives water) *in water* (Spirit) *and cool my tongue* (Tongue is connected with the Spirit being poured out, Acts 2:3, 4, 17; I Cor. 12:13).

Laodicea is pictured as lukewarm, and to be spit out of Christ's mouth. Jesus describes them as disgusting to him. Since they are not fully committed to him, their spiritual food offering is not fit to be in his mouth. He makes war against them with his mouth. He is connecting back with what he said to Pergamos. To Pergamos he said, *Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth* (Rev. 2: 16). In Jeremiah 24: 2, 5, & 8, the people of God are pictured as either good food that is fit to eat or bad food that is so evil (foul) it cannot be eaten. Paul says judgment shall come upon *the Man of Sin whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth* (II Thes 2:8). In Isaiah 11:4 we are told, *the rod of Jesse shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth*.

Their attitude of self-satisfaction, *I am rich and have need of nothing*, connects with *thou art lukewarm*. Their smugness is altogether uncalled for. They are completely unaware of their deficiencies or danger. Fervency is always diminished by complacency. *I will spue these out of my mouth*, reflects being utterly rejected and cast out by the Lord.

Jesus pictured the Jewish religious leadership of his day as *a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day* (Luke 16:19). He also said 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* (Luke 16:20 - 21). This beggar, outside of the rich man's gates, hungering, full of sores, pictures the Gentile peoples. In the time of the apostles, the roles of the Jew and Gentile were changed. The Gentiles entered into Abraham's bosom and received the rich man's blessings (Genesis 9:27). The majority of the Jews have been cut off since they rejected the Gospel. They have been in *torments*.

The Gentile church glaringly resembles the five brethren of the rich man (Luke 16:27 - 31). They are in danger of coming, for sins similar to his, to the same place of torment that he entered into. We are not to imagine that before judgment is executed upon this Laodicean Church, forgetful of its high calling, it will be startled or raised from its dream of security by any startling summons, novel signs and wonders, or new revelation. Not even Lazarus raising from the dead and bidding it to repent. As a whole, this church will not change.

There will be a judgment on Jezebel and her daughters. So that no accusation of unfairness or mercilessness will have been brought against God, he will raise Lazarus from the dead in a restored Gentile church (Rev 11:11).

Romans 9 - 11 teaches that there remained a remnant in Israel, faithful to God. God *cast off* the unbelieving of Israel but not the faithful remnant of believers (Romans 11:1 - 5). Those that he *cast off* were *blind* (Rom. 11:7 - 10). Paul then speaks of the majority of Israel being *broken off* from the *holy root* of God's *olive tree*, and Gentiles as *wild olive tree branches grafted in* (Rom. 11:17). Paul gives a solemn warning and rebuke, in Romans 11:20 - 22, to the Gentiles. *Be not high-minded, 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 towards thee (Gentiles) goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou (Gentiles) also shall be cut off. The message is clear!* The roles will be reversed. The high-minded Gentile church will be cut off and suffer like the Jewish nation has.

There will be a remnant of Gentiles who will survive this *cutting off*, but the Israelites that believe will be grafted in: *for God is able to graft them in again* (Rom. 11:23). Paul explains this mystery so the Gentiles will not become *conceited* (11:25). Romans 11:25 says, *blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in*. When Jesus *spues* the unfaithful Gentile church out of his mouth because of their *conceit*, he will have opened Israel's eyes again.

There was a time of transition when the Church changed from Jew to Gentile, and judgment eventually fell on apostate Jerusalem in 70 AD. So also, in the time leading up to Christ's return, there will be Gentiles used by God to bring Israel into God's mercy again, just as Jews had brought Gentiles into God's mercy (Rom. 11:30 - 31). It was a Jewish remnant that brought mercy to the Gentiles, *the rest were blinded* (Rom. 11:7). In reverse, Paul shows a Gentile remnant will bring mercy to the Israelites.

Samson pictured the Jewish nation of Jesus' day. The nation of Israel, through an unlawful union with Rome, committed spiritual fornication, as Samson did with Delilah. As Samson lost his *covering* (hair) and he *wist (knew) not that the Lord was departed from him*, so also the nation of Israel lost its covering and did not know that the Lord had departed from them (Judges 16:20, Hosea 5:15). This nation continued on until the destruction of 70 AD. All the while Jesus had his church in operation, there continued religious activity in Israel. Luke 19:42 - 44 reveals a false religious system that knew not the time of their visitation, because it was *hid from their eyes* (blind), (verse 42). As this happened at the end of the Jewish age, it will happen to the last Gentile church. The Laodicean church *knew not that they were blind and naked* (Rev 3:17).

In Revelation 3:4 & 5, Jesus says that those that overcome shall be *clothed with white raiment*. However, the Laodiceans are *naked* because of spiritual idolatry and fornication, and will be *ashamed* at his coming. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof (Romans 13:14).

The Laodiceans need leaders with *eye salve*, anointing their spiritual sight (Luke 24:45). Jesus loves the church and speaks strongly to them to be zealous and repent.

The reverse of the open door of the Philadelphian Church is seen with Laodicea. Those of Laodicea that open the door to Christ will enjoy a feast with Christ himself. Jesus' love for the Church causes him to speak a rebuke and to call for repentance. They that do not

compromise with these lukewarm conditions, but leave the Laodicean Church and are part of the *true seed*, that repent and open their door to Jesus, will share his throne. Only those that victoriously overcome will be seated with Christ on his throne. Jesus was a victor! *Overcoming as he overcame* refers to victory of a moral character. The expression, *those that overcome*, can be defined as conquering besetting sins, the world and its temptations, prevailing error, ills and trials of life. Those that overcome will show themselves to be firm and unshaken in their Christian principles in the face of these tests (I Cor. 15:58).

The Christian life is pictured as warfare. Many fall in the conflict with evil. They who maintain a steady warfare and achieve victory shall be received as conquerors in the end. In Hebrews 4:15 we are told, Jesus was *tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.* I Peter 2:21 & 22 says, *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin.*

Psalms 2:6 - 9 and 110:1 are the ancient images of the *Davidic throne* that Jesus sits upon, and also promises to those that overcome. The promise to share his throne is offered until the bridegroom comes to take away his bride. After his coming, the door is shut to any that are not ready. In Matthew 25:1 - 13, Jesus is dealing with preparation at the time of his return. The five wise virgins are picturing those that buy enough oil to be prepared for the bridegroom's coming. The five foolish picture those that live at the time of his return, but have not purchased adequate oil to light their way into heaven. Those that overcome from the Philadelphian and Laodicean Churches are those who buy oil from Jesus in order to be ready. Those Jews who begin to receive the Gospel from the Philadelphian Church are the five foolish virgins. They receive the torch of truth from a true Gentile church, but there will not be enough time to be fully prepared for Christ's return. They are called *foolish* because that which is *unwise*, or without complete understanding, is termed as *foolish* by the scripture (Eph 5:15-17).

Jesus gave another parable that helps us to understand the transition that takes place during the Philadelphian and Laodicean periods. The parable of the prodigal son has three levels of application (Luke 15:11 - 32). Jesus' first application for this parable was the publicans and harlots, as the prodigal and the elder brother, being the self-righteous Pharisees. The second application was the new Gentile Christians pictured by the prodigal, and the self-righteous nation of Israel represented by the elder brother.

As we have seen before, the tables are turned in the third application. The prodigal pictures the nation of Israel at the end of the Gentile times, which repents and returns to God. A true Gentile ministry (the servants - Luke 15: 22) *brings forth the best robe* (putting on Christ through Holy Spirit baptism - Rom. 13: 14) and put a *ring on his hand* (token of undying love - Jeremiah 31:3) and *shoes on his feet* (shod with the Gospel - Eph. 6:15). The father (God) calls for a party to rejoice over his son (repentant Israel), which was dead and is now alive (Rom. 11:15).

However, there enters someone who will not rejoice over the prodigal returning. The *elder brother* is angry and will not go in and rejoice. His envy and jealousy causes him to resent his father's joy over the prodigal son. The Gentile church of Laodicea is seen as the elder brother, who is angry because God has received the Jews (prodigal), again. This self-righteous Gentile Church will resent Jews having favor with God. The father coming out to *entreat* the elder son to come into the party pictures Laodicea's last invitation to repent. As it was with the hypocritical Pharisees in Jesus' day, *they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: they neither go in themselves, neither suffer they them that are entering to go in* (Matthew 23:13). We see the elder brother similar to Laodicea; he had access to his father's wealth (Luke 15:31), but never availed himself of the true riches.

A brief review of the promises given to those that overcome through these seven periods is quite exciting! Those that overcome and reign with Christ will be found eating of the tree of life. Therefore, they are not hurt of the second death. They are feasting on hidden manna. They have power over the nations, to rule with a rod of iron. They are clothed in white raiment. They have their names permanently enrolled in the book of life, and are confessed by Jesus as his own in the presence of God. They are permanently fastened in the temple and eternal City, and are seated with Christ in his throne.

We can see that the **seven** messages are really **divided** into **two** series or cycles. The **last three** messages are **reusing the same descriptions** of Christ that the **first three** messages used, with *certain modifications.* The **first four** descriptions of Christ are **the only complete series.** The **next three** are the **second** series. We see **the whole (seven)** is made up of **four** and **three.** Since the **last three** descriptions are *built upon* the **first three**, we see **only one complete series of four**, that being the **first four.**

This **pattern of four main types** prepares us for the **four sevens** that make up the book: **(1)** seven churches, **(2)** seven seals, **(3)** seven trumpets and **(4)** seven vials. Dividing the seven into four and three establishes a pattern for the other series of sevens that will be used throughout the book.

The **seven seals** are divided by the first four, which are horses that are announced by the four beasts. The next three seals are not horses.

The **seven trumpets** are also divided like the seals. The **first four trumpets** bring plagues on the four elements of the world: earth, salt water, fresh water and heavenly bodies. These four plagues are found in the Exodus plagues in Egypt.

- Trumpet #1 Rev 8:7

The land (earth) is smitten by lightening mixed with hail
(Ex 8:16, 10:12)

- Trumpet #2 Rev 8:8

Sea (salt water) by water turned to blood (Ex. 7:19)

- Trumpet #3 Rev 8:10 & 11

Fresh waters by the plague of frogs, they could not drink their water (Ex. 8:5)

- Trumpet #4 Rev 8:12

Heavenly bodies brought plague of darkness (Ex 10:21).

Each of the last three trumpets is announced with an urgent sound of *woe*. This sets them apart from the first four trumpets. This again points out the division of four and three.

The seven plagues (vials) are like the seven trumpets in that the first four vials smite the four elements of the world with Moses' rod. Men are seen as the ones that are suffering from the plagues even though the four elements are still involved.

Vial #1 Rev. 16:2

The land (earth) is plagued by boils (sores) being put upon men. (Ex 9:10-11);

Vial #2 Rev. 16:3

The sea by water turned to blood. Every soul died in the sea (Ex 7:19);

Vial #3 Rev. 16:4

Fresh waters by water turned to blood. Men are given blood water to drink (Ex. 8: 5)

Vial #4 Rev 16:8

Heavenly bodies (Sun); men scorched (still dealing with the element of heavenly bodies as (Ex 10:21), but not speaking of darkness, seems to connect with the preceding angel (Rev 16:7). The angel leading into the fourth vial is coming out of the golden altar. In Revelation 14:18, the angel that came out of the altar had *power over fire*. This appears to be the connection of the sun scorching men with fire in the fourth vial.

The last three vials are definitely a different series than the first four vials. In the first of the last three vials the evil kingdom is darkened. The second of this last series involves the drying of the river Euphrates. The third of these last three vials is *poured out into the air*, and a voice from the throne says *IT IS DONE*, showing again a distinction between the first four and the last three vials.

It is clear that the seven churches of Asia are vital to understanding the rest of Christ's Revelation. Patterns and images from these seven churches are reused and reborn throughout the book.

4:1

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.

What John has previously written (Rev.1: 12 to 3: 22) was mostly spoken to him in a vision. When John writes, *after this I looked*, he is describing that he has entered into a **new phase** of his vision. He not only hears a voice, but this time sees many images. The first image he sees is a door into heaven that is set open. He hears a voice like the trumpet voice that he heard in the first vision. This trumpet voice beckons John to ascend up higher just like Moses had been invited, in Ex.19, to come up the mountain.

The open door image shows there is no real break between the first vision and this one. In the first vision, the Smyrean Church was told that their prison was to be opened and a door of eternal life swung open to them (Rev. 2: 10 & 11). The Philadelphian Church had an open door set before them (Rev.3: 8). The Laodicean Church is shown with a shut door to Christ (Rev.3: 20). In this new vision, the imagery is turned around and Jesus opens this door in heaven.

When the voice says, *I will show you things that will be hereafter*, it is referring back to Rev.1: 19. There, Christ commands John to write down what he had already seen in vision up to that moment (*hast seen*). What he had seen was regarding the seven stars and seven candlesticks. He then saw (*the things which are*) the development of the stars and candlesticks (Rev. 2 & 3). After seeing what unfolded with that imagery, in Rev.2 & 3, he is to write down what he is seeing now and what he will see forthcoming (Rev. 4 -22:21).

What he is seeing now (Rev.4: 1) begins the hereafter, mentioned in Rev.1: 19. He saw the seven stars and candlesticks in Rev.1:12 - 20 (these were the things which thou hast seen). He was then shown further development of that very imagery (Rev.1: 12 - 20) in Rev.2 & 3 (these were the things which are).

Now, after being shown the development of the seven stars and candlesticks, he is shown other images that were not mentioned in Rev.1: 12 - 20. The images of Rev.4: 1 - 22:21 work together with the other images previously given.

It would be a wrong conclusion to think that everything from Rev.4: 1 - 22:2 happens after the seven church periods have been completed. Many of the images, given after the seven churches, are just further developments of their periods. By believing that everything from Rev. 4:1 to 22:21 must happen after the fulfillment of the seven churches would cause confusion. The voice was saying to John, come up in the Spirit to another level of images and I will show you even more than I have previously. Some of these images help clarify what you have already seen in the seven churches and take you beyond the seven churches.

4:2

And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

This fresh inspiration of the Spirit causes John to see a throne set in heaven. The stage was already set for this scene by the mention, to the Laodicean Church, that the Father shares his throne with the Son and the Son shares the throne with those that overcome (Rev.3: 21). This new inspiration is for the purpose of showing how the Son, through his victory, becomes seated with the Father (Rev.5: 5 & 6). It also reveals how those that overcome share in the throne (Rev.5: 8 - 10).

4:3

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.

John continues to see ancient images that are reformed into new shape. The welded together images bring forth greater expressions of truth. Familiar images from Ezk.1: 4 - 28; Dan.7:9 - 14; Isa. 6:1 - 3 and 24:23 are the material used to describe the divine glory of the Father seated on the throne and other accompanying images in Rev. 4 & 5. The description of the Father is minimal and is similar to the Biblical images used to describe Christ, in Rev.1: 13 - 16. In Ezk.1: 22, 26 - 28 the firmament and throne are portrayed as precious stones. The firmament is crystal (Ezk 1: 22) and the throne is sapphire (Ezk 1: 26). Ezekiel describes the Divine One on the throne as amber and fire (Ezk 1: 27). A bright glory rain cloud around God is like a rainbow (Ezk 1: 28).

As in Ezekiel, John describes the Almighty as precious stones of flaming colors (jasper and sardine). The emerald is pale and must be seen as producing rainbow colors around the throne. A diamond could be an example of a precious stone producing rainbow like colors. Describing the divine glory as a precious stone (jasper) and drawing this imagery from Ezk. 1:22 – 28, where crystal is used, will prepare us for the similar images in describing the heavenly Jerusalem in Rev. 21:11. This city as a bride is adorned with precious jewels, reflecting the glory of God. The light of that city is the glory of God. John sees that light as a jasper stone, clear as crystal (Rev. 21:11).

4:4

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.

The Father's throne, in Rev. 4:2 & 3, is connected back to Rev. 3:21. Those of the Laodicean period that overcome will share the Father's throne with Christ. In Rev. 4:4, twenty-four elders wear golden crowns and are seated on thrones around the throne of God. This vision supplies further information with respect to how those that overcome are seated with Christ in the Father's throne. The imagery for thrones being placed around the throne of God comes from Dan. 7:9. *Thrones were cast down* (placed or set), *and the Ancient (Elder) of days did sit ...the judgment (court) was set, and the books were opened* (Dan. 7:9 & 10). The Ancient of days is Almighty God. He is the original Elder.

Daniel's vision appears as a courtroom. The leading Elder is sitting with twenty-four elders. They are all seated before a standing audience of an innumerable assembly. Daniel's court of judgment seems to be picking up some imagery from Isa. 24:21 - 23. *The LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited* (they shall be tried) *... the LORD ... shall reign in Mount Zion, ... and before his ancients* (elders) *gloriously* (Isa. 24:21 - 23). It appears that the ones who sit on Daniel's thrones are the ancients (elders) of Isa. 24:23. The Ancient (Elder) of days sits in a courtroom with other seated ancients (elders).

The courtroom scene in Dan. 7:9 & 10 could be thought of as a synagogue where the Law is read and applied. Since the synagogue of Satan has excluded Christians from their midst (Rev. 2:9 & 3:9), it would be fitting that John sees persecuted Christians included in this heavenly synagogue (Rev.5: 7 - 10). According to Rev. 5:8 – 10, the elders are the redeemed who reign with Christ. Since they reign, they wear golden crowns on their heads (Rev. 4:4b).

Rev. 5:10 not only supplies the image of kings for the elders, but also of priests. Priests have judicial functions to their office (Deut. 17:9 - 12). These elders (ancients) are sitting in the heavenly synagogue with the Ancient (Elder) of days to reign and judge.

White raiment (Rev. 4:4b) is a description of the apparel of those that overcome, which is given to the elders (Rev. 3:4 & 5; 6:11 & 19:8). White symbolizes that the kings and priests have been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5 & 6).

The imagery of twenty-four elders is drawn from several Biblical sources. The twelve tribes of Israel encamped around the tabernacle where the glory of God was present (Num. 2:1 - 34). The twelve apostles encamped around the glory of God that was tabernacling in flesh (Jesus -John 1:14). The two sets of twelve, joined together, add up to twenty-four. The elders (the redeemed) are made up of the faithful from both dispensations (Old and New). This combination of the same two sets of twelve surrounding God and the Lamb are found in the Jerusalem that descends from heaven in Rev. 21:10 – 14. The twelve tribes are the gates and the twelve apostles are the foundations of that heavenly city.

Another Old Testament source for the twenty-four elders is found in the twenty-four chief men (elders) of the priesthood (I Chron. 24:1 - 19). King David gathered these governors of the house of God around his throne (1 Chron. 23:2 & 28:1). The scene that is drawn from I Chron. 23 - 29 is that of King David formally establishing his son, Solomon, as king. King David was given the pattern by the Spirit (I Chron. 28:12) to build the temple.

