

THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CONTENTS, DEDICATION, AND PREFACE. Pages 1-3.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION. Page 4.

- A. The various theories as to the interpretation of the book of Revelation.
- B. The key facts necessary for a correct interpretation of the Apocalypse.
- C. The city called "Babylon," is the city of Jerusalem.
- D. A skeleton outline of the book of Revelation. Rev.1v19.
- E. The Greek text of the book of Revelation.

JOHN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION. Rev.1v1-8. Page 9.

- A. The Source of the Book of Revelation. Rev.1v1-3.
- B. John's Greeting to the Seven Churches in the Roman Province of Asia. Rev.1v4-8.

PART 1. THINGS PAST. Rev.1v9-20. John's vision of the Lord Jesus on Patmos. Page 15.

PART 2. THINGS PRESENT. Rev.2v1 to 3v22. The Letters to the Seven Churches. Page 19.

1. Ephesus. Rev.2v1-7.
2. Smyrna. Rev.2v8-11.
3. Pergamos. Rev.2v12-17.
4. Thyatira. Rev.2v18-29.
5. Sardis. Rev.3v1-6.
6. Philadelphia. Rev.3v7-13.
7. Laodicea. Rev.3v14-22.

PART 3. THINGS FUTURE. Rev.4v1. to 22v21. Page 32.

A. THE LAST FEW YEARS OF THIS AGE. Rev.4v1 to 20v3. Page 32.

01. Events in Heaven just before the last seven years of this age. Rev.4 and 5.
02. The seven seals. Rev.6v1-17. 8v1.
03. The 144,000 Israelites and the victorious Christians. Rev.7v1-17.
04. The seven trumpets. Rev.8 and 9. and 11v15-19.
05. The angel and the little book. Rev.10v1-11.
06. The conflict in Jerusalem between God's two witnesses and Antichrist. Rev.11v1-14.
07. The escape of the woman into the wilderness. Rev.12v1-17.
08. Antichrist and the False Prophet. Rev.13v1-18.
09. The 144,000 Christians, the angelic messengers, the two harvests. Rev.14v1-20.
10. The seven vials of God's wrath. Rev.15 and 16.
11. The description of Jerusalem as the Scarlet Woman. Rev.17v1 to 19v4.
12. The wrath of God, and marriage supper, of the Lamb. Rev.19v1 to 20v3. cf. Is.24v21. 25v6-9.

B. GOD REIGNS OVER ALL. Page 73

1. THE MILLENNIUM. Rev.20v4-10. Page 73.

2. THE SECOND RESURRECTION AND THE LAST JUDGEMENT. Rev.20v11. Page 75.

3. THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE AGES OF AGES. Rev.21 and 22. Page 77.

APPENDIX 1. A BRIEF STUDY ON THE ISSUES OF DEATH AND ETERNAL JUDGEMENT. Page 84.

APPENDIX 2. THE GREEK TEXT OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION. Page 93.

APPENDIX 3. CHARTS OF DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS OF YEARS. Dan.9v20-27. Page 98.

DEDICATION.

I dedicate this book to the memory of my dear mother who died on August 4th. 1995. My mother and I knew what it was to suffer real persecution for Christ's sake, and we were at times in real danger of losing our lives, until my father was converted by an experience similar to that of Saul on the Damascus Road. The adversity that we experienced threw us upon God and each other, and developed and deepened our relationship with each other and the Lord. Our fellowship and joy in Jesus was very precious, and He gave us priceless experiences of Himself and His spiritual gifts to comfort, inspire, and protect us in our tribulations. My mother's life in God was a continual joy and inspiration to myself, and many others, and her love and prayers have sustained myself, and many others, down the years. I was about three to four years old when my mother told me that Jesus was the door to Heaven, and asked me if I wanted Him to save me, and I said that I did. This event is still vividly in my memory, even though it occurred some sixty years ago. My mother introduced me to the kingdom of God, and helped me to live and walk in the light of that kingdom; I look forward with joy to the day when I shall meet her, and all my loved ones, in our Father's kingdom. Mt.13v43. William H. Turner. June 6th. 1997. (My mother's birthday.)