That pattern included all of them that would assist his son in his reign. We can see, in those that he appoints to assist his son, the repetition of the number twenty-four is a number representing leadership. David appoints twenty-four thousand overseers from the Levites (1 Chron. 23:4), twenty-four chief priests that were governors of the sanctuary (1 Chron 24: 4 -5 & 18 -19), twenty-four leaders for songs of praise (I Chron. 25:1 - 31) and finally twenty-four thousand chief men of Israel each month to serve him (I Chron 27:1 - 15).

The image from scripture is clear. The twelve tribes represented divine government under the Old Testament period. The twelve apostles represented divine government under the New Testament period. The number 24 must therefore represent eternal divine government, made up of the redeemed, drawn from both periods. The twenty-four elders stand as symbols for renewed and redeemed humanity (Adam). The dominion Adam lost is restored in the twenty-four elders.

4:5

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.

Ezekiel 1:12 - 13 appears to be the background for these images. Since the four beasts that Ezekiel is describing are mentioned next in Rev. 4:6, it is appropriate that lightning should be seen issuing from the fire of the throne (Ezk. 1:13). In Ezekiel, the four beasts went wherever the Spirit went (Ezk 1:12). In the midst of the four beasts there appeared coals of fire burning as lamps (Ezk 1:13). The fire and lamps in the midst of the four beasts symbolize to John the Spirit that directs the four beasts.

The Spirit is represented as seven lamps of fire. These seven lamps in heaven are the archetype for the seven candlesticks on earth. Seven heavenly lamps stand for the Spirit, which issues from the throne of God. Lightning, thunders and voices issue from the throne. Adding the thunder and voices to the lightning connects Ex. 19:6 to this vision of God's presence. God spoke to Moses with lightning, thunders and voices. God's Spirit speaking to the churches (Rev. 2:7, etc.) is depicted by the same images (Heb. 12:18 - 28).

The Spirit of God is represented as seven lamps of fire before God's throne. We have already seen God's Spirit as seven Spirits before God's throne, but here we see God's Spirit as seven lamps. The fire of the seven heavenly lamps (Spirit) ignites the seven candlesticks (churches). What vivid imagery for God's Spirit! A lightning strike is a powerful event! Wouldn't it be wonderful if all God's people were lightning rods, reaching upward toward the heavenly lightning in order to be set on fire?

4:6

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.

All of these images are recorded by a plan. In Rev. 4:2 – 4, we saw the throne, and the thrones surrounding that throne. In Rev. 4:5a, we saw three things issuing from that throne and, in Rev. 4:5b & 6a, two things that were set before that throne. In Rev. 4:6b, we now see four beasts that are in the midst of that throne and around it. The seven lamps were the first things set before God's throne (Rev. 4:5b). Second, a sea of glass like unto crystal (Rev. 4:6a). Each image is a piece of temple furniture, which can stand before the presence of God (II Chron. 4:6 - 7).

As the seven heavenly lamps are the archetype for the seven earthly candlesticks (churches), in like manner, this sea of glass is the archetype of the Church also. The twelve oxen (the twelve apostles) bear Christ (the molten sea) into the world. Those that believe on Christ are washed in that sea (Titus 3:5). If we are priests and are going to minister before the Lord, we will need to wash in his Spirit. It is glass-like because it represents the calm counsel of God's love.

The four beasts find their background in Ezekiel 1:4 - 26. In Ezekiel, the throne of God rests on a living chariot, made up of four faces with wings. Ezekiel's vision is reshaped for John. The four beasts are seen in the midst of the throne and around the throne. They appear to be a part of God's throne. This is in line with Rev. 5:8 – 10, where the four beasts are found reigning as kings over the earth. They share God's throne with Christ (Rev. 3:21).

We observe, in Rev. 5: 8-10, that both the four beasts and the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed that reign with Christ. The four beasts appear to make up a part of the redeemed, having a prophetic nature. Rev. 4:6b reveals that they have eyes before and behind. They can see how God has been working in the past and what he intends to do in the future.

The four beasts are also different from the twenty-four elders in that they are in the midst of the throne, while the twenty-four elders sit on thrones encircling God's throne. It is as though the four beasts are protecting the throne. One Biblical source for this guardianship of the four beasts is I Chron. 26:13 - 16. The foursquare temple had four families of Levites, who were appointed to guard a gate on each side. Num. 2:3, 10, 18 & 25 explains that there was a leading tribe protecting the tabernacle on all four sides.

4:7

And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had the face of a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

We need to remember that man is also considered an animal. The usage of the word beast here is not the same as in Rev. 13:1, regarding the evil kingdoms of this world. In Ezekiel 1: 5, the term is living creature. These four faces appear to be taken from Numbers 2:1 - 34 and Ezekiel 1:10. In Num. 2:1 - 34, we are told that the twelve tribes of Israel were to encamp around the tabernacle. Three tribes were to encamp on each of the four sides. As mentioned above, there was a leading tribe protecting the tabernacle on each side. Judah (Num 2:3) watched over the tribes on the east side with his lion banner flying (Gen. 49:9). Ephraim (Num. 2:18) on the west flew the banner of the calf (Deut. 33:17). Reuben (Num. 2:10) on the south flew the banner of the man (Gen. 30:14). Dan (Num. 2:25) on the north was left with flying the eagle.

These leading tribes would march forward with the others following. Judah was the first to lead (Num. 2:9). Reuben was second (Num. 2:16). Ephraim was third (Num. 2:24). Dan led the hindmost (Num. 2:31). These leading tribes, with their banners flying, were Israel's guardians and coverings. These banners were their symbols of power, protection and guidance. They were part of a divine, heavenly administration that led them forth from bondage, preserved them in the wilderness and settled them in the Promised Land.

This divine heavenly administration represents the ministry of Jesus Christ. The four beasts are ministers that led God's people on earth and will continue in heaven to retain leadership positions. They are a part of the redeemed, but are shown in a different function from the twenty-four elders. The twenty-four elders represent all of the redeemed (including ministers) that will reign with Christ in His Father's throne. The four beasts only represent ministers who have been redeemed. The four beasts continue to lead out in praise and the twenty-four elders follow their lead (Rev. 4:9 & 10; 5:14).

In the parable of the pounds, Jesus taught that there is a distinction between the rewards that he gives (Luke 19:15 - 19). We can see this distinction in how the four beasts and twenty-four elders are placed around the throne. The four beasts are in the midst of the throne. The twenty-four elders surround the throne.

The vision of Christ standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks (churches), but holding the seven stars (ministers) in his right hand helps to point out this distinction. The ministers are truly a part of the candlesticks, but are performing a different function from the rest of the candlesticks.

4:8

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.

The four living creatures in Ezekiel had four wings (Ezk. 1:6). In John's vision they have six wings, like the seraphims in Isa. 6:2. The reshaping from four wings to six wings creates the needed pattern. God sits on his four-sided throne (Ezk. 1:10). Four beasts with twenty-four wings support the throne. The twenty-four wings connect the imagery of the four beasts with the twenty-four thrones encircling God's throne.

The four beasts sing the same song which the seraphim sing in Isa. 6:3. They never cease in singing this song day or night. Since they never cease singing this song to the Almighty, it naturally brings about a change in how the Almighty is expressed. In Rev. 1:4 & 8, 11:17, 16:5, the Father is expressed as **is, was and is to come** (see comments at Rev. 1:8). In Rev. 4:8, the continual singing, with no break, causes the three tenses to take on a more historical order of **was, is, is to come**. The seraphim's song of **holy**, in sequence of three from Isaiah 6:2, is appropriate with the divine three tenses.

Ezekiel's four creatures - chariot wheels, which are **full of eyes** (Ezk. 1:18), makes one think of **ceaseless watching**. The **eyes that never shut**, fit together with the idea that the four beasts **rest not night or day**. It is also appropriate that ministers that were watchman in the earth (Ezk. 3: 17& Heb. 13: 17) are seen as watchman in heaven.

The eyes of the four beasts having **eyes within** seem to convey that the four beasts (ministers) will look inward toward God. In Rev. 4:6, the four beasts around the throne are full of eyes that look before and behind. As ministers, they not only can look at the previous ways of

God (Mat. 13:52), but they are able to understand how God will work in the future (Amos 3:7). In representing Christ, ministers are constantly looking inward toward God for direction and outward toward man to help mankind.

4:9

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 beasts leading out in praise to God illustrates a ministry leading God's people in worship. Ministers should always be ready to give glory, honor and thanks to God.

4:10

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,

The twenty-four elders (the redeemed) have followed the lead of the four beasts (redeemed ministers) in worship while on the earth. The four beasts (redeemed ministers) will continue in positions of authority over the twenty-four elders (the redeemed) even in heaven.

When the twenty-four elders cast their crowns (Rev. 2:10 – crown is eternal life) before the throne, they are acknowledging that eternal life originates in the Father (1 John 5:11 & 12).

4:11

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Isaiah's seraphim sing that **the whole earth is full of God's glory** (Isa. 6:3). This part of the seraphim's song is reshaped so that the four beasts sing **Thou art worthy to receive glory ...for thou hast created all things**. Of course, God created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9).

5:1

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.

This scene is taken from Ezk.2: 9 & 10. Almighty God, from his throne, hands Ezekiel a rolled up book, written within and without. God unrolls (spreads) the scroll for Ezekiel. The book (scroll) that John sees is written on both sides and is sealed with seven seals.

The modern form of a book with pages was not common in John's day. Books (scrolls) were made of papyrus (reed). The best side of the scroll to write on was the front. The front side had the fibers running horizontally, which made writing easier. The reverse side had the fibers running vertically, which made writing more difficult. If a scroll was written on both sides, it meant that not everything could be contained on the best side and overflowed to the backside.

In John's time, the sealing of a scroll was an important practice. A will made by emperors was sealed with seven seals. A scribe would begin writing and, when he reached the end of a main point, he would stop. He would roll the scroll enough to cover the words and, at that point, he would seal the scroll with wax. The scribe would start writing again and repeat the same process seven times. When the scroll was to be read, the process was reversed. A seal would be broken and the scroll unrolled. That portion of the scroll would be read until they reached the next seal. This process of breaking seals and unrolling the scroll was done until the document had been completely read.

5:2

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

Things are different for John than they were for Ezekiel. God immediately spread his book for Ezekiel. John is made to know that someone worthy must open the book. A strong angel makes a loud public inquiry regarding this. The image of difficulty in opening the book is derived from Isa. 29:11 & 12. Isaiah says the vision of all (all the prophets) has become a book that is sealed. He says that men deliver the book to one that is learned and say to the learned, read this, and he says I can't, it is sealed. They then deliver it to one that is unlearned and he can't read it either, for it is sealed. This dilemma existed in Isaiah's time and continued until the time of Christ.

To open the book was to fathom the depths of the mystery of God, to reveal the secret of eternal life and foretell the future. The Bible is a sealed book (I Cor. 2:14). A veil kept people from understanding God's word (II Cor.3:14 & 15). Eternal life could not be given through the Old Covenant (Gal.3:21).

5:3

And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

No man was able to open the book. Neither Able, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Elijah, the major- prophets, the minor- prophets nor even John the Baptist could open the book. In four thousand years no one could give life. No one that was living or had ever lived could reveal the secret of eternal life.

Jesus was greater than all of these notable worthies. It is worthwhile to look at all the statements in scripture, which indicate that Jesus is greater than all that had ever lived (Mat.12: 6, 41, 42, 17:4 - 6,22:42; John 1:17, 4:12, 5:36, 8:53, 58).

Philip. 2:10 tells us that every knee shall bow to Jesus, whether it is in heaven, in earth or under the earth. The New Covenant that Jesus brought gave life (II Cor. 3:6). Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (II Tim 1: 10). Luke 24:45 reveals Jesus as the one who could open the scriptures. As in Rev. 3:18, Jesus is the only one with eye salve to open the eyes of our understanding (Eph 1:18).

5:4

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon.

John is overcome by the desperate search to find someone worthy to open the book. He hears the loud announcement and comprehends that the search is futile. This pitiful scene may be drawing from three comparable stories in Daniel. First of all, in Dan. 5:5 -17, a search is made for someone to decode words written on a wall by God's hand and the understanding is granted to Daniel. Second, a mysterious dream is announced by the loud cry of a strong angel (Rev. 5:3 also has a loud cry of a strong angel), and must be explained (Dan. 4:4 - 8, 13 & 14). Third, Dan. 2:1 - 24 relates a frightening time of sure death that is awaiting Babylon's wise men, unless someone has the interpretation to the king's dream. God provides the understanding through Daniel and the drama ends.

5:5

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.

5:6

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, 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.

We have understood that the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed, including men who were ministers (ministers are called elders - 1 Pet. 5: 1). It is therefore appropriate for an elder to give John these encouraging words. He shows Jesus as the conquering royal lion of Judah (Gen. 49:9 - 10). The royal Root of David (David is of Judah) is seen sprouting again from the stump of Jesse (David's father), and he is anointed with the sevenfold Spirit of God (Isa. 11:1 - 2). Since he has the fullness of the Spirit, he is the one who is supremely gifted to interpret the scriptures.

When the elder says the Lion of Judah has prevailed to open the book, he is emphasizing the conquering trait seen in a lion. He has gained the victory. He has overcome. He is the winner. The lion has waged the war and is worthy to open the book.

As the elder gives the true significance of these scriptures, he is designating the Lamb as the one who can open the book. To open the book is to be able to give its true understanding. This was the ability that was recognized of Jesus right after his anointing with the Spirit (Luke 4:14 - 21). He not only read the scriptures, he opened the understanding of them to the people. This was the responsibility of the elders in the synagogue. It is therefore appropriate that this elder has explained that the Lamb is the worthy one. This elder's action, in pointing out the Lion, is similar to John the Baptist specifying Jesus as the Lamb (John 1:29 & 36 - Ex. 12:3). The elder does just as John the Baptist. He bases his declaration on true scriptural interpretation. Both witnesses point to Jesus as the only true interpretation of the ancient images.

The elder has told John that in the Lamb is found both the conqueror (lion) and the anointed offshoot (Root), with the ability to interpret. Who is worthy to open the book? This was the question that was asked. The answer is given very clearly! Only the Lion is worthy! Only the Lion deserves to open the book!

What is peculiar to this scene is that we are looking for a Lion and what is unexpectedly seen is a slaughtered Lamb. The Lamb has his throat cut (Isa. 53:7) but is standing! The imagery of a lamb in scripture calls to our mind the unexpected appearance of a lamb for a

substitute of Abraham's son (Gen. 22:13). We are surprised, just as Abraham was. Paul saw this comparison of Abraham, not sparing his son, being fulfilled in God not sparing his Son (Gen. 22:16 - Rom. 8:32). In Heb. 11:17 - 19, we see that in a figure, Abraham saw his son (Isaac) raised from the dead. The Father (God) truly experienced his Son being raised from the dead, in that he was the literal sacrificial lamb (I Cor. 5:7). He was bound to the wood like Isaac. Isaac was delivered, but God's Son was actually slain. Although the Lamb is slaughtered, yet he lives (Rev. 1:18). He stands!

The seven horns and seven eyes on the Lamb are constructed out of Isa. 11:1 - 2). This shows that the Lamb is a further development of the rod of Jesse. The seven horns manifest the Lamb's power (Deut. 33:17) to conquer (Matt. 28:18). By the power of the seven horns he opens the book. His seven eyes reflect the perception (insight) given him by the sevenfold Spirit. No one else in heaven or in earth has seven horns of power to open the book or seven eyes to look thereon (Rev. 5:3).

The connection of the seven eyes (sevenfold Spirit) with the rod of Jesse is unmistakable (Isa. 11:1 - 2). The image of the sevenfold Spirit of Isaiah's rod (branch) is welded together with the seven-eyed stone which is set before the man (Joshua), called the Branch of Zech. 3:8 - 9. Zech. 6:12 establishes that Joshua, the high priest, is the Branch of Zech. 3:8. The seven-eyed (faceted) stone confirms Joshua as the Branch. The seven-eyed stone makes the obvious connection between the sevenfold Spirit of the rod (branch) in Isa. 11:1 - 2 and Joshua the Branch. The seven-faceted stone appears to be a signet ring with a shining precious stone. As Joseph was confirmed with authority by Pharaoh's ring (Gen. 41:42), in like manner, Joshua the high priest was confirmed as a temporary fulfillment of Isa. 11:1 - 2. Zechariah's Joshua (in Greek: Jesus) was a temporary fulfillment of the sevenfold anointed rod or branch of Isa. 11:1 - 2. John is shown the Joshua (Jesus Christ) who is the true fulfillment of Isa. 11:1 - 2.

The seven-eyed stone gave the confirmation that Zechariah's Joshua was the temporary rod (Branch) of Isa. 11:1 - 2. The seven-eyes of the LORD gave a temporary anointing to Joshua. So also, John's Lamb is confirmed to be the final and permanent fulfillment of Isaiah's rod by having seven eyes. John then explains that the seven eyes are the seven Spirits of the Lord.

We are assisted by the image of the seven eyes being the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord in Zechariah's vision of the sevenfold candlestick (Zech. 4:4 - 10). When Zechariah asks what the seven lamps of the candlestick signify, he is told that the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel is, **it is not by power or might but by the Lord's Spirit**. The seven lamps in some way are expressing the Lord's Spirit. John was shown the seven Spirits of the Lord as seven lamps in Rev. 4:5. In Zech. 4:10, the seven lamps are called the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the whole earth.

When we step back and view all of the images together, we see more clearly what is being revealed unto John. The Spirit is imaged as seven lamps and also as the Lord's seven eyes, which run to and fro throughout the whole earth. Jesus (the Lamb) is given these seven eyes and, as the Root (rod or Branch), he is anointed with the sevenfold Spirit. As the Father has the seven lamps of the Spirit before him (Rev. 4:5), so also the Son (Jesus), as the seven-Spirited rod of Jesse, is the Lamb with seven eyes. The Spirit of God shines forth from the seven lamps that are before God's throne and also from the seven eyes of the Lamb. His eyes are as a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14). This imagery of light (the Spirit) coming from God and the Lamb is also found in Rev. 22:1. There, the image is the water of life (Spirit - John 7:7 - 39) that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb.

When John says he sees the Lamb appear, he is following the pattern of the Son of man coming to the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:13). When the Ancient of days sits, then is he surrounded by thrones (Dan. 7:9). The time of the opening of books has arrived (Dan. 7:10). This is when the Son of man appears and is brought before the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:13). John sees the Lamb appear between the throne, with its four beasts in the midst of it, and the circle of twenty-four elders. We are now prepared for the Lamb's approach to the throne. We should not be surprised by what next transpires.

5:7

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

This scene should remind us of what we were shown in Rev. 4:4. The record, in I Chron. 23 - 29, was seen as the background for the twenty-four elders who are seated on thrones around the throne of God. The Lamb taking the book out of the Father's hand is drawn from I Chron. 28:11. David gave to his son the pattern for building the temple. He handed Solomon a book (I Chron. 28:19) with all the instructions concerning how to build God's house. He included who and how many were to assist him in his reign (I Chron. 28:13 & 21).

We are seeing a vivid reenactment of what God commanded David to do with his son Solomon. In Rev. 5:5, we saw the imagery of the Lion of Judah and the Root of David drawn upon. This same imagery is used in I Chron. 28:4 - 5,10. Notice how David shows God is narrowing down to choose Solomon. Judah was chosen to rule from among his other eleven brothers. Jesse was chosen out of many other families of Judah. David was chosen to be king over Israel forever above Jesse's many sons. Finally, Solomon was chosen to be God's son, over David's many other sons. As God's chosen son, he was to build the house of the Lord (I Chron. 28:10).

It is no shock that Jesus Christ is the one who appears as the Lamb to receive the book from his Father's right hand. He is the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. He is the chosen son of David. He is the chosen Son of God (Luke 1:31 - 35).

He is the one, and the only one, who was chosen to take the book from the Father, break the seven seals and give the understanding of it. Jesus Christ holds in his hands the blueprint for God's eternal temple. He is working according to the pattern in the book.

In Hebrews 8:1 - 6 we are told, Moses built the house of God according to the pattern that was shown him. It then tells us that Jesus is a priest over the true tabernacle (Heb. 8:2 & 10:21). Heb. 3:1 - 6 tells us that, as Moses was faithful to build God's house according to the pattern, so also is Christ faithful to build God's eternal house. Moses built the earthly house and was only a servant in the house. Jesus is building an eternal heavenly house and he is not a servant, but is the Father's Son. The book in the Lamb's hand tells him that God's eternal temple will only be built with those that overcome (Rev. 3:12). He is faithful to the pattern supplied to him.

Everything that John is given to write is the spreading out of the scroll (Ezk. 2:10). According to Dan. 7:10, the judgment is set and the books were opened. The Lamb has come before the Father and has received the book. As he prepares to open the book, we recognize that, in his hands, he holds revelation and judgment.

5:8

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints.

5:9

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 every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

5:10

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

The first to give recognition to the conquering Lamb are those who have been redeemed by his blood. We have seen that the four beasts and the four and twenty elders represent the redeemed that will reign with Christ (Rev. 4:4, 6 - 11). Falling prostrate before the one who was slain for them is a perfectly reasonable response to him. The word for worship in Greek means to prostrate oneself before the greatness of God. They are basically singing the same praise to the Lamb that they sang in Rev. 1:5 - 6. The Lamb is to be worshipped as the redeemer of men.

The song they sang in Rev. 4:11 was the song of creation. It celebrated the creator and all of his creation. This new song is the song of redemption. They are celebrating that the Lamb has purchased them for salvation by his precious blood.

They play with the harp because it symbolizes worship (Psalm 33:2). Their prayers are pictured as incense rising to the Lord (Psalm 141:2). Rev. 8:3 - 4 pictures saints in the holy place, offering prayers of incense unto the Lord. The new song is a term for a victory song. The victory song celebrates a new situation, which has been created by the conquering activity of God (Isa. 42:10 - 13, Psalm 33:3, 144:9). The redeemed are enjoying the victory their captain has won (Heb. 2:10).

We hear in their praise that all races are represented in the redeemed. The blood of the Lamb purchases people from every ethnic group. Joseph's coat of many colors represents the many races. In Gen. 37:31 - 32, we find the coat of many colors being dipped in blood. This is a picture of the redeemed that are comprised of every kindred, tongue, people and nation. Gal. 3:27 - 28 says that all race distinctions become insignificant when we are baptized into Christ. We are all one color in Christ. We are dipped in his blood and have become one in him (Col. 3:11).

The comments made regarding Rev. 1:6 will help to also understand Rev. 5:10. In Rev. 5:8 - 10 we are told of praises issuing from those who are enthroned with Christ. They reign with him over the earth. These thoughts are drawn from Dan. 7:22. The saints possess the kingdom. Although they share the Father's throne with Christ (Rev. 3:21), they never forget who they are and who he is. They owe everything to the Lamb. These that rule with Christ also serve (worship) him. They are the beginning fulfillment of Dan. 7:14. They are the representation of the kingdom given to the Son of man. The Son of man's kingdom is eventually to be made up of all people, nations and languages. It is proper that these who fill the thrones (twenty-four elders) around the Ancient of days should be made up from every kindred, tongue, people and nation (Rev. 5:9). They reign with Christ. This is when the saints possess the kingdom. After they reign with Christ and put down all rule, then shall it be truly **said that all people, nations, and languages should serve the Son of man** (I Cor. 15:25 & Dan. 7:14).

5:11

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;

12

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.

This innumerable company of angels (Rev.5: 11) seems to be those from Dan. 7:10, who are seen standing before the Ancient of days. The angels join in with the enthroned elders (saints possessing the kingdom - Dan. 7:22) to worship the Lamb. As was mentioned in Rev. 5:7, the enthronement of David's son sets the stage for God's Son to be enthroned. It is no surprise, therefore, that the angelic worship directed toward the Lamb is patterned after I Chron. 29:10 - 12.

From I Chron. 29:10 – 12, we hear David rejoicing and giving praise to the Lord. This praise is taking place at the time of his son being formally installed as king instead of him (I Chron. 29:23). David's words of praise are the pattern for the angelic praise of the Lamb. I Chron. 29:10 has **blessing** the Lord, verse 11 has **power, glory** and verse 12 has **riches, honour, might (strength)**. When we compare these words of praise with Rev. 5:12, we see **power, riches, strength (might), honour, glory, and blessing**. David's combination of these six words is unique in all the Old Testament. In fact, Rev. 5:12 is the only other place in all scripture where these words are used in like combination.

God's Son (the Lamb) receives this praise as he sits down with his Father in his throne (Psalm 110:1).

5:13

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on 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.”

Talk about a grand finale! The crescendo of praise builds to a dramatic climax. We heard the praise of the four beasts and twenty-four elders given to Almighty God in Rev. 4:8 - 11. We have now heard the four beasts and twenty-four elders giving praise to the Lamb as their redeemer (Rev. 5:8 - 10). The voices of innumerable angels also join in the worship of the Lamb. Each time we are hearing from even more voices. Now, every creature in every place of the universe gives vent to worship. This climatic praise is directed to Almighty God on the throne and the Lamb.

Interestingly, God's Spirit is mentioned in both these worship scenes. In Rev. 4:5, there are seen seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. In Rev. 5:6, the Lamb has seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. The Spirit of God is before the Almighty's throne as seven lamps of fire burning and as seven eyes of the Lamb.

These symbols are similar to Rev.22:1. There, God's Spirit is the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. These scenes give us a clear picture of God, the Lamb and God's Spirit. In these pictures, there is a distinction made between God and the Lamb. God's Spirit is symbolized as being with both God and the Lamb.

Similar symbolism can be found in Acts 10:38. God (the anointer) has the anointing oil (Spirit) with him and Jesus (the anointed one - **Christened** one) has the Spirit with him, since he is anointed with the Spirit. Once again, God is the **anointer**, Jesus is the **anointed** and God's Spirit is the **anointing**.

5:14

And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

As seen in Rev. 4:9 - 10 and 5:8 – 10, the twenty-four elders follow the lead of the four beasts. Almighty God is to be worshipped as the all in all (I Cor. 15:28). Now that God has been worshipped as Creator and the Lamb as the Redeemer, it is time for the book to be opened.

6:1

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.

At the end of Rev. 3:22, comments are made about how the seven messages to the seven churches established a pattern for the remaining revelation. We recognize that the book of Revelation is made up of four sevens. Overall, the book of Revelation contains seven messages, seals, trumpets and vials. The Lamb begins to open (break the seal) the book (scroll) that was in the Father's right hand. The seven seals of this book parallel the seven messages.

A few key comparisons will show that the pattern of the seven seals matches the seven messages. (1)In Rev. 1:16, Christ holds seven stars in his right hand. In Rev. 5:1, the Almighty has in his right hand a book of seven seals, which he gives into the hand of the Lamb. (2)Christ gives a message to each of the seven stars he holds in his hand. The Lamb reveals these seals by breaking each one of the seven seals in his hand. (3)Then Christ, by the seven Spirits of God, gives messages to the seven candlesticks (lamps), which are at his feet. The Lamb breaks the seals by the same seven Spirits, which are at first seen as lamps before the Almighty's throne. Then, the seven Spirits are seen as seven eyes on the Lamb, which empower him to break the seals.

Jesus reaches back into the first chapter for the four main descriptions of himself in order to develop the introduction to the first four messages. The image of the four beasts, in chapters four and five, provide the voices of introduction needed for the breaking of the first four seals.

These comparisons establish that the seven seals deal with the same element as the seven messages. The new outline of seven seals can be laid over the stencil of the seven messages, and the similarity can be seen immediately. The seals are dealing with the same truth as contained in the messages, but from a different perspective. They cover the same time frames. The first four seals will explain through ancient images the beginning of the Church and its apostasy. The last three seals explain the Church's restoration, Christ's catching away of the redeemed and judgment on a false religious-political power that will be administered by those that are caught away. This is identical to what is seen in the seven messages.

The voice of one of the four beasts speaks like thunder. Of the four beasts, the lion's roar would sound the most like thunder. Following the image of the Lion of Judah as a conqueror (Rev. 5:5), it would be appropriate for the first beast (lion - Rev. 4:7) to be heard giving the invitation to come and see what the breaking of the first seal reveals.

It is perfectly in line that a lion should introduce what the Lion of Judah has revealed. The slain Lamb (also the Lion) is standing victoriously, for he has conquered death. Fresh from his resurrection and enthronement, the conquering Lion begins to conquer.

The order in which the four beasts are speaking (Rev. 6:1 - 8) is taken from the order they are given in Rev. 4:7. The order in Rev. 4:7 is drawn from the order given to the four living creatures (or cherubims - Ezk. 10:20) in Ezk. 1: 10. In Ezekiel, the ox (calf) guards the left (west) side. The man guards the front side (south). The lion guards the right (east) side of the throne. The eagle guards the backside (north).

The order in Ezk.1: 10, is drawn from Num. 2: 3, 10, 18 & 25 (see comments on Rev.4: 7). The very beginning of this order takes us back to the Garden of Eden. The Cherubims (see Ezk. 10:20) that kept the entrance to Eden were placed at the East Side of the Garden. The gate into the tabernacle was always on the East Side (Ex. 38: 13 - 18). The lion of Judah guarded the tabernacle on the *East Side toward the rising of the sun* (Num. 2:3). In Rev. 7:5, it is the tribe of Judah that is sealed first. It all fits together so beautifully! The Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2 - John 8:12) arose in the east (Lion of Judah). The priests stood at the gate of the Tabernacle looking eastward toward the rising sun. Everything in the tabernacle was looking eastward to the rising Sun (Jesus). We can see that these ancient images established the order, which is used in Rev. 4:7 and 6:1 - 8.

As each seal is broken and the Lamb spreads forth the scroll, a beast speaks, giving John an invitation to see what is revealed. The descriptions of Christ from the first chapter of Revelation provided the inspiration for the first four messages to the churches. So also, the imagery of the four beasts supplies inspiration for the first four seals.

6:2

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.

30 AD to 100AD The first seal parallels Ephesus (Rev. 2:1 - 7)

Christ started opening these seals when he introduced the Church into the world on the day of Pentecost, following his resurrection. The conquering Lion that announces the breaking of the first seal sets the stage for the entrance of this victorious rider on a white horse. The image of a white horse, ridden by a conqueror, is drawn from several Old Testament sources. We have already seen images drawn from Zech. 3 & 4 used in Rev. 1:12 - 13, 4: 5, 5:6. It is not surprising that John is shown horses, which are drawn from Zech. 1:7 - 17. The horsemen of Zechariah's first chapter are pictured as scouting the whole earth. We see this horse imagery of Zech. 1 further developed in Zech. 6:1 - 8. There are four chariots in Zech. 6, which are pulled by horses of the same colors (red, black, white and dapple-gray), referred to in Zech. 1. The only thing that distinguishes the riders of Zech. 1 from one other is the color of the horse they are riding.

In this book of Revelation, the horses of Zechariah are reshaped and fused with other images in order to express even greater truths. In Zech. 10:3 (see also Isa. 63:9 - 14), the house of Judah is imaged as *the Lord's goodly horse in the battle*. The horses of Zech.1, 6 and 10 are fused together, so that John sees **the spiritual house of Judah** (the first Church) as the white horse, ridden by Christ. This first century Church was in a pure condition. Christ was the rider holding the reins and directing that Church to victory. Zechariah is not the only source for the victorious white horse rider.

Psalms 45:4 - 8 is a messianic prophecy of Christ (Heb. 1:8 - 9), also fused into this image in Rev. 6:2. It pictures a conquering king riding out of **white (ivory) palaces**. He rides victoriously in the cause of truth. He has **arrows** that he **shoots (so he must have a bow)** into the hearts of his enemies. As he rides, **he conquers. He is subduing his enemies under him.** God has anointed this king (**a king wears a crown**). The crown is really a garland given to a victor to wear.

The king of Psalm 45 has a bow and arrows just like the rider in Rev. 6:2. The ancient image of **a bow and arrows as associated with conquest** is found in II Kings 13:15 - 19. In Habakkuk 3:8 - 9, the LORD rides upon his horse with *a bow, which is his word*. We see that Christ rode forth (on the support of his Church as a horse) conquering (taking the Gospel into all the world - Mark 16:15) with his bow (his word). The phrase *and to conquer* speaks of Christ continuing to conquer in the future. This phrase holds out hope that, despite the disappearance of the white horse rider (changes to inferior colors), he will return to conquer. In Rev. 19: 11 - 16, we see the return of the white horse rider and he resumes subduing the enemy.

We see in Rev. 5:7 that the background scene for opening these seals is taken from David handing Solomon the pattern for how he should build the temple. We also see, in Rev. 3:12, that Solomon's temple was a picture of Christ building a spiritual temple (the Church). The type of Solomon's temple is what is developed in the opening of these seals. As Solomon built a beautiful temple and enjoyed great prosperity, so also did Christ, in building the Church. Sadly, as Solomon's kingdom was divided after his death, so also Christ's kingdom experienced division after the death of the apostles. This is what is pictured in the opening of the second seal.

6:3

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

The second beast of Rev. 4:7 is the calf. It is an animal of sacrifice and slaughter. A sword or butcher's knife is associated with this animal of slaughter. John was given an invitation to view the spreading of the scroll by an animal of slaughter. Sacrificial animal and butcher sword set the stage for the second seal rider.

6:4

100 Ad to 323Ad The second seal parallels Smyrna, Rev. 2:8-11

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.

This appears to be where the saying originated **a horse of a different color**. Red is an inferior color to white. It reflects the change, which was taking place with the Church. In II Tim. 4:2 - 4, Paul prophesied that many would turn away from the truth and be turned unto fables. Also, in I Tim. 4:1 - 3, Paul spoke of some departing from the faith. II Thes. 2:2 - 4 speaks of a falling away of the Church. These scriptures show that an inferior stage of the Church was developing. The Church was not continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine (Act 2:42).

Since the Apostles were off the scene through death, another rider is on this red horse. It is not Christ and the twelve apostles, but leaders who brought division into the Church. In Act 20:28 - 32, Paul warns that after his departure there would arise leaders who would divide the Church. Also, in I Cor. 1:10 - 13, Paul is dealing with divisions starting to form in the Church. In II Cor. 11:3, the Church is warned against losing its devotion to Christ.

The Church suffered persecution during this time period. The invitation by the calf projected the image of sacrifice (Rom. 8:36). As was mentioned in Rev. 2:9 - 10, this was a period of severe persecution.

Peace was taken from the Church by this **sword** of division that was given into the hands of a false leadership. In Ezekiel 6: 11, we find the background for the second, third and fourth seals. The order of the plagues is sword, famine and the pestilence. It is easy to see the influence of Ezekiel on these seals. The sword is the first of these plagues. The animal of slaughter (calf) fits with the sword, both for persecution and division. We must not forget that Solomon's kingdom was divided after his death.

6:5

323 AD to 538 AD

The third seal parallels Pergamos, Rev. 2:12 - 17

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.

6:6

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.

The third beast in the order of Rev 4:7 is the man. The man is suitable because the Church is continuing to drop down from a heavenly state to man's state. The color (black) of the horse is more inferior to the red one. Black denotes darkness. Spiritual darkness (John 3: 19) was creeping into the Church. Saints were closing their eyes to the truth (Matt. 13:14 - 15). Black also denotes famine when drought is involved (Lam. 5:10).

Balances represent a sign of famine. As was mentioned above, in Rev. 6:4, the next plague listed in Ezk. 6: 11 was famine. There became a famine for the word of God (1 Sam. 3:1; Amos 8:11). In Ezk. 4:10, the citizens of Jerusalem, in time of famine, eat their bread by using balances. The bread of life (God's word) became scarce and was weighed out to the starving people of spiritual Jerusalem. The balances also represent a spirit of commercialization that began to invade the Church. Men gained material wealth from selling spiritual food, which should have been given freely.

The famine of II Kings 7:1 is the background for the mentioning of wheat and barley being measured. John hears a reversal of the promise of plenty, as is found in II Kings 7:1.

A penny was what a person earned for a day's labor (Matt. 20:2). A measure of wheat or barley was something between one and a half pints and a quart. To work a full day for a penny and spend that to buy, at the most, a quart of wheat or three quarts of barley to feed your family for the day is to live in a time of famine.

Wheat represents the truth and it is seen as scarce compared to barley, which is false doctrine. During the black horse period, false doctrine was easier to buy than the truth (compare Rev. 13:17).

This commandment not to hurt the oil and the wine is the assurance that there would always be a quantity of the word (oil) and the spirit (wine). The truth was not in abundance, but it never ceased to exist for those who desired it. In Isa. 59:21, the promise was made that God's Spirit and his word would always remain among his people.

6:7

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

538 A.D. to 1798 A.D

The fourth seal parallels Thyatira Rev. 2: 18-29

The fourth beast according to the order of Rev. 4: 7 is the eagle. Not only does the fourth seal parallel the fourth church (Thyatira) but it also parallels the woman flying into the wilderness with eagle's wings (Rev. 12: 6&14). She is flying on eagle's wings for protection from the devouring Dragon. The devouring Dragon in heaven is another image of the false religious system that persecuted the true Church (Rev. 12: 3-4). The pale horse with Death as its rider is the same as the Dragon in heaven. Since the eagle helps the woman to flee from the Dragon, he should introduce the Dragon's parallel image of the pale horse.

6:8

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 the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the fields.

What an eerie sight! Pale is light green. The Greek word in the New Testament for pale is **chloros**, meaning pale green like **chlorophyll**. It is the color of rotten meat.

We have seen that the second and third seals fall into the pattern of plagues that Ezk. 6: 11 gives. Ezekiel lists first the sword (second seal). The next on his list is famine (third seal). It is not a surprise that the fourth seal is seen as a pale horse. What other color could more perfectly stand for Ezekiel's last plague of pestilence than pale? It is the color of some one not being alive.

The pale horse represents a period of the Church where spiritual pestilence dominated. Pestilence is any fatal epidemic disease that affects man or beast and destroys many victims. The pale horse represents the darkest part of the Dark ages. There existed a spiritual disease during this time that took the life of God out of men's souls. The disease was false teaching. It ate at men's soul like a canker (gangrene-2nd Tim. 2: 17-18).

So many leaders in the Church during this period had strayed from the teaching that Christ had given to the apostles (Act 2: 42). They were teaching devilish doctrines (1 Tim. 4: 1). Men were not preaching the word of God but fables (2nd Tim. 4: 2-4). A falling away from the truth had produced a great false religious system (2nd Thes. 2: 3). Many in the Church were given spiritual food to eat that brought death to their soul (2nd Thes. 2: 9-12).

This great falling away produced a principal agent that continued to perpetuate this apostasy. Paul called this office the man of sin (2nd Thes. 2: 3). This man of sin did not originate this defection. This office came about because of this departure from the faith. The leadership position in the false Church was created by this defection from the truth. This office of leadership in this false religious system consists of a succession of men of the same general character filling this position over a long period of time.

The rider of the pale horse represents this office of the man of sin. In the Greek Old Testament the word for pestilence was **the death**. It is fitting that the office of the man of sin is called Death. This rider was responsible for the physical death of many saints. It was a similar situation to what Jesus addressed in his time. The false religious leaders of his day were responsible for his death and many in the early Church (Mat. 23: 29-35).

The pale horse rider was not just guilty of physical death of the saints. The more severe charge against this office was **spiritual death**. Jesus also taught that men would become defiled with death (of their soul) by following false religious leaders (Mat. 23: 27-28). They were themselves dead (Mat. 8:22) and everyone that followed their teaching were defiled with death. We saw this type of death in Rev. 3: 1-5. False religion can make one spiritually unclean, as touching a dead body can make one ceremonially unclean (2nd Cor. 6: 17; Num. 19: 11).

The man of sin spoke lies about God and those that believed him were damned (2nd Thes. 2:9-12). A soul that may be alive by God's Spirit can be defiled by the Death. This awful pestilence has destroyed many souls spiritually.

The rider Death is accompanied by Hell (the grave). Many times in the scriptures these two are seen together. These two words can have an elastic usage. When they are used together they usually represent the opposite to God and his life. As God and his people represent life (John 5: 26), so also Death and Hell represent the absence of life. In Isa. 28: 15 death and hell represent the ungodly nations around Israel. When Israel's leaders trusted their security in treaties with ungodly nations they made a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.

This also happened in the days of Jesus and the apostles. The Jewish leaders rejected the prince of life and said that Caesar was their king (John 19: 15). They looked to Rome for their protection instead of God. The religious leaders joined together with ungodly civil powers to fight against the LORD and his anointed (Act 4: 24-30).

Jesus called the religious groups of his day children of hell (Mat 23: 15). He spoke of gates of hell that would work against the kingdom he was establishing (Mat. 16: 18). In John 1: 51 he refers to Gen. 28: 12 and gives himself as the fulfillment of the gate and ladder to heaven. In Rev. 3: 7 he is the true key bearer to open the gate to heaven.

Jesus not only has the keys to unlock the gate to heaven but he has given them to his true ministers (Mat. 16: 19). He also has the key to unlock Death and Hell (Rev. 1: 18 - Mat. 16: 18) and set men free from their bondage. His true ministers can unlock heaven and hell also. The religious leaders tried to keep people from entering into heaven (Mat. 23: 13). They were the gates of hell that were trying to prevail against his Church.

We can also see another place where this imagery is drawn from by looking at Proverbs 9. Two women are pictured, a woman of wisdom and a foolish woman. The woman of wisdom pictures the true Church that gives life. A person can receive life by entering into wisdom's house and eating from her table (Prov. 9: 6).

The foolish woman represents the false Church. She has guests that are dead and are in the depths of hell (Prov. 9: 18). The simple are invited by the foolish woman to enter into her door and eat at her table of death. The wise woman provides a table of life. The foolish woman tells lies and brings you into death and hell. The personification of death and hell as reborn in the book of Revelation is drawn from these Old Testament images.

If Death is a leader of a false religious world power (the pale horse), then who is this that accompanies Death? In Rev. 17: 5 we find the answer. We find a great whore (false religion) riding a beast (a world power). She is a mother of many harlot daughters. These harlot daughters are not the mother but are the offspring of her. As the mother is joined to the ungodly civil powers so also are her daughters. The pale horse is pestilence, which is a false Church that brings death. Hell is not the pale horse but is an associate.

In the natural, Death is followed closely by the grave (hell). In this imagery we see something similar to the way it is in the natural. Hell pictures a false religious system that follows Death, which is a prior false religious system. Hell is not the same as Death but is its offspring. They are as different and similar as daughter is to mother. Hell proceeds from Death as daughter comes from mother. They have separate identities but are basically the same.

As a daughter leaves home to establish her own identity, Hell separated herself from Death and the pale horse. Voices from within the pale horse called out for reform. Death would not respond to reform. This brought about a mutual separation. Hell still works in the same pattern as Death. The souls of people in both systems are eating things that will eventually kill them spiritually.

We are healthy physically if we eat good food. We bring about premature death if we eat rotten food. It is the same spiritually. If we eat the bread and drink the water of life, we will remain healthy and alive unto God. Those that eat from the table of false doctrine will find themselves among **the dead** and in the **depths of hell**.

Another way to view the true Church of Jesus Christ and Death and Hell is to see them in the Bible's geography. The melting snow (Spirit) of Mount Hermon (God & His Son) flowing into the Sea of Galilee (True Church) provides the living water necessary for life (for the soul). The Sea of Galilee remains fresh water because it takes in water and gives it out (Mat. 10: 8) into the river Jordan. The river Jordan (Hell) is crooked (if straight 65 miles, but it is so crooked it is 200 miles long) and muddy. It flows into the Dead Sea (Death & pale horse). The Dead Sea receives its name from having no outlet. They receive but do not give out. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth below sea level. It is a little over 1260 (Rev. 11: 3) feet below sea level.

These two false religious systems have power in the earth over this fourth period of the Church. Since the four beasts have been used in these four seals, John is shown four plagues that are given to Death and Hell. The order of the plagues in the second, third and fourth seals is drawn from Ezk. 6: 11. The additional fourth plague is drawn from an alternative version of the list in Ezk. 14:21. Wild beasts of the earth are added to the sword, famine and pestilence. Even though the cry of the lion in the first seal brought forth no plague, the lion is suggestive of wild beasts. This provides the fourth plague to round out all the fours that are used.

The period of the pale horse was to be worse than any of the previous ones. This is demonstrated by not just one plague but four plagues. Whatever was the form of persecution in the earlier periods is combined together in this time. The sword, famine and pestilence are all combined together. A new plague of the beasts of the field is added. Beasts represent worldly powers in Daniel and Revelation. This rider of the pale horse has all the power to persecute the saints that the previous riders had. What is added to Death's power is all the worldly powers (beasts) are subject to his commands. The addition of the wild beasts to destroy completes the picture. Death and Hell exercise power over all the earth.

The magnitude of their destroying power is developed from Ezk. 14. God says to Ezekiel that when the land of Israel sins he will send famine (Ezk. 14: 13). Then he sends noisome beasts (Ezk. 14: 15). Then he sends a sword (Ezk. 14: 17). Then he sends a pestilence (Ezk.14: 19). In each plague the LORD makes it very clear that only the righteous will be saved (Ezk. 14: 14,16,18&20). Finally, God says he will bring all four judgments on Jerusalem at one time. This is the imagery that supplies the four fold plagues in Rev. 6: 8. As Ezekiel says in another place God will bring **the worst of the heathen** to possess God's people (Ezk. 7: 24). Death and Hell were the worst!

We noticed above in Ezk. 14 that with each plague and with the four plagues all together, **that the righteous are the only ones delivered**. The saving of the righteous souls prepares us for what is seen in the opening of the fifth seal.

6:9

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, for the testimony which they held:

1500 A.D. to 1900 A.D.

The fifth seal parallels Sardis. Rev. 3: 1-6.

What we saw previously in Ezk. 14, prepares us for seeing the righteous that have been delivered out of the previous four periods of the Church. The souls under the altar are picturing the righteous of these four time periods. They have been offering up their holy lives unto God as sweet incense (Eph. 5:2). They represent the saints that were persecuted during these four horses. They held fast (Rev. 3: 11) to the truth of God's word and gave witness to it despite death threats.

They are seen as souls because they died a physical death. They are seen as slain but are alive like the Lamb that stood that was slain (Rev. 5: 6). It is just a way of expressing how they died. As the Lamb is alive but pictured as slain, so also are these souls alive that were slain. These are the ones that overcame the perils of these four previous church periods.

Images from the tabernacle and temple have already been drawn upon in the book of the Revelation. The golden altar was set in the holy place of the tabernacle-temple. We already saw the seven golden candlesticks that stand in the holy place dealt with in Rev. 1: 13,20. In Rev. 1: 13 Jesus is wearing priestly garments. Temple imagery was dealt with in Rev. 3: 12. . Seven lamps and a sea of glass (laver) were seen before the throne of God (Rev. 4: 5 & 6). The four beasts are described with temple imagery drawn from Isa. 6. We saw in Rev. 5: 7 that the image of Solomon receiving a book from the hand of his father David is the material that the book with seven seals is drawn from. We also saw that the book Solomon received contained the pattern of how to build God's temple. The four beasts and the twenty-four elders are seen as priests with golden vials of incense.

As Jesus is opening the scroll and using the pattern it contains for building God's eternal temple it is not surprising that the golden altar imagery is drawn upon. The golden altar was set in the holy place of the tabernacle-temple. The altar was placed in front of the second veil that separated the holy from the holiest (Ex. 30: 6; 40: 5,26).

On the other side of the second veil was the ark. The golden altar was right in front of the ark where God communed with the high priest. They were close to one another, yet separated by the second veil. In Revelation the golden altar is seen before the throne of God (Rev. 8: 3; 9: 13).

Christ as our high priest has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true holy places but into heaven itself. There he appears in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9: 24). The three places (Eph 2: 6) of the tabernacle represent (figures) the three heavens (2nd Cor. 12: 2 & 4)). The outer court is first heaven. The holy place is second heaven. The holiest is third heaven (in the presence of God).

Believers (true worshippers-John 4: 23) enter into first heaven through the eastern gate by faith in Christ (Rom 5: 2). They offer their self to God in dedication on the brazen altar (Rom 12: 1). The brass altar is where the flesh is consumed.

The laver is also in first heaven. The water of the Spirit washes and baptizes us into Christ (1Cor. 12: 13). The women's looking glasses (the truth-Jam. 1: 25) that are on the base of the laver (Ex. 38: 8) point to our impurities. When we are plunged into the laver of the Spirit we come up out of it and are taken through the first veil (our carnal ways) into the holy place (second heaven-paradise- 2nd Cor. 12: 4).

The believer finds himself in Christ (second heaven). He has access to the unleavened bread (1 Cor. 10: 16-bread of life) and to the light of the candlestick (Psalm 119: 105-God's word is our light). Believers not only have access to bread and light but also become bread and light (1 Cor. 5: 7; 10: 17 & Mat. 5: 14-16). In like manner they not only receive the blessing of Christ's prayer for them (John 17: 1-26) as incense (Eph. 5: 2) offered on the golden altar, but through their prayer they become incense on the golden altar also (Psalm 141: 2).

The altar that they are pictured under is the golden altar. The golden altar is the only type of altar mentioned in Revelation. The brazen altar is not mentioned in the book of Revelation. The golden altar is seen in Rev. 8: 3; 9: 13; 14: 18 & 16: 7. The image of the golden altar is drawn from Ex. 30: 1-3. A priest would offer sweet incense on the golden altar twice a day (Ex. 30: 7-8; Luke 1: 9-10). We are unto God a sweet savor (fragrance) of Christ (2nd Cor. 2: 15). Christ our high priest, offers us up to God. Our lives are to be a sweet smelling fragrance to the Lord as Christ's was (Eph 5: 2).

Incense signified the everlasting worship of God. When Isaiah had a vision of God he saw Him seated on his throne, high, exalted and the house was filled with smoke (Isaiah 6: 4). In the scriptures **incense is consistently used in portraying the true worship of God.** The altar of incense reproduced in mirror form the glory cloud that had descended on Mount Sinai. As Aaron and his successors stood before the golden altar with the small cloud of incense they would be reminded of that fellowship with God on the smoke filled mountain (Ex. 24).

The incense of worship and prayer from the Old Testament was connected together with the New Testament when John the Baptist's father Zacharias at the time of offering incense had the angel Gabriel appear to him. Prayer that had been going up like incense to God for centuries was being answered in the news of his coming son (Luke 1: 10).

Ancient prophecies of nations coming to worship the Messiah with gold and incense (Isa. 60: 6) was being fulfilled in miniature form by the wise men (Mat. 2: 11). The prophet Malachi spoke of the name of the Lord being great among the Gentiles from the east to the west. He then said that incense would be offered unto the Lord in every place (Mal. 1: 11). Gentiles came to the Lord and gave prayer and worship as incense to God through Jesus.

The perfume that was offered on the golden altar was made of specific ingredients (Ex. 25: 6; 30: 7,**34-38**; 31: 11 & 37: 29). It would not smell like the brazen altar sacrifices (burning flesh). No flesh was to be offered on the golden altar. The fragrance was to be a sweet smell. Believer's lives are to be a sweet aroma not stinking with the ways of the flesh.

Moses was given very detailed instructions on how to make the perfume that was to be offered on the golden altar (Ex. 30: 34-38). In Psalm 141: 2 we see the significance of this image. Our prayers are as incense unto the Lord. The redeemed worship the Lamb with incense (odors) from golden vials (Rev. 5: 8). The incense is the prayer of the saints.

The way we live our lives through prayer determines if all the right ingredients are being offered up to God. In Ex. 30: 34 we are given the images of **four ingredients that make up our prayer life**. These four ingredients distinguish the fifth seal as the four plagues distinguish the fourth seal. The righteous is treasured up under the golden altar. In their earthly lives they fulfilled these four ingredients in their prayer lives. A believer needs to have these four prayer ingredients developed in their life in order to be the proper incense.

The fire of the golden altar is the trials and persecutions that come against us (1 Pet. 1: 7; 4: 12). Every morning and evening a priest was assigned to spread burning charcoal across the square top of the golden altar. A priest like John the Baptist's father (Luke 1: 10) would then sprinkle incense on the hot coals. As the fire died down the priest would scoop up the burned out coals and treasure them up under the golden altar. This represents the souls of those that had overcome and had experienced physical death. They are pictured as under the altar because they have offered up their lives as prayers of incense on top of the golden altar. Being placed under the golden altar represents physical death. They are no longer active in the earthly sphere. They are people that have developed a relationship with God through prayer. It is a balanced relationship as these four ingredients of the incense reveal.

The first ingredient (stacte) was from trees that grew in Mount Gilead. The sap from this tree would flow without piercing it. This is picturing a prayer life that is spontaneous. This spontaneous prayer is opposite to a known need that produces voluntary prayer (Act 12: 5). This ingredient is not of that nature but is **spontaneous praise and thanksgiving**. It bursts forth from fullness of the Spirit (Eph. 5: 18-19). A life that is filled with God's Spirit is ready at all times to worship and praise the Lord. This type of prayer life does not exist where there is strife, envy or selfish motives. Bitterness and anger will not allow this fullness of the Spirit.

The second ingredient (onycha) comes from the perfume of a crab that is found in the depths of the sea. Prayer and praise that is motivated from love (Mat. 5: 43-48) in the depths of the heart (Rom. 5: 5) is what this ingredient pictures. When love is developed deep in our hearts it will bring forth a sweet perfume unto the Lord. If we walk lovingly as Christ did we will be a sweet smelling fragrance unto the Lord (Eph. 5: 2 & II Cor. 2: 15).

The third ingredient (galbanum) comes from a shrub that grows on the highlands of Syria. If the branches are broken where they are joined together a thin juice issues forth. Prayer that is effective must issue forth from a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51: 17). The Spirit of God will inspire prayers in a heart that is allowing the Spirit to help with our infirmities (Rom 8: 26 & 27). Our infirmities cause us to seek God's face. When we can see how helpless we are then we can effectively pray (II Cor. 12: 9 & 10).

The fourth ingredient (pure frankincense) comes from a small tree that has an incision made in the evening. The juice oozes out all night. Christ was cut and bruised and from him issued intercessory prayer. We are one with Christ through his Spirit. If we experience the fellowship of his sufferings (1 Pet. 4: 13; Col 1: 24 & Philp. 3: 10) we will be involved with his intercessory prayer. A heart that is full of love will intercede in prayer for others even though it is deeply cut.

All of these ingredients were to be of equal amounts. This pictures a need to be balanced in all areas of our prayer life. Spontaneous praise, love deep in the heart, a broken spirit and intercessory prayer are necessary traits to be developed in our lives. Without them we will be unfit to be offered on the golden altar.

When these ingredients are mixed equally together and poured on the fire (1 Pet 4: 13) of the golden altar then a sweet fragrance of smoke fills the air. This fragrance of praise, love, broken spirit and intercession caught God's attention and he was pleased.

That the **souls are under** the golden altar is picturing that they have died (ashes) and are no longer active on this earth. They are as ashes that have been deposited at the base of the altar. Jesus tasted of death for every man that we (our souls) might not have to taste death (Heb. 2: 9). These **souls** are alive! They were alive unto God while they were being poured out on the fire as sweet incense and are still alive as ashes under the altar. The ashes picture that they have ceased from their earthly activity. They are still in second heaven (holy place-paradise). These souls that were slain are just as much alive as the Lamb that stood slain (Rev. 5: 6).

These are the **righteous souls** that have been saved up (treasured up) during the four previous Church periods. God has treasured them (souls) up under the golden altar. **Judgment came to the house of God as is imaged in Ezk. 14 and only the souls of the righteous were saved.** They suffered for doing well according to the will of God and committed the keeping of their **souls** to him that is their faithful Creator (1Pet. 17-19). Jesus promised that whosoever believes in Him shall never die (John 11: 26). They were slain by men and died physically but they live according to God in the Spirit (1Pet 4: 6).

6:10

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?

During the last part of the pale horse period (1517 A.D. to 1798 A.D.) voices were heard crying for reform within this apostate Church. Important blows were struck by the sword of the Spirit (God's word) that made it appear that the promised judgment (Rev. 2: 22-23; 17: 1) on this false Church had come.

The voices that cried for reform eventually were driven out of the false Church. **Hell** that followed **Death** is what developed from these that cried for reform and left the false Church. They recognized the awful condition in the pale horse and spoke out against it. The pale horse became weak from their departure and it appeared that the promised judgment was imminent.

The righteous souls (under the altar) that had suffered persecution from the four previous Church periods saw the pale horse becoming weak from these reformation blows. Although Hell eventually fell into the same basic pattern as Death, it did damage to that false system while it was separating itself from it. It looked like the beginning of the promised judgment that they expected God to pour out. A hope dawned on these souls that made them cry out for divine justice.

This is not a personal cry for revenge but for divine justice (Psalm 109). The martyr's cry (**How long, O Lord**) from under the golden altar asking for God's judgment is drawn from several Psalms (Psalm 6: 3; 74: 9,10; 79: 5; 80: 4).

Zechariah's chapter one has an even more perfect image for the martyr's cry to be drawn from. The four riders return from searching the whole earth and report that the whole earth is still and at rest (Zech 1: 11). This causes the angel to ask *how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem* (Zech. 1: 12). The cry in Zechariah comes from the angel hearing the four horsemen's report that all is at rest. The cry in the fifth seal of Revelation comes from the righteous souls after they see that the fourth horse is apparently receiving the promised judgment.

These righteous souls that are in Christ (1Thes. 4: 14 & 16) have died a physical death but their soul is alive. They are with Christ (Philp. 1: 21 & 23; 2nd Cor. 5: 6-9). They desire to know if these reformation events are pointing to the promised judgment. This imagery reveals that righteous souls that have died are alive and have communication with Christ. They have knowledge of things that are happening on the earth.

The image of being under the golden altar reveals that they are in the same spiritual realm in death that they were in life. When they were being offered as incense on the golden altar they were in the holy place. This symbolizes being in Christ or in paradise (second heaven). In death they are in the same spiritual realm that they were in while living on the earth.

Their cry to have their blood avenged is not based on a carnal desire for revenge but is the expectation of God's promise to them. God had promised that the righteous saints would some day execute vengeance on their persecutors. It looked to them like this honor was about to be bestowed on them (Psalm 149: 4-9). These souls that overcome are pictured as prayerful incense and they are also pictured as priests with golden censers (vials) full of prayerful incense (Rev. 5: 8). In Rev. 15: 6 – 8 they are pictured as angelic priests that are given golden vials filled with the wrath of God, instead of prayerful incense. By this imagery, we can understand that the prayers of the righteous end up being poured out in judgment on their enemies.

The reformers were striking such effective blows with the sword of the Spirit that it looked to these martyrs like the promised judgment had arrived (Rev. 13: 3). The wound to the head of this false religious system looked fatal. The rider of the pale horse was imprisoned and looked like he never would ride again. The next verse reveals that the martyr's hopes were premature.

6:11

And white robes were given unto everyone of them; and it was said to them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The white robes represent eternal bodies that are given to them. These robes are given to them because they lost their earthly robes in death. Their souls are not naked but clothed with immortal bodies (2nd Cor. 5: 1-4). It is appropriate that the souls of the fifth seal are clothed in white. This Church period parallels the Church of Sardis (fifth Church), which also is given a promise of white raiment (Rev. 3: 5).

It was pointed out above (in comments about Rev. 6: 10) that expectations that the promised judgment had arrived were premature. The saints are not to lose patience. The reason they must wait a little longer is there is going to be a resurgence of this false religious system and it will give further persecution. They must wait until other future saints are slain also.

This is similar to the exhortation James gives for the saints to be patient (Jam. 5: 7-11). God is waiting with long patience for the precious fruit of both the early and latter rain. The saints are to be patient also until the harvest of the latter rain is gathered in.

We should also see that as there was a morning sacrifice under the Old Covenant there is to be an evening sacrifice also. If we take the body of Christ as a picture of the Church periods we can see this illustrated also. Christ's head and hands were made to suffer and bleed. This is picturing persecution during the early church periods. His side being wounded is picturing persecution during the dark ages. His feet are wounded and is a picture that these fellowservants are also to suffer persecution during these remaining church periods.

A further development on the image of the body is seen in what is said to John (Rev. 10: 8-11). He is given the little book to eat. When he eats it the taste is sweet but it becomes bitter in his belly. This is picturing the sweet success of the early Church. In the dark ages there were a lot of bitter things that happened to the Church. As John was told that he must prophesy again before many nations, this was picturing future saints that would give witness to Jesus at the time of his return.

The saints that are under the golden altar are at rest. In Psalm 149: 5 they are pictured upon beds of rejoicing. In Act 7: 60 they are pictured as having fallen asleep. In Rev. 14: 13 they are said to be resting from their labors.

We can know that the phrase **killed** is symbolical of severe persecution by understanding what Paul said about this group of saints in 1 Thes. 4: 17. This group of saints will be made up of people that are not only killed but are caught up alive also.

6:12

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;

6: 13

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.

6: 14

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together: and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

6: 15

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 freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

6: 16

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:

6: 17

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

1900 to the destruction of the Gentile world.

The Sixth Seal parallels both Philadelphia and Laodicea. Rev. 3: 7-22.

When the Lamb breaks the sixth seal a universal shaking takes place. This great earthquake is the answer to the martyr's prayer in Rev. 6: 10. Judgment is coming on the Gentile kingdoms that have persecuted the saints. Jesus spoke of **wars** and the devastations that follow like famine and pestilence (Mat. 24: 6-7). He called these events **the beginning of sorrows** (Mat. 24: 8). Leading up to this great earthquake (World war three) are preshock tremors (other wars). He was speaking of the end of the Gentile times (Luke 21: 24).

All of these shocking events in the sixth seal are describing the beginning of sorrows that Jesus spoke of. The terror in the hearts of the high and mighty (Rev. 6: 15-17) is picturing what is the state of mind of people living during this time. The knowledge that the opposing nations of the world have weapons of mass destruction is terrorizing men's minds.

Luke gives us the record of Jesus saying that there would be signs in the sun, moon and stars. He said the earth would be in distress and be perplexed. The sea of the ungodly nations would be raging. Men's hearts would be failing them for fear of what they could see was coming on the earth. In the midst of all these terrible happenings Jesus said his followers should look up and lift up their head for their redemption draws near (Luke 21: 25-28). He also said that his followers should watch and pray that they may escape all these terrible things that are coming on the earth and be able to stand before the Son of man (Luke 21: 36).

Jesus' words in Luke 21 are similar to what is depicted in the sixth seal. The sixth seal reveals very distressful and fearful events and asks the question **who shall be able to stand?** Jesus answered that question. He said we must all watch and pray to be worthy to escape all these things and stand before Him (Luke 21: 36).

The events of the sixth seal are the beginning of sorrows. The sorrows will culminate in a worldwide use of the weapons of mass destruction (World war three). The last statement in the sixth seal speaks of **the great day of the Lamb's wrath that has come** (Rev. 6: 17). All of these sixth seal events lead into and develop the image of the day of the Lamb's wrath.

The apostle Paul *said God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he had ordained* (Act. 17: 31). In Psalm 110 a prince (Jesus) of the house of David is said to be seated next to Jehovah God and is waiting in expectation *until all enemies are put under his feet*. These enemies are to be judged and put under his feet *during the day of his power and wrath* (Psalm 110: 1, 3, 5&6).

The day of his wrath consists of a thousand years (Psalm 90: 4; 2nd Pet. 3: 8). Man has been given six one thousand year days to labor but the seventh one thousand year day is the Lord's Sabbath (Ex. 20: 9-10). This is why Christ and his redeemed are said to reign for one thousand years (Rev. 20: 4, 5, 6 & 7). The thousand- year reign **begins** with the final destruction mentioned in the conclusion of the sixth seal.

There is a question that is asked at the end of the sixth seal. Who will be able to stand during all of these terrorizing events? The answer to the question of who will be able to stand is found in the opening of the seventh seal (Rev. 8: 1). The opening of the seventh seal happens during the events of the sixth seal but after the sixth seal is opened. This is similar to what we saw in the overlapping that took place between the sixth message (Philadelphia) and the seventh message (Laodicea).

The comparison between the seals and messages continues to develop a pattern. Partial applications of the conflict between the synagogue of Satan and the Church of Philadelphia eventually led to a more perfect application. In like manner, we have partial applications to the events of the sixth seal that lead us to a more perfect application. There would be earthquakes (wars) that would be a partial fulfillment of this image of an earthquake. They would be like preshock tremors leading up to the major quake (World war three).

World war one (1914-1918) shook the pillars of this world. Twenty- eight nations were rocked by this war. 8,500,000 were killed, 21,000,000 were wounded and 45,000,000 armed forces were mobilized. It shook this earth!

The first world war was the beginning of the end. It was the beginning of sorrows. World war two was the next preshock that caused the earth to tremble. The atomic bombs that were used in this war have cast a shadow of fear over this earth. Men that know the true situation of the weapons of mass destruction understand that the future of civilization hangs by a thread.

These world wars are early tremors of the great earthquake that will bring down the Gentile powers. We can see on a small scale how world war one (as an earthquake) affected the heavens and the earth. There is a cluster of Old Testament images that the Sixth seal draws from.

The second chapter of Isaiah in verses ten through twenty- two creates the background that the sixth seal develops. The earthquake of Rev. 6: 12 is from Isa. 2: 19 & 21. In Rev. 6: 15 we see the high and lofty people of the earth hiding themselves in the rocks in fear of God (Isa. 2: 10-19).

Isaiah chapter thirteen verses six through thirteen creates some further imagery that the sixth seal draws from. The earthquake is repeated in Isa. 13: 13. The haughty ones are brought down and quake with fear (Isa. 13: 7-8,11; Rev. 6: 15). The sun, moon and stars are darkened (Isa. 13: 10; Rev. 6: 12-13).

The twenty- fourth chapter of Isaiah verses eighteen through twenty-three helps even more in these images. The earthquake of Rev. 6: 12 comes from Isa. 24: 18-20. The stars falling of Rev. 6:13 is drawn from Isa. 24: 21. The kings of the earth (Rev. 6: 15) are drawn from Isa. 24: 21b. The sun and moon darkened in Rev. 6: 12 is drawn from Isa. 24: 23.

The thirty- fourth chapter of Isaiah verses four and five creates more images that are reborn in the sixth seal. The heavens being rolled together as a scroll (Rev. 6: 14) and the stars falling as figs from a fig tree (Rev. 6: 13) are images drawn from Isa. 34: 3 & 4.

The second chapter of Joel verse ten also supplies material for the earthquake (Rev. 6: 12) and the darkening of the sun, moon and stars (Rev. 6: 12 & 13). The third chapter of Joel verse thirty- one (Joel 3: 15 also) gives the image of the sun darkened and the moon turned to blood (Rev. 6: 12).

6: 12

Since we have looked at the images from the Old Testament that provided the terrorizing events of the sixth seal it is important to discover what the images represent. **The sun** represents Jesus and his Church (John 8: 12; Mat. 5: 14&Mal. 4: 2). The Church (of Philadelphia) that exists in the time of the sixth seal will suffer persecution and this is seen as the sun becoming black.

The moon represents the nation of Israel. The moon only reflects the light of the sun. It does not give forth its own light. The sun is the true light. Any light from the nation of Israel is from the Old Testament. The light in the Old Testament comes from the true light of Jesus in the New Testament (John 1: 9; 1 John 2: 8). As Jesus and his Church represent the sun, so also Moses (law) and the nation of Israel

represent the moon. The moon became as blood represents the suffering of the nation of Israel. World war two brought a bloody holocaust to the Jews. The Jews will suffer again right before the destruction of the Gentile world.

6: 13

We have already seen that **the stars** of heaven represent ministers (Rev. 1: 20). These stars represent ministers that have fallen from the heavenly condition they were raised up to. World war one shook the Spirit filled stars to a lower level. Many ministers that had left non-pentecostal Churches were troubled that they were not recognized as ministers by the government. They wanted to be like the other Church organizations. Instead of continuing to look to Christ as their head, they built a headquarters in the earth. They wanted credentials to show they belonged to something that was recognized here on the earth as a religious organization.

They had been the Spirit filled people of God enjoying the unity of the Spirit. They wanted to build a spiritual city and tower like the ancient city and tower of Babel (Gen. 1-9). They wanted to make themselves a name in the earth. They did not want to retain the name of Jesus (Rev. 3: 8). This represented the Spirit filled people organizing themselves. The earthquake of world war one brought this uniting about.

They no longer wanted to build on the foundation stone of Jesus but made bricks (man made stones-false doctrine). They did not hold it together with mortar (Spirit) but used slime (man made glue-programs). Babel means confusion and God's people became a confused people that all spoke different from each other. If you did not speak their language (doctrine) you were an alien. They would only recognize their own. Division set in among Spirit filled people.

Jacob saw that two of his sons (Simeon and Levi) were united and assembled together (Gen. 49: 5). He would not unite himself to them because they were wicked (Gen. 49: 6). Spirit filled people should not unite themselves with all that appears Christian. Some Christian unity may have the wrong motives.

We should recognize all true believers as brethren but still not join ourselves together to everything that appears Christian. We are to understand what the Church is really built with. The foundation teachings of the apostles and prophets are the real stones. The unity of God's Spirit is the mortar that is to hold God's temple together. We should not join with towers that are built of brick (false doctrine) and held together with slime (programs).

The mighty wind (Rev. 6: 13) that shook down the stars (ministers) as figs falling from a fig tree was the commotion of world war one. Winds in Daniel 7: 2 are the political and social agitations that constantly keep the sea of the ungodly troubled. This wind of war will continue to blow through the time of the sixth seal. God's people should never let the winds of the world shake us loose from the Branch.

6: 14

The heavens picture an ecclesiastical system. In discussing the golden altar of the fifth seal we covered the three heavens. This is why it is appropriate for stars to be seen in heaven. Heaven is not only a place of God's abode but also a spiritual condition. False ministers are wandering stars in the heavens (Jude 1: 13). Heavens pictures a religious element.

The heaven departing as a scroll when it is rolled together is picturing the false religious system being joined together (Mat. 13: 29) for its destruction in world war three. It is appropriate that as the Lamb is finishing up unrolling his scroll that this other scroll is being rolled up.

It appears that what Jesus did in the Nazarene synagogue is being repeated symbolically here (Luke 4: 16-20). God is finishing up with these false religious elements and they will be put away in this war (2nd Pet. 3: 10&12). The Laodicean church parallels these heavens. As Laodicea was to be spit out of Christ's mouth, so also these heavens are rolled up as a sign that Christ is finished with them.

Mountains represent elements in humanity that lift up and exalt above the rest (Isa. 2: 11-17). They appear to have great stability as religious, political and social fortresses but will be removed in the great earthquake of World war three.

Islands represent far- flung and little -known nations (Ezk. 26: 18; Isa. 23: 2, 6). In Isaiah they represent the ends of the earth and borders of the known world (Isa. 11: 11; 24: 15; 40: 15; 41: 1,5; 42: 4,10,12; 49: 1; 51: 5; 59:18; 60: 9; 66: 19). It is the image of the smallest and remotest religious, political and social institutions that will also be removed. Nothing will escape this judgment.

6: 15

The kings of the earth are the ungodly rulers of Gentile nations that are going to be destroyed. **The great men, rich men, chief captains, and the mighty men** represent the wide scope of important leaders that will be brought down from all phases of society. **Every bondman and freeman** will come under the wrath of the Lamb. They all seek to hide themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains. Men are seeking safety in the exalted portions of humanity. There are mountains of religion (Isa. 2: 2-3; Mic. 4: 1-2; Heb. 12: 22; Oba. 1: 21; Psalm 2: 6; 15: 1; 24: 3; 68: 15-17; 87: 1; 133: 3; Gal. 4: 24-25; Rev. 14: 1; 17: 9-10) that are true and false. **The dens** are strongholds of iniquity (Mat. 21: 13) in these false religious mountains.

6: 16

When all of these **cry to the mountains for them to fall on them and hide them from the face of God and the wrath of the Lamb** they are asking for religious and political institutions to protect them from these weapons of mass destruction. They will be seeking world peace from these institutions that can't hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. They can hide for a time under these mountains that fall on them. But there is a stone (Christ and the redeemed) that is to be cut out of the mountain without hands that will fall on them and break them to pieces (Dan. 2: 45).

6: 17

All these vivid images of divine judgment are depicting the Lamb's wrath.

The wrath of the Lamb is manifested on the great day of his wrath (Rev. 6: 17). As we saw above, this day is a one thousand year day. The one thousand year reign of Christ with his saints **begins** with this judgment on ungodly Gentile nations and the false religion (Laodicea) that they are joined together with. We know from 1 Cor. 15: 25-26 that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. The last enemy that is put under his feet is death. We also know from Rev. 21: 4 that death is not put under his feet until the one thousand year reign of Christ is complete. During the one thousand year reign of Christ with his saints, the wrath of the Lamb continues to be poured out.

The question of **who shall be able to stand** in the face of all this divine judgment is left hanging in mid air. The question stands there

alone, begging for an answer. The seventh chapter supplies the answer of who will be able to stand during the one thousand year reign of the Lamb's wrath. Chapter seven is a parenthetical statement. It is intended to answer the question "who shall be able to stand?"

The two visions that make up the seventh chapter are placed between the sixth and seventh seals. The startling scenes of the sixth seal describe the build up of events leading to the destruction of the Gentile world (civil and religious). As the sixth seal closes we are left right on the brink of the destruction of the Gentile world.

Another world or age is to begin as the Gentile world is brought to an end. The next age or world is to be dominated by the Jews. Chapter seven reveals how the Lion of the tribe of Judah will lead the tribes of Israel to victory in the next age.

The only mention of the true Church in the sixth seal was that the sun (Church) was black. It represents a great attempt to persecute the Church and dim its message. If we compare this with the parallel Church in Philadelphia we find that the nearness of Christ's return is urged upon the Church during this time period. The restored Gentile Church will suffer great persecution. The Church will have other martyr's that will join the righteous souls under the golden altar. The souls from the fifth seal are waiting for the promised martyr's of the sixth seal.

We saw from Rev. 1: 7 that the Church that exists right before Christ's return will catch the eye of the Jews. The Jews will repent and receive the Gospel from the restored Gentile Church. Christ will return to catch away the remnant of the redeemed from the restored Gentile Church. Those that are caught away will be joined with those under the altar (the dead in Christ – 1Thes. 4: 13 – 17). Christ will take his redeemed to third heaven with him to help him rule for one thousand years. The seventh seal deals with these events of the catching away.

The separate visions of chapter seven and the seventh seal are given **after** the opening of the sixth seal **because they do begin after the sixth seal has begun to be opened.** However, near the climatic end of the sixth seal and just before the opening of the seventh seal, **the events of chapter seven begin to unfold.** Although the two visions of chapter seven begin before the sixth seal is finished and before the seventh seal is opened, **they extend a thousand years past both seals.** Chapter seven explains who will be able to stand during the one thousand year day of the Lamb's wrath. The seventh seal explains the- who, when, why and how of the great day of the Lamb's wrath. It explains **who** will share the honor with the Lamb of pouring out his wrath. **When** the wrath will begin to be poured out. **Why** and **how** his wrath will be poured out.

7: 1

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.

This separate vision (Rev. 7: 1 – 8) does not follow in exact time sequence chronologically after the close of the sixth seal. As said above, it is a parenthetical statement. It is commenting on the question of who shall be able to stand during the one thousand year day of the Lamb's wrath.

The four angels are agents of God's divine justice and are pictured as holding back **the four winds.** In Jeremiah 4: 11-12 judgment is to come upon Jerusalem as a dry and scorching wind. The image of the wind (in the singular) as God's wrath is familiar in the Old Testament (Psalm 11: 6; Jer. 18: 17; 30: 22; Ezk. 13: 13). Jeremiah speaks of Babylon being destroyed utterly by a destroying wind (Jer. 51: 1-3). We saw above the wind of war shake the stars down. It is clear a wind can image God's judgment.

Winds (in the plural) in the Old Testament represent **God's judgment comprehensively and supremely.** The Old Testament mentions the wind from the west (Ex.10: 19), the east (Hos. 12: 1), the north (Prov. 25: 23; S of S 4: 16) and the south (Eccl. 1: 6). Each wind has its own distinct purpose.

When all four winds are released together it represents all the commotion of war, political strife, famine, pestilence, social unrest and turmoil happening at the same time. Through Jeremiah, God said he would bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven against Elam (Jer. 49: 36). He said he would bring evil (his fierce anger) upon them **to consume** them and it would be in the form of the sword (war-Jer. 49: 37).

The four winds create an image of God's comprehensive power and punishment. When God scatters his enemies to the four winds it represents the completeness of his scattering (Jer. 49: 36). In like manner, the four winds represent the completeness of His Judgment.

The four winds being held back pictures the limitations God puts on the whole manifestation of His judgment. The seven trumpets and seven vials represent the completeness of God's sovereign judgment. God will not pour out his complete wrath all at once. They are poured out during the one thousand year reign of Christ. The four winds hurting the earth, sea, and the trees pictured universal judgment on everything on the earth. It means nothing will escape God's judgment when they are released.

God does not allow this complete judgment to fall at one time. He holds some of it back. God's mercy is holding back his complete judgment. There does come a time when the four angels are released. It is near the end of Christ's one thousand- year reign (Rev. 9: 14-15). The vision of chapter seven is dealing with who shall be able to stand during the divine judgments of the thousand years.

7: 2

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,

7: 3

Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

7: 4

And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The angel ascending from the east pictures Christ. He is the Sun of righteousness rising in the east (Num. 2: 3 & Mal. 4: 2). He is ascending from the east as the rising sun because a new day is dawning for Israel (Hos. 6:3). Jacob wrestled with an angel until the breaking of the day (Gen. 32: 24, 31). The Jews will wrestle against Christ until the time of the rising of the sun.

We saw in Rev. 2: 27 & 28 that Christ is the morning star (Dayspring-Luke 1: 78). Angels and stars are seen as the same thing (Rev. 1: 20). Christ as the Dayspring, came forth from Judah which was the principal tribe located on the east side of the tabernacle (Num. 2: 3).

Christ has the seal of the living God (the Father). We saw in Rev. 5: 1-2, 5& 8 that only the Lion of the tribe of Judah was worthy to open the sealed book from God's right hand. How appropriate that the tribes of Israel are sealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49: 9-10) for he alone is worthy to open God's seal or to use the seal of the living God.

Ancient images from the scriptures are drawn upon to show the living God has given his seal to Christ. One such image is Pharaoh giving Joseph his signet ring to validate (see also Est. 8: 2) his new position of power (Gen 41: 42). Pharaoh required that as all bowed their knee to him, then all should bow their knee to Joseph also (Isa. 45: 23; Philp. 2: 10). Jesus recognized this practice of giving the ring in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 22-23). The father restores the authority of son-ship by giving him the ring. Everyone will know that the prodigal son has valid authority from his father by the ring on his finger. As Pharaoh gave Joseph his ring to validate his power and position, so also did God give His Son all power (Mat. 28: 18).

We saw in Rev 5: 5-6 that the Lion of Judah is also the Root of David. The image of Root of David is drawn from the Branch (shoot) of Isa. 11: 1-2 that is anointed with the seven-fold Spirit of God. The Lion-Root is also called the Lamb with seven eyes that are the seven Spirits of God (Rev. 5: 6). In Zech. 3: 8 - 9 & 4: 10 we saw Joshua (in Greek-Jesus) the high priest called the Branch with a seven eyed engraved stone.

If we draw all of these related images together, we can see how Christ has the seal of the living God. **We can see that God gave (Act 2: 33) to His Son the ring (jewel with seven facets – Seven Spirits) of His authority. Jesus seals us unto God by God's Spirit. Jesus baptizes with the Spirit (Mat. 3: 12; John 16: 7). Holy Spirit baptism seals us unto God (Eph. 1: 13 & 4: 30; 2nd Cor. 1: 21-22).**

The ancient practice of sealing provides rich material for this image of God's servants receiving a seal. Letters in the Old Testament that were sealed with a signet ring represented the **authenticity** of the person that sent it (1 Kings 21: 8; Esth. 3: 12; 8: 8-10). Circumcision was the seal of Abraham's righteousness (Rom. 4: 11). It authenticated his righteousness. It was an outward sign of an inward work of God.

People in the Old Testament wore signet rings on their fingers that were engraved (Gen. 41: 42; Jer. 22: 24). The engraving on the signet ring stood for **the identity** of the person wearing it. The engraving was like a coat of arms that symbolized the person. For something to bear the image of the person's signet ring represented that person's **authority or ownership on the object**. The lover in Song of Solomon 8: 6 asks that her lover would stamp his heart with her signature. With this seal on his heart, all would know that he belonged to her.

Again the lover in Song of Solomon 4: 12 is spoken of as a fountain sealed. She keeps herself for her lover alone. It is an image of **preservation**. Another image of sealing for the purpose of preservation is found in Nehemiah 9: 38-10: 1. The Israelites promised to keep the law and wrote it in a covenant. This document was sealed as assurance that they would keep (preserve) their promise to God. Isaiah's testimony is to be bound and the instructions he gave sealed (preserved) in his disciples (Isa. 8: 16). God preserves judgment for the ungodly by sealing it in his treasury of punishments (Deut. 32: 34).

This scene of **God's servants being sealed in their forehead** draws upon all these ancient images. The seal (Spirit baptism) is impressed on the forehead by the authentic signet ring that was given to Christ by God. The seal indicates they belong to God (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). They are sealed to preserve them from the judgment that is coming.

Another ancient image from Ezekiel 9:1-11 is drawn upon in this vision. An angel with an inkhorn on his side was commanded to go throughout Jerusalem and put an ink mark on the forehead of the righteous. Destroying angels (picturing Babylonish troops) are sent to destroy all the unmarked. In Revelation the divine seal replaced the ink mark. Only the worthy Lion of Judah can touch, break the seals and read the book from God's right hand. So also, only the worthy Lion of Judah can seal. **This divine seal is the authenticated mark of God on the foreheads of the tribe of Judah and the other eleven tribes that are with them.** Who would think to defy God and break his divine seal (Eph. 4: 30)?

The design that is engraved on Christ's signet ring must be the name of Almighty God (Rev. 3: 12; 14: 1). God's family in earth will bear the same name as his family in heaven (Eph. 3: 14 – 15) The name of God stands for his nature. To be inscribed with God's name is to take on the divine nature (2nd Pet. 1: 4). Inscribed in the forehead denotes having our minds renewed in knowledge by the Spirit (Rom. 12: 2 & Col. 3: 10).

We are sealed by Spirit baptism. In Rom. 4: 11 circumcision is shown to be the seal of the Old Covenant. In Col. 2: 11 – 12 Spirit-baptism is our seal of spiritual circumcision (Rom. 2: 29).

There are two Old Testament passages that the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel are drawn from. In Psalm 110: 3 the second Lord (Christ) is told that his people will be willing in the day of his power. Christ's people are the Jews (John 1: 11). They will be willing to follow Christ in the one thousand year day of Christ's power (Rev. 12: 10).

In Hosea 6: 1-3 the Israelites will return to the Lord. After two one thousand year days he will revive them as a nation. In the third one thousand year day he will raise them up and they will **live** in his sight. When two thousand years have expired since the Lord tore away from Israel and left them wounded (Mat.23: 38), he will heal their wound (Isa. 30: 26). After two days they will have been restored as a nation again. In the third thousand- year period (Christ's thousand year reign) he will raise them up spiritually. This is what the sealing of the twelve tribes is denoting. The Spirit resurrects the souls of the Jews that have been dead in sin (John 5: 25 & Eph. 2: 1). This starts to happen right before Christ's literal return.

Another ancient image that is used is Ezekiel 37: 1 – 8. The prophet is told to speak to a valley of dry bones and the bones come together to form a body (Ezk. 37: 1-8). This body represents the natural nation of Israel that has been restored to nationhood once more. He then prophesied to this body and the Spirit of life came into it and made it alive. This is when they are raised up spiritually and sealed. It starts at the beginning of Christ's thousand- year reign.

The Gospel had been to the Jews first (Rom. 1: 16; Mark 7: 27). Since they rejected it, the Gentiles have had an open door of faith (Act 14: 27). God used anointed Jews to open the door to the Gentiles (Act. 10: 34 – 48). Anointed Gentile ministers will be used to begin

sealing the believing Jews (Rom. 11: 31). **Please review the comments on the Laodicean Church about the Jews being brought back into God's favor.**

The symbolic number of one hundred and forty four thousand being sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel requires us to recognize that it is not a literal number. David went against the command of God and called for a census (2nd Sam. 24: 8 – 9). **Imperfect** Israel numbered **thirteen** hundred thousand. It is appropriate for **perfect** Israel to number a multiple of **twelve times twelve times one thousand**. It means during the one thousand year reign of Christ that Israel will be saved.

Twelve represents governmental perfection. **Please review what was said about the twenty-four elders for the importance of the number twelve** (Rev. 4). This is the foundation of Christ's Church through the one thousand year reign. They represent key personnel of the Lord through the thousand years. It is Christ's government here on the earth.

The Lamb has **divine government on earth**, just as he has **divine government in heaven** during his one thousand year reign. There is a family of God on the earth just as there is a family of God in heaven (Eph. 3: 14 – 15).

The natural twelve tribes of Israel that become spiritual Jews through Spirit baptism are a part of God's family that is on the earth. In Rev. 7: 4 – 8 the one hundred and forty four thousand Jews represent divine government that is **on the earth**. **The heavenly** one hundred and forty four thousand are pictured in Rev. 14: 1 – 5. The divine government that rules with Christ from heaven is seen standing with him on the mount Zion (Rev. 14: 1). Mount Zion in its final and eternal application represents third heaven, God's abode (Psalm 2: 6 & 15: 1).

These two divine governments are pictured in other ways in the book of Revelation. The divine government **on earth** is symbolized as the seven angels sounding the seven trumpets (Rev. 8: 2). These angels are Jewish ministers sounding the Gospel trumpets during the one thousand year reign of Christ.

The divine government **in heaven** is pictured as the seven angels pouring out the seven vials of God's wrath (Rev. 15: 1 & 16: 1). These angels are the redeemed from the earth that will share with Christ in heaven his power over the nations (Psalm 2: 8 – 9 & Rev. 2: 26 – 27).

Christ's government on earth is also seen as the mighty angel's **left foot** on the earth (Rev. 10: 2). This is a Jewish ministry that through their preaching keeps **false religion (earth – Rev. 13: 11)** from gaining too much territory during the one thousand year reign of Christ.

The mighty angel's **right foot** on the sea pictures Christ's government **in heaven** (Rev. 10: 2). Christ is seated at the **right hand** of Almighty God (Psalm 110: 1; Mark 14: 62 & Act 7: 55 – 56). The redeemed from the earth will be seated with Christ at the Father's right hand (Rev. 3: 21). The **ungodly nations** are pictured as the **turbulent sea (Isa. 17: 12 – 13; 57: 20 & Luke 21: 25)**. Christ with the redeemed rule over the turbulent sea (ungodly nations – Psalm 2: 8 – 9 & Rev. 2: 26 – 27) from the right hand of God.

The mighty angel (Christ) with his feet on the earth and sea is picturing all things being put under Christ's feet. This is the fulfillment of Psalm 8: 5 & 110: 1. The divine government from earth and heaven accomplishes putting all enemies under Christ's feet (1 Cor. 15: 23 – 28).

Paul tells us that when all things are put under Christ's feet then Christ will turn it all over to his Father that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15: 28). When there is no more sin then the kingdom of God will have finally come (Rev. 11:15). This is getting a little ahead of the story but it was too good to pass up. We need to return to the twelve tribes of Israel for now.

They represent a Jewish ministry that receives the Gospel from the restored Gentile Church. They begin preaching just before the redeemed are caught away with Christ. They are pictured as the five foolish virgins that are not ready when the bridegroom comes (Mat. 25: 1 – 13). This Jewish ministry will continue developing until they sound the first trumpet that condemns the Laodicean Church and Gentile world. After the Gentile religious and political world power is judged and destroyed, then this Jewish ministry will continue preaching through the one thousand year reign of Christ.

7: 5

Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Rueben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

7: 6

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7: 7

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

7: 8

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Twelve times twelve means the tribes are a square. The earth has been just laid out before us as a square with four corners (Rev. 7: 1). We saw Christ as the angel from the east and it is appropriate that he starts sealing Judah, the principal tribe from the eastside of the tabernacle. Judah always led the rest of the tribes (Num. 2: 9). Judah was the head of all the tribes. Christ as the Lion and Star of Judah is also called the chief corner stone (Eph. 2: 20). His tribe, Judah, therefore takes the chief cornerstone position in this square of the twelve tribes. With Judah in the chief (head) corner position, the square of the tribes is turned to be as a diamond. Judah is at the top corner position.

John is given the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. They are related to him as though they would be listed around the two bent corners of the diamond. So that we don't go upwards or backwards the tribes are listed as two lists.

The first list starts on the east corner with Judah, goes to the north corner and then toward the west corner. The second list starts from the east corner, goes toward the south corner and then toward the west corner also. This is the same order followed in Rev. 21: 12 – 13. In Rev. 21 it is the gates of the foursquare city. They are listed in the same broken order. The gates are listed as on the east, then the north, then the south and finally the west.

Starting with Juda at the top east corner, Reuben and Gad are named as on the east side. Starting on the north corner with Aser, we then have Nephthalim and Manasses on the north side. This completes the first list on the left bent corner.

Starting on the right bent corner working down from Juda toward the south corner we have Simeon, Levi and Issachar on the south side. Starting down from the south corner toward the west corner we have Zabulon, Joseph and Benjamin on the west side.

The ancient image that this square of the twelve tribes is drawn from appears to be Ezekiel's description of an ideal square city of Jerusalem (Ezk. 48: 31 – 34). Ezekiel uses sides instead of corners. In Rev. 21 we can clearly see that Ezekiel's pattern provides the inspiration for John's square city.

Ezekiel's listing of the twelve tribes is close to what is listed in Rev. 7.

Revelation 7: 5 - 8

Ezekiel 48: 31 - 34

East corner--*Juda, Reuben* and Gad North --*Reuben, Judah* and Levi

North---Aser, Nephthalim and Manasses West---Gad, Asher and Naphtali

South---Simeon, Levi and Issachar South --Simeon, Issachar and Zebulon

West---Zabulon, Joseph and Benjamin East --Joseph, Benjamin and Dan

The twelve sons of Israel were from different mothers (Gen. 29 – 30 & 35: 16 – 26). The twelve sons are made up from Leah and Rachel and their handmaids. Leah bore six sons and adopted two of her handmaid's sons. Rachel had two sons and also adopted two of her handmaid's sons.

In Ezekiel's square city he divides the families up into four threes. Leah's six sons is divided into two threes. Ezekiel divides them into the older Leah and the younger Leah. Rachel is built into a three by adding the oldest of her adopted sons (Dan) to her. The remaining three sons of the handmaids are used as the fourth three.

Ezekiel advances Judah into the older Leah and pushes Simeon back into the younger Leah. This brings the tribe of Judah into the first three because of its royal position.

In Revelation both of these changes from Ezekiel are used but have a new birth. Dan is removed from the list with Manasses replacing him. Manasses was a son of Joseph as was Ephraim. Joseph's two sons had each become a tribe. With Ephraim as the oldest it was natural for the name Joseph to substitute for Ephraim. By using Joseph and Manasses and removing Dan from the twelve it fits with the removal of Judas Iscariot from the original twelve apostles.

Evidently Dan had an unreliable reputation (Gen. 49: 17, Lev. 24: 10 – 11, 1 Kings 12: 28 – 30, Jer. 4: 15 & 8: 16). This omission of Dan fits with what we should understand takes place in Rev. 21: 12 – 14. The names of the twelve apostles are associated with the twelve tribes in that celestial square city. No one would expect Iscariot's name to be there as one of the twelve apostles in that city, anymore than Dan's to be among the twelve tribes.

By omitting Dan, we can see that a Jewish ministry will be made up without men like Judas Iscariot. These ministers during the one thousand year reign of Christ will be faithful to the Lamb. As the one hundred and forty four thousand in heaven are faithful to follow the Lamb (Rev. 14: 4), so also this one hundred and forty four thousand are faithful to follow the Lamb on the earth.

Juda experiences an even greater promotion in Revelation than in Ezekiel. Juda is brought to the lead of the first three. The change is even more revealing when we see that Levi and not Simeon is removed from the first three. The demotion for Levi is to be understood in light of the change that has taken place in Christ. Under the New Covenant, the office of priest is joined with the final king of Israel (Jesus). In Hebrews 7: 11 – 14 we are told that the priesthood under the New Covenant is no longer from the tribe of Levi. Christ, who is from the tribe of Juda has been made a priest after the order of Melchisedec. In Christ, the king and priest have been joined together. The tribe of Levi has no special place of honor under the New Covenant like they did under the Old Covenant.

The lion of the tribe of Juda is the leading one under the New Covenant. The tribe of Juda is mentioned first because the Jews that are from these natural tribes will be following the spiritual tribe of Juda. It pictures natural Jews becoming spiritual Jews. This Jewish ministry will be paying no attention to their natural lineage. All they will be concerned with is the new birth of the Spirit. Their message will be about Spiritual circumcision and not natural circumcision.

The Jewish ministry will be preaching like their Jewish predecessor, the apostle Paul.

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. Rom. 2: 28 & 29.

They will be preaching to Jew and Gentile alike. The results of this sealed, foursquare Israel's preaching is revealed in the very next vision. An Israelite ministry is spiritually sealed down through the one thousand year reign of Christ to assure victory for Christ's kingdom. They are sealed that multitudes of Gentiles through their preaching may also be sealed.

7: 9

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;

7: 10

And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

7: 11

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,

7: 12

Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

7: 13

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?

7: 14

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.

7: 15

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.

7: 16

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

7: 17

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.

This great multitude of people from all nations represents all that will be eternally saved down through the one thousand year reign of Christ. There are several statements that help us to understand when this vision takes place. In Rev. 7: 9, the multitude that no man can number stands before God's throne and the Lamb with palm branches in their hands.

The palm branches seen in their hands, is drawn from the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23: 40). This feast usually coincides with the end of September or early October. It is primarily agricultural in its character. It is a joyous occasion. The harvest has been brought in from the fields, the groves and the orchards. The barns and sheds are full. Hearts also, are full of praise and thanksgiving for God's bounties.

It is the Feast of Ingathering or Israel's thanksgiving festival. It is the one called *the feast* by the apostle John in John 7: 37. Apart from its agricultural character, it also commemorates God's mighty deliverance of his people from Egypt and their forty years of wilderness wandering when they dwelt in tents and tabernacles.

During this feast, they were to dwell in booths or tabernacles made of palm branches (Lev. 23: 40). They were to rejoice before the Lord. The Jews were instructed to build tabernacles made of palm branches. They would wave palm branches in their hands during their worship.

The Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering is greatly imaged in Rev. 7: 9 - 17. This vision pictures all of God's people that are gathered together at the finality of God's plan of redemption. This innumerable company is crying Salvation or Victory to God. God has accomplished his plan of salvation. He has gathered together all the redeemed.

We can know that this vision is summing up all that will be saved. In order to understand how this is accomplished, we need to look at a type from the destruction of the city of Jericho. This type will be developed in detail in explaining the seven trumpets of the next chapter. It is only necessary for now, to focus on the house of Rahab and how her house is marked for preservation from Jericho's complete destruction.

In Joshua 2: 1 - 24, 6: 17 & 25 we have the story of Joshua sending two spies into the evil city of Jericho. Rahab the harlot hides them from the men of Jericho because she has become a believer in their God. She heard of Israel's great deliverance from Egypt and God's continuing power among them. In return for this favor, the spies promise her that if she displays the scarlet thread in the window that she and all that are within the house shall be saved from the destruction.

Rahab is a type of the natural Jews. When the Gentile Church (Philadelphia) is restored, this will be fulfilling the type of Israel entering into the promise land. The natural Jews will hear about the great things that God has done with the Restored Gentile Church and believe on their God (Christ). The scarlet thread pictures the natural Jews that believe are marked with the blood (scarlet) of the Lamb for preservation. The one hundred and forty four thousand Jews are the scarlet thread down through the one thousand year reign of Christ.

Rahab (Jews) will convince others (Jew & Gentile) in Jericho (city of sin) to come into her marked house (Jewish Church). It is marked and sealed for preservation from total destruction that is coming. Rahab and her house are numbered ahead of time for preservation from destruction. The number of those that enter into the marked house to be saved is not known. In like manner, the Jewish ministry is numbered and marked for preservation down through the one thousand year reign of Christ. They are the Church. The Church has always been God's plan for salvation (Rom. 8: 29). A great multitude that no man can number from all nations results from their preaching.

The great multitude that no man can number from all nations is set opposite to the limited number of Israelites. John hears with his ear the number counted by an angel but sees with his eye a great multitude that no man could number. We can see this pre-known number is set in opposition to an unknown number imaged in the promise that Abraham received (Gen. 15: 5). We know the number of Abraham but those that inherit Abraham's blessing are as unknown as the innumerable stars.

Those that will find salvation during this one thousand year reign of Christ will become a part of this Jewish Church

This last vision (Rev. 7: 9 - 17) reveals those that will be able to stand during the day of the Lamb's wrath. Salvation is the outcome for those that are sealed.

When the walls of sin (Jericho) fall down (battle of Gog & Magog), Rahab (Jewish ministry) and her house (Jew and Gentile believers during Christ's reign) will be joined together with Israel (redeemed from heaven) forever.

God's overall redemption *purpose is that in the fullness of time he might gather together in one, all things in Christ (Eph. 1: 10)*. This vision is showing *the family in heaven* is gathered together with *the family on earth* (Eph. 3: 15). The vision mentions that this innumerable company is before God's throne and the Lamb. Angels, twenty- four elders and the four beasts are all there together. The vision doesn't mention where the throne of God is located. Other aspects of the vision reveal when and where it takes place.

The repetition of Rev. 7: 15 –17 in Rev. 21: 3 – 6 and Rev. 22: 1 – 4 helps us to know the when and where of the vision. In Rev. 21: 3 – 6 we see *God tabernacling with men, wiping all tears from their eyes because there is no more death and quenching the thirst of men with the fountain of the water of life*. In Rev. 21: 1 – 2 we discover when God tabernacles with men. God dwells with men only after the first heaven and earth are passed away and there is no more sea. This pictures no more sinners existing on the earth. At this time, the holy city, New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to the earth. This is when God dwells with men. After the last enemy, which is death, is destroyed (1 Cor. 15: 26), then God tabernacles with men.

In Rev. 22: 1 – 4 we see again, the throne of God is in the holy city that has descended to the earth. In that city, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb is the water of life. The curse of death is removed and all his servants worship before his throne. They are blessed to see God's face and they are sealed (marked) with God's name in their foreheads.

The comparisons of Rev. 21: 3 – 6 and Rev. 22: 1 – 4 with Rev. 7: 15 – 17 makes it clear that the innumerable company exists after God's kingdom comes to the earth. This fulfills the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. *The tabernacle of God is with men* (Rev. 21: 3).

The other name that this feast has is *Ingathering* (Ex. 23: 16 & Deut. 16: 13). The significance of the Feast of Ingathering can be seen in Zechariah 14: 16 – 19. The nations that are left after the great judgment (World war three) falls on the Gentile world are pictured as going up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Jerusalem represents the Jewish ministry and Church during the reign of Christ. They are the family of God in the earth (Amos 3: 2 & Eph 3: 15). During the one thousand year reign of Christ, if any of the families of the earth (Gentiles) come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (ingathering) they will have no rain (no water of life – Spirit). If they don't have the Spirit of life, then they will die. This is showing that eternal life will be found with the Jewish Church during the one thousand year reign of Christ.

When Zech. 14: 18 – 19 mentions the family of Egypt not keeping the Feast of Tabernacles it is picturing all the realm outside of the Jewish Church that does not respond to their preaching. The family of Egypt pictures all the heathen families. In Zech. 14: 18 the family of Egypt (Gentiles) that keep not the Feast of Tabernacles (they don't believe the message of the Jewish ministry) will be smitten with the plague (seven plagues of God's wrath – Rev. 15: 1).

In Psalm 79: 1 – 13 we are given further images to help explain Zech. 14: 18. The Psalmist is asking for divine justice on Israel's neighbors, the heathen (Psalm 79: 3, 6 & 12). These neighbors were other families of the earth. He is asking God to pour out his wrath (Psalm 79: 6) sevenfold on their neighbors, the heathen (Psalm 79: 12). This seventy- ninth Psalm provides imagery for the seven plagues that are poured out on all the heathen that do not believe the preaching of this Jewish ministry. Compare also Psalm 78: 43 – 51 for plagues on Egypt.

The closing out of God's salvation plan with the Feast of Ingathering is appropriate in relation to the other two great feasts of the Jews. The Feast of Passover was fulfilled in Christ's crucifixion (1Cor. 5: 7) and the Church has been keeping this feast since that time. The feast of Pentecost began on the day of the first Pentecostal feast after our Lord's resurrection (Act 2: 1 – 4). God's Spirit was poured out into the Church and has continued being celebrated since that time. God has been gathering the harvest into his heavenly barn (Ex. 23: 16). The fulfillment of the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) will be completed when God has gathered all of his people together unto him. Not only will the ingathering of souls be fulfilled, but God tabernacling with men will also be fulfilled.

In Rev. 7: 11 we are told that all the angels stood round about the throne, the elders and the four beasts. The point is being made that the angels stand (not seated) before God's throne. We should also notice that the innumerable company of saints stand (not seated) before the throne (Rev. 7: 9). It is a special place of honor and authority to be seated in the presence of God and the Lamb. The twenty-four elders are seated around the throne (Rev.4: 4).

The white robes that this great multitude wears represent eternal bodies that they are clothed with (II Cor. 5: 1 – 3). By deduction, we can determine what it means to have their robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14). The martyrs of the fifth seal have lost their bodies through a persecuted death. They are given white robes (immortal & glorified bodies - Rev. 6: 11). This innumerable company is not given white robes but they wash them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The elder that explains the robes are white by the blood of the Lamb is drawing from Gen. 49: 9 – 12. The last elder that spoke to John, used this same passage to explain the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5: 5). The Spiritual tribe of Judah washes their robes in the blood of grapes (Gen. 49: 11 & Deut.32: 14). In Num. 13: 23 we find the Israelite spies bringing back a huge cluster of grapes from the promise land. The cluster of grapes represents Christ as he was crushed on the cross. On the day of Pentecost, Christ poured out (Act 2: 33) this juice of his Spirit into the one hundred and twenty thirsty disciples (Act 2: 4). Peter said they were drunk with new wine (Act 2: 13) but it was the Spirit of God (Act 2: 15 – 17). The blood of the Lamb represents God's Spirit (Lev. 17: 11 & Rom. 8: 10). We have already seen that this company has entered into Rahab's house that is marked by the scarlet (Christ's blood – Spirit) thread. As the red thread preserves from destruction, so also the blood of the Lamb washes white the robe of flesh they are living in. They are not glorified bodies but they have the curse of death (Rev. 21: 4 & 22: 3) removed from their bodies and are immortal.

In Isa. 65: 17 – 25 we are told that during the natural and spiritual restoration of Israel a Jewish man that dies at one hundred years old will be thought to be but a child when he died. God will also limit an old Jewish sinner from living past one hundred. He will be cursed when he dies and have no hope for an eternal existence. This will start happening around Jerusalem but not in the world as a whole. As the one thousand year reign of Christ develops and the Jewish Church expands, more believers will be living longer and longer. God's Spirit will be preserving people just as it would have preserved Adam and Eve. As they overcome the flesh by the Spirit (the blood of the Lamb), the curse of death will be lifted off of their mortal bodies (Rom. 8: 10 – 13).

One of the elders tells John that these that have *washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb are they that have come out of great tribulation*. This particular *great tribulation* represents *the seven vials of wrath* that will have been poured out during the one thousand year reign of Christ (Rev. 15: 1). This great tribulation is referring back to Rev. 6: 17. There, we are told that *the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?* The great day of his wrath is the one thousand year day of Christ's reign. In Psalm 110: 3 we are told of Israel being willing to serve Christ *in the day of his power*. Verse six of this Psalm tells us of Christ striking kings *in the day of his wrath*.

These that come out of this great tribulation are pictured in Rev. 20: 8 – 9 as *the beloved city and camp of the saints*. Fire from God comes down upon their enemies. The Jewish Church is protected from the fire. They are protected from the first vial of wrath that is poured out (Dan. 12: 1) all the way through, to and including the seventh vial (Rev. 20: 8 – 9). They are in Rahab's protected house. The destruction of Jericho's walls of sin can be falling down all around them and they have no reason to fear. As long as they remain inside the house with the scarlet thread in the window, no harm will come to them. As long as they keep the Passover and stay in the house covered by the blood, the death angel will pass over them (Ex.12: 13 & I Cor. 5: 7).

This is the distinction between being given white robes and washing them in the blood of the Lamb. Those that overcome during the one thousand year reign of Christ don't die a physical death and go to heaven but are preserved on the earth in immortal bodies. If Adam and Eve had proven faithful they would never have died. Their bodies would have been immortal. This is why they are being pictured as having their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

As the Jewish Church expands and grows it will be reaching more Gentiles. There will be people that God will allow to live the entire one thousand year reign of Christ. Through the power of God's Spirit they will overcome the law of sin and death (Rom 8: 1 – 2). When they have become conformed into the image of Christ, the curse of death will be removed from their bodies (Rom 8: 11). They are cleansed (washed – Tit. 3: 5 – 6) as they offer their bodies a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12: 1 – 2). In Rev. 12: 11, we are told that those that overcome do so by the blood of the Lamb. Even though Rev. 12: 11 is speaking of the angels (those that rule with Christ) that are with Michael (Christ) the principle of the power of the Spirit is the same for all those that overcome sin.

We need to understand that this innumerable company of saints will also consist of all those that resurrect at the end of the one thousand year reign of Christ (Rev. 20: 5 & 12). Of course, only those that overcome after they are resurrected will be a part of this group. The resurrected will also have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have come through great tribulation.

This great tribulation is not the same as the great tribulation mentioned in Mat. 24: 21 or in Rev. 2: 22. In Mat. 24: 21 it is talking about the nation of Israel and the awful destruction of 70 A.D. from the Roman Empire. In Rev. 2: 22 it is talking about the great battle that will bring an end to the Gentile world (World war three). This innumerable company of saints will be those that God wonderfully delivers from the effects of the seven vials of wrath that are poured out during the reign of Christ. In Psalm 91 we are told that God will preserve his people from any harm, if they are faithful. No harm can come to someone, if they are walking in the Spirit and pleasing God unless God permits it.

The great multitude, which no man can number that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb is to be distinguished between those that reign with Christ for one thousand years and are given robes.

In the book of Revelation there are many different images used. Some of them stand for the very same thing. The symbols of those that reign with Christ for one thousand years are expressed in a variety of ways. In Rev. 1: 6 they are kings and priests. In 3: 12 they are pillars in the temple of God that have the name of the city of God written on them. In 5: 8 – 10 they are the four beasts and twenty-four elders. In 10: 2 they are the right foot of the mighty angel on the sea. In 11: 12 they are the two witnesses that ascend up to heaven in a cloud. In 12: 5 they are the man-child caught up to God and his throne. In 12: 7 they are the angels with Michael. In 14: 1 they are the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. In 15: 1 they are the seven angels having the seven last plagues. In 17: 14 they are the called, chosen and faithful that are with the Lamb. In 19: 7 they are the wife of the Lamb that has made herself ready. In 19: 14 they are the armies on white horses that ride with the Word of God. In 20: 1 they are the great chain in the angel's hand that binds the dragon. In 20: 4 they are the souls that sit on thrones and reign with Christ for one thousand years. In 21: 2 they are the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. In 21: 9 they are the bride the Lamb's wife. In 21: 10 – 27 they are the gloriously beautiful city of holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven.

This great multitude that no man can number is before the throne of God. They worship Him in his temple and God dwells among them. They are also pictured as the saved nations that walk in the light of that heavenly city (Rev. 21: 24). We have already seen that the time when God dwells with men is when all sin has been removed from the earth. God and the Lamb come down to the earth surrounded by the four beasts and the twenty- four elders that are the walls of the heavenly city. The throne of God and the Lamb are the temple of God (Rev. 21: 22). The temple has no walls or curtains in this heavenly city. The city is that temple and the temple is that city.

If the city is the temple and this innumerable company serves or worships God continually in his temple (Rev. 7: 15), then they must be citizens in the eternal city. John is told that God *dwells* (tabernacles) among them (Rev. 7: 15). We saw from Rev. 21: 3 that God comes to tabernacle (dwell) with men when the eternal city comes down to the earth. Although they are pictured as being in his temple, they are also

pictured as being in the city where God dwells (Rev. 21: 24 & 27). The symbols of the temple and tabernacle are used as they serve their specific purposes. God dwells in the city. He dwells in the temple. He pitches his tabernacle over his people because He now dwells in their midst. The city and the temple are really the same thing. They each express a different aspect of those that rule with Christ for one thousand years. God pitching his tabernacle over his people expresses his dwelling with men.

This pitching His tabernacle over his people provides the background for Rev. 7: 16. God provides protection for them from hunger, thirst and heat. The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd. He will feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters. The image is drawn from God preserving the nation of Israel during their wilderness wanderings. God's miraculous provision for Israel in the wilderness finds final fulfillment in his eternal care for his people.

These images connect us back with Rev. 7: 9. The innumerable company **stands in the temple** with palm branches in their hands shouting *Salvation (Hosanna – Psalm 118: 25)* or *Victory* to God and the Lamb. We know from Rev. 3: 12a that Jesus will make those that overcome to *be pillars in the eternal temple of God*. They also have *the name of the city of God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven written on them* (Rev. 3: 12b).

The seventh seal explains the assembling of this eternal temple, which is also the holy city. After it is assembled, it will be dedicated like Solomon did at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (II Chron. 5: 3). At Solomon's temple dedication, the priests came out of the temple (II Chron. 5: 11); trumpets began to sound and the glory of God filled the temple (II Chron. 5: 13), so that no one was able to enter the temple (II Chron. 5: 14 & Ex. 40: 34 – 35).

The Greater Solomon (God's Son) fulfilled this image. After the Lamb takes seven years and six months to assemble the eternal temple, he will dedicate it at the time of the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles (or ingathering). As mentioned above, this great multitude is seen celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (Rev. 7: 9). This Feast starts to be celebrated at the dedication of God's eternal temple, which begins the one thousand year reign of Christ. An ingathering of souls begins at this dedication through the first trumpet of the Jewish ministry. It culminates when all the redeemed from heaven and earth are joined together around God's throne at the end of Christ's reign (Eph. 1: 10). The literal feast lasted seven days (II Chron. 7: 8). On each of the seven days they offered sacrifices (Lev. 23: 36). On each of the seven days they blew trumpets (Num. 10: 10). In Rev. 8: 2 seven angels are given seven trumpets to sound. The first trumpet sounds at the dedication of the eternal temple.

Just before the first trumpet sounds and the eternal temple is dedicated, we see in Rev. 15: 5 – 8 seven priestly angels **come out** of the eternal temple with vials of plagues and the temple is filled with the glory of God. No man can enter into the eternal temple until the seven plagues was poured out.

This innumerable company of saints will not be able to stand before God and the Lamb in the eternal temple (city) until the seventh vial is poured out. God will not dwell among this great multitude and wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 7: 15 & 17) until the holy city (temple) comes down to the earth (Rev. 21: 2 – 4). We can understand by these images when this takes place. The great multitude cannot enter the temple until after the seventh vial is poured out. When we study the seven trumpets and vials we will see that they work together. The one thousand year reign of Christ is pictured by these seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles.

They are keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. They are celebrating God's provision in the wilderness. God pitched his tabernacle over Israel. He covered them with the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day. The picture is very clear! God's wonderful care and provision in the wilderness is fulfilled in the end of God's plan of redemption. The Feast of Tabernacles celebrates God's loving care for his people. We all will be rejoicing when God wipes away all tears from our eyes (Isa. 25: 8 & Rev. 21: 4).

It was mentioned earlier that the Feast of Tabernacles brought the fitting end to the year. In Ex. 23: 16 it is called *the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when they had gathered their crops from the fields*. This scene is given in anticipation of what will be at the end of this divine love story. All of God's children will have been redeemed and gathered around the throne.

In these two visions of Rev. 7, John has been shown those that are able to stand through the one thousand year reign of Christ. The divine governmental leadership that comes from Israel (144,000 Israelites) will bring about this innumerable company of saints that will welcome the tabernacle of God on the earth.

Chapter seven is inserted before the seventh seal is opened because its events **start** taking place **during** the time of the sixth seal and **prior to** the seventh seal. We have already seen that although the events of the seventh chapter and seventh seal **start during the time of the sixth seal** that they **both continue** for the one thousand year reign of the Lamb.

Now that we know who will be able to **stand on the earth** during this great tribulation (seven vials of wrath), John is to be shown who will **assist** the Lamb in his reign **from heaven**. We are ready for the opening of the seventh seal. This will explain who assists the Lamb in his reign and pours out the vials of wrath.

The twenty-four elders sitting on thrones around (Rev. 4: the throne of God and the Lamb are seen in anticipation of their assisting the Lamb in his reign (Rev. 5: 8 – 10). By comparing the promise of Christ sharing his throne with those that overcome (Rev. 3: 21) with the twenty-four elders (Rev. 5: 8 – 10) we see that they are the same group. Since those that overcome reign with the Lamb, we are not surprised also to see that they are pictured as the eternal temple of God (Rev. 3: 12). The promise to Philadelphia (to be a part of the eternal temple) and Laodicea (to rule with Christ) are fused together in the seventh seal. Those that overcome can be understood as the image of the eternal temple and the image of kings sharing Christ's throne. The seventh seal explains how those that assist the Lamb in his reign, are also an eternal temple of God. The imagery of Solomon and the temple is foundational to the book of Revelation.

8: 1

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

We saw earlier in Rev. 3: 12 that those that overcome will be made a part of God's eternal temple. This eternal temple is to be built by the greater son of David (Rev. 5: 7). The opening of the six seals has now produced the scene for the assembling of the eternal temple of God. As David handed his son Solomon the written instructions to build the temple (I Chron. 28: 11 & 19), so also God's Son has been given the instructions to build the eternal temple (Rev. 5: 7).

During the six seals, the material for building the eternal temple was being quarried from the mountains of sinful humanity (Dan. 2: 45). The image of silence in assembling the eternal temple of God is drawn from I Kings 6: 7.

*And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone **made ready before it was brought hither**: so that there was neither hammer nor axe **nor any tool of iron heard** in the house, while it was in **building** (being assembled).*

Solomon had everything pre-cut and then it was brought to the temple site. At the temple site there was silence. No sounds were heard in the assembling of the temple. None of the material needed any further cutting or shaping at the time of assembling. All cutting was done away from the temple site. The builders only had to put the material together. The craftsmen had cut and shaped the material precisely according to the plan given to Solomon by his father David that there was no need to make any changes.

The final fulfillment of this image is found in The Lamb assembling those that overcome into the eternal temple of God. In third heaven, the Lamb will put together all the material that his craftsmen (ministers) have been working on here in the earth.

In Jer. 23: 29 we are told that *God's word is like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces*. If we remember what was said about Rev. 3: 12 it will help us in understanding what is imaged here. As Christ built a spiritual temple (I Pet. 2: 5) that was his Church (Mat. 16: 18), so also we can see he will build an eternal temple. He has laborers (ministers) that are cutting the material (souls) here in the earth to perfectly fit into that eternal temple of God. They are using the tools of God's word to shape us.

In Eph. 2: 10 Paul said we are *God's workmanship* (His handiwork). He then said in Eph. 2: 21 that we are material in *the building that is fitly framed together that grows into a holy temple*. In Eph. 4: 11 – 12 Christ's five-fold ministry has been given for the perfecting of the saints. In II Cor. 5: 5 Paul also said *God has wrought* (shaped) us for this eternal temple. In I Cor. 3:10 Paul calls himself a *wise master-builder*. In I Cor. 3: 9 he said other ministers are *laborers in God's building*. In II Cor. 6: 1 ministers are spoken of as *workers for God*.

We can see by these scriptures that as we are shaped by God's word to fit into his temple (the Church) here on the earth, we are also being shaped to fit into that eternal temple in heaven. Although we are a part of his Church here on the earth, we must be sure that we are ready when he returns for us (Mat. 24: 44). The Lamb's wife, that is another symbol for the city –temple, must make herself ready (Rev. 19: 7).

In Psalm 15: 1 – 5 we must not only qualify to temporarily *abide in God's tabernacle* (His Church), but we must be found ready and finished to *dwell* (eternally) *in His holy hill* (Rev. 14: 1). Not everyone that is part of the spiritual temple here on the earth will be a part of the eternal temple in heaven. In Rev. 12: 5, the woman is not caught up to the third heaven but only the man-child is caught up. This shows that the woman (the Church) is not caught away to reign but only what she produces (the man-child).

The man-child is caught up when Christ returns. In Rev. 11: 12 & 13 **the two revived witnesses ascend (are caught up) to third heaven. They are caught up in the same hour that judgment falls on the Gentile world**. During the **hour** that they are caught away, the Lamb begins to assemble those that will reign with him into the eternal temple of God. This silent assembling takes *about the space of half an hour* (Rev. 8: 1).

According to the image that this seventh seal is built upon, Solomon silently assembled the literal temple in the space of seven years and six months (II Kings 6: 1, 37 & 38). Seven years and six months, according to the type, represents the space of half an hour. One hour would be fifteen years ($2 \times 7 \frac{1}{2} = 15$). One twenty-four hour day would be three hundred and sixty years ($24 \times 15 = 360$). Three and one half days would be one thousand two hundred and sixty years ($3 \frac{1}{2} \times 360 = 1,260$).

We find some of these same numbers in the third, eleventh and twelfth chapters of Revelation. In Rev. 11: 2 and 12: 6 there is one thousand two hundred and sixty days. In Rev. 11: 9 & 11 there is three and one half days. In Rev. 3: 10, 11: 13 & 17: 12 & 16 there is one hour.

Two more related numbers are mentioned in chapters eleven, twelve and thirteen of Revelation. In Rev. 11: 2 & 13: 5 we see forty-two months. In Rev. 12: 14 we see three and a half times. Forty-two months translates into one thousand two and sixty days or three and a half years. Three and a half times is the same as three and a half years or three and a half days.

These numbers all refer to the same time frame. $3 \frac{1}{2}$ days = $3 \frac{1}{2}$ times = $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years = 42 months = 1,260 days = 1,260 years.

If $3 \frac{1}{2}$ days = 1,260 years, then we can discover what one day is by dividing $3 \frac{1}{2}$ into 1,260. If 1 day = 360 years, then we can discover what one hour is by dividing 24 into 360. If 1 hour = 15 years, then we can discover what a half an hour is by dividing $\frac{1}{2} \times 15$. We discover that the half an hour is $7 \frac{1}{2}$ years.

We saw that three and a half *times* (Rev. 12: 14) was a part of the prophetic equation. It has its background from Dan 7: 25. The evil little horn makes war successfully against the saints for three and a half times. Jesus spoke of the Gentile times in Luke 21: 24. The times of the Gentiles is imaged from Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan. 2: 1 – 45.

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered and brought to an end the kings of Judah. Gentile supremacy over Israel continued through the four world powers (Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome) that are imaged in the dream. During the reign of Rome, God set his Son on David's throne in the heavens. Pagan Roman rule transformed into religious Roman rule. Israel has continued under Gentile supremacy until the middle of the twentieth century. The times of the Gentiles are coming to an end. The Gentile times will have a last prophetic hour.

There is a last prophetic hour (15 years) that ends the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21: 24). In the first half of that hour Christ dedicates his rebuilt spiritual temple, the Philadelphia Church (Rev. 3: 9). Again, the background of Solomon and the temple provides the understanding of this spiritual temple that was destroyed by mystery Babylon (Rev. 17: 5) and is rebuilt. The Davidic descendant Zerubbabel pictures Christ rebuilding his temple (Zech. 4: 8).

The prophet Haggai promised that the glory of this rebuilt literal temple was to be greater than the first temple (Hag. 2: 9). The greatest manifestation of God's glory in the first temple that Solomon built was on the day of dedication when the glory of the Lord filled the temple, so that no one could minister in it (II Chron. 5: 14). This was fulfilled in the spiritual temple when the glory of the Lord came on the day of Pentecost and filled the one hundred and twenty disciples (Act 2: 1 – 4). (See the comments made on Rev. 3: 12 for more details of this type). The way that the rebuilt literal temple had greater glory than the first was that The Lord of glory (Jesus) himself came to teach in the outer courts of the rebuilt temple (Mat. 21: 12). This is to be fulfilled spiritually when the Lord of glory himself shall descend and catch away those that are ready that make up his rebuilt spiritual temple (1 Thes. 4: 16 – 17). The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former.

The latter spiritual house (the restored Church) shall be dedicated with the glory of the Lord filling it at the beginning of the last Gentile hour. In the middle of that last hour, the Lord of Glory shall personally come for this spiritual temple.

At the end of the first half hour (7 ½ years) he returns to steal away those that have overcome and are alive and remain (Rev. 3: 11 & 12). This stealing away is when the silence in third heaven begins. In the second half hour he assembles them in silence with all others that have overcome (Rev. 3: 12 & 8: 1). There will be no need for Jesus to shape any of the stones that he is assembling. All the noise of the cutting and hammering will have already been done here on the earth.

While there is silence in third heaven during this second half hour, there is not silence in first and second heaven on this earth. These three heavens (II Cor. 12: 2 – 4) can be seen in chapter twelve of Revelation. The man-child was caught up to the throne of God (third heaven – Rev. 12: 5). The woman clothed with the sun is in second heaven (Rev. 12: 1). The great red dragon is in first heaven.

The heaven that the woman and the dragon are in (Rev. 12: 1 & 3) represents a religious element (Rev. 6: 14). However, in Rev. 11: 1 & 2 we should be able to see a difference the first and second heaven.. The outer courts are to be seen as first heaven and the temple as second heaven. The sealed Israelites that receive the Gospel from the restored Gentile Church are continuing during the one thousand years to preach the Gospel to people in the first two heavens. The Jewish divine government (the sealed Israelites) will be helping the saints (believing nations) during the one thousand years to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The nations hear the trumpets that sound during the Feast of Tabernacles and come to worship (Zech. 14: 16 – 19). The believing nations celebrate this Feast with palm branches in their hands (Rev. 7: 9). This is what is pictured next by the seven angels blowing the seven trumpets (Rev. 8: 2).

The seven messages and the seven seals showed how the greater Solomon would build and dedicate his eternal temple and have officiating censuring priests functioning in it. The seven trumpets that we meet in the next verse will show us how the innumerable worshippers from every nation are able to enter into that eternal temple. A trumpet each of the days of the feast announces blood that is available to wash their robes white. During the sounding of the seven trumpets they dwell in booths (temporary tabernacles – Lev. 23: 42) but when the seventh trumpet sounds they dwell in the eternal temple. God will dwell or tabernacle among them forever (Rev. 7: 15). The Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering is fulfilled at last!

8: 2

And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

This is the first appearance of these seven angels that are seen as standing before God. Standing before God is meant to picture their service unto God (I Kings 17: 1). Their trumpets reveal they are ministers heralding the good news of the Gospel (Ezk. 33: 7 & Isa. 58: 1). The seven angels are messengers or stars similar to the seven angels of the seven churches of Asia. They represent a ministry that begins to sound the Gospel trumpet during the dedication of the eternal temple of God.

As mentioned above in comments about Rev. 8: 1, the dedication of the eternal temple will take place at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ingathering). During that Feast a trumpet is blown each day announcing the bloodshed of a sacrificial lamb. These seven angels with seven trumpets announce that the Lamb's Blood is available to all who will keep the Feast. Robes are being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The Gospel trumpet that Gentiles sounded is now passed to Jewish lips. The seven trumpeters define the one hundred and forty-four thousand Israelites. They are a Jewish ministry declaring the good news to those that respond to the Gospel by repenting and judgment to those that reject the truth.

This Jewish ministry brings about the great ingathering of souls during the one thousand year reign of Christ. The ingathering is pictured in Rev. 7: 9 as the great multitude, which no man could number. This great multitude is pictured as keeping the Feast of Ingathering. The connection of this Feast with Solomon's temple dedication provides the imagery background that is being drawn upon.

The imagery of the Feast with the temple does not exhaust all of the Old Testament images that are drawn upon in this scene. What was previously mentioned about the story of Rahab the harlot (see comments about Rev. 7: 9 – 17) also provides rich imagery material for this particular vision of seven trumpeters.

As Jesus reshapes other images from the Old Testament in the Revelation, he also reshapes the story of the destruction of Jericho. As the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) provides the image necessary for the saving of a great number of souls during Christ's reign and of God eventually tabernacling with all the redeemed, in like manner, Jericho's destruction provides the imagery necessary for the judgment that Christ will bring on all those that do not repent during his one thousand year reign.

The story of Israel marching around the walls of Jericho and the priests blowing trumpets until the walls fall down provides the rich imagery for the seven trumpets and the seven vials. In the sixth chapter of Joshua we have recorded the method that God used to miraculously destroy that wicked city. The Israelites were to march around Jericho once a day for six days. On each of the six days, seven priests were to blow trumpets. The seventh day was different. They were to march around the city seven times and the priests were to blow their trumpets each time they marched around. The seventh time around the priests blew their trumpets long, the Israelites shouted and the walls of Jericho fell down flat.

Christ's one thousand-year reign is pictured by this seventh day of Jericho (see comments on Rev. 6: 13 – 17). The six previous days picture the six one thousand-year days that started with Adam and will end with the destruction of the Gentile age. In each one thousand year day God has had a trumpet blower. Each day had outstanding men that declared God's truth.

When Adam sinned at the beginning of the **first day**, God raised up *Abel* as **the first trumpet** blower to sound a clear warning of what to do when they sinned. He brought a blood sacrifice for the remission of sins (Heb. 11: 4). Abel's trumpet declared that without the shedding of blood there would be no remission of sins (Heb. 9: 22).

Near the end of the **second day**, *Noah* blew **the second trumpet** declaring God's righteousness and coming judgment (II Pet. 2: 5 & Heb. 11: 7).

During the **third day**, *Moses* blew **the third trumpet** when he delivered the law of God (Luke 16: 16).

The prophets, with *John the Baptist* as the most prominent trumpet blower among them (Mat. 11: 11) blew **the fourth trumpet** during the **fourth day**. He was a voice crying in the wilderness (Mat. 3: 3).

Christ came at the beginning of the **fifth day** but he was not a trumpet blower. He equipped *a Jewish ministry* and gave them **the fifth trumpet**. We are still hearing their sound (Rom. 10: 18 & Mark 16: 20) today.

God is preparing *a Gentile ministry* at the end of the **sixth day** to sound **the sixth trumpet** (Mat. 24:31 & Rev. 14: 6 -7). This restored Gentile ministry will hand the gospel trumpet to a restored Jewish ministry. The restored Jewish ministry is the seven angels with seven trumpets.

The Jewish ministry blows **the seven trumpets** during the **seventh day** and the walls of sin in the world fall down flat. The walls of sin do not fall down at the blowing of the first trumpet. Each trumpet blowing is followed by judgment on the unrepentant. These seven gospel trumpets and the seven vials of judgment that follow each trumpet are what will bring down the walls of sin in this world.

The seven angels are waiting to blow their trumpets. Before the first angel sounds some other events must take place.

8: 3

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.

8: 4

And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

8: 5

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.

8: 6

And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Under the comments made about Rev. 8: 2, we saw that on each day of the Feast of tabernacles that trumpets are blown preceding the shed blood of lambs. The mention here of incense being offered with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar and it being acceptable to God fits with this description. The slaughtered lamb can't be burned nor the trumpets blown until the priest has offered incense on the golden altar in the holy place.

Adding further to these different levels of imagery we should remember the comments made about Rev. 6: 10. The prayers of the saints for righteous judgment have been heard. The comments made about Rev. 5: 8 show that the saints that have overcome are as censuring priests. When we put these images together we see the angel as a censuring priest (Christ –High Priest & those that overcome are priests with him) is offering the prayers of the saints as incense on the golden altar and is thereby giving the signal for the trumpets of the Feast to begin.

The scene that is shown to John continues the imagery of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Temple has been put together in silence and now the censuring priest has offered the incense of prayer to God for divine judgment. Now that God has accepted the incense, it is time for the censer to be filled with the judgment. The coals of fire from the golden altar symbolize the wrath of God. The function of the censuring priest has changed. He is no longer offering up prayers as incense for divine justice because the time for judgment has arrived.

The role of the censuring priest is now to scoop up coals of fire from off the golden altar with the golden censer (vial). He casts the coals of fire upon the earth. This image connects with comments made in Rev. 7: 4. The comments show that the image of the righteous in Jerusalem being marked in their foreheads for preservation is drawn from Ezek. 9: 1 – 11. So also, during the one thousand year reign of Christ the restored Jewish Church will be sealed in their forehead from destruction. Those that do not repent during each gospel trumpet will receive judgment from God.

This judgment is pictured in Ezek. 10: 2 by the marking angel scooping coals of fire and casting them upon the doomed city. In like manner, the censuring angel changes from offering incense on the coals of fire on the golden altar to scooping up the coals of fire and casting them upon the earth. This imagery brings out the connection of the souls under the golden altar that are praying for divine vengeance with the prayers that are being offered as incense by the censuring priest. After the number of those that overcome is made up, then they will no longer be praying for justice but will be involved in the pouring out of the wrath.

Putting the layers of imagery together, we can see that the prayers (incense) of the saints from the golden altar are transformed into coals of fire (judgment) that return upon their enemies heads. These images reveal the activities of those that reign with Christ. During the half hour of silence, their role as a persecuted witness is changed into one that rules the nations with the rod of iron. As they suffer with their Lord, they shall also reign with him.

Those that overcome are now to be involved in pouring out judgment on the unrepentant. The fire poured on the earth depicts events that take place after Christ's return and just before the world war that brings an end to the Gentile world. It is wars and rumors of wars. The fire also images very troubling events. There will be tumults, pollution, population problems and uprisings. While world leaders are trying desperately to maintain world peace, yet there will constantly be flare-ups.

The fledgling Jewish ministry will be developing also during this last half hour of the Gentile times. They will be preparing themselves to echo the truth that they have received from the restored Gentile Church. They will be in opposition to the false church system that will be receiving power from the pagan world governments.

The voices, thunderings, lightnings and earthquake are images from God's presence at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19: 16 – 18). Jehovah was present on the mount. His presence was manifested by voices, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake. Jesus was the prophet that was greater than Moses (Deut. 18: 15, Mat. 5: 1 - 2 & Heb. 3: 1 – 6). The Church of Jesus Christ was pictured as a mountain (Gal. 3: 22 – 26 & Heb. 12: 18 – 27). As Moses received the law from God on the mount and gave it to the people, so also did Jesus receive the law of the Spirit of life from his Father to give to the people. The voices, thunderings, lightnings and earthquake depict the Church.

We saw these images in Rev. 4: 5 as coming from the presence of God. They are also mentioned in Rev. 11: 19 & 16: 18. These images reveal the presence of God in the Church. In Rev. 8: 5 they image the Jewish Church that begins sounding the gospel trumpet during this last half hour