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

It is high time for the Church of Jesus to awake to the hour that we are living in and prepare for the dark days ahead. Jesus warned us that the darkness of the last days will demand a reserve of oil. Mt.24v1-13. This oil consists of prophetic truth as well as the Holy Spirit's anointing and gifts, for Peter tells us that the sure word of prophecy is a light that shines in a dark place. 2Pet.1v19. Some foolishly look upon those who study prophetic truth as unbalanced cranks, however, the study of prophetic truth is a study of the mind and purposes of God, and the study of Revelation carries a special blessing from our Lord. Rev.1v3. Since the first edition of this book was written in 1958, many significant world events have occurred, which show us that the prophecies concerning the end of this age could soon be fulfilled. The ethnic conflicts, wars and rumours of wars, that our Lord warned us about, have become a daily feature of the news. Mt.24v7. Probably the most prophetically significant of all the present day events is the attempts to make peace between Israel and the Arab states.

The collapse of the Communist empire is another remarkable fact, and its confederation of states has also brought about a possible fulfilment of a ten king alliance. A ten king confederation of Arab states is another possibility. These are two possible answers to God's prophetic puzzle. At the strategic divine epoch of human history, Jesus will open the seven seals, and the identities of the ten kings and the Antichrist will be confirmed; God will fulfil His divine purposes and personally unfold these epochal world events. He reigns and rules in the kingdoms of men even when the vilest of kings are set up. Dan.4v17,32. The proximity of these last day events forces us to examine again the foundations of our knowledge of prophetic truth. God has given a prominent place to the closing events of this age and the second coming of Christ, and they should have a prominent place in the studies, thoughts, preaching and witnessing of all Christians. I shall feel very happy if those who read this book are challenged to search the Scriptures, and to purify their hearts and walk closer to the Lord. The blessed hope of the Church is our Lord's appearing in power and great glory; may this hope purify, challenge and comfort every Christian's heart. 1Thes.4v18. Titus.2v13. 1Jn.2v28. 3v2,3.

When I was a young man, I accepted my Pastor's viewpoint on prophecy, because I felt that such a prayerful and godly man must be right, I later found out that God wanted me to examine the Scriptures for myself. Over forty years of study and discussion with others, have convinced me that most Christians have accepted other people's opinions on prophecy exactly as I did as a young man, and have never really tested their teachings by the Scriptures. This is a dangerous practice, for in the day of battle we can only stand and conquer through the truth that we have made our own. It is not being disloyal to test the doctrines that we are taught by our Christian leaders by the light of the Scriptures, for God calls the Bereans "noble-minded," when they eagerly checked Paul's doctrine to see if it was Scriptural, with the same exact research that a person would use in checking a legal document. Acts.17v10,11. Heb.5v11-14. 6v12. 2Tim.3v14-17. I trust that no one accepts my views without thoroughly testing them by the Scriptures. 1Thes.5v21.

In 1Pet.1v10-12., Peter uses three very strong words to describe the prayerful, thoughtful, and intensive efforts that the prophets made in seeking God, to find out WHAT their prophecies meant and WHEN they would occur. We need to seek God with the same earnestness and prayerfulness for the interpretation of prophetic truth that the prophets themselves manifested in searching out the interpretation of their own prophecies, for there is "heavier judgement" for Christian teachers who mislead the children of God. James.3v1. This book has been written with the strong warnings of our Lord in Rev.22v18,19., very much in mind. Let us humbly seek the truth, for God hates pride, and He hides truth from proud and cocksure theologians, and reveals His secrets to humble seekers. Mt.11v25,26. Lk.10v21-24.

I have included many Scripture references, so I advise readers to get a "bird's eye view" of this book by a quick scan of its contents, and then study the references. I hope that consideration of the original Greek Scriptures will help students of God's Word to find the truth they seek, and will not put off people from reading this book. I have put some of this material in the Appendix for those who want to study it. Many books on the Revelation lack any real insight into the meaning of its prophecies; however, I have found books by G.H. Lang and Tregelles to be enlightening and profitable. The notes of the late C.L. Parker have been the most helpful, and one sorrows at the loss of such a gifted teacher and man of God. 2Tim.2v2.

Some say that John could not have written Revelation, because the Greek style and thought content is so different from that of his Gospel. This difference in style is easily explained by the fact that John had someone to write the Gospel for him, but nobody in the isolation of Patmos to write the Apocalypse for him. Anyway it is absurd to expect a person to use the same style in a personal letter, a history like the Gospel, and a revelation from God like the Apocalypse. John could have just written down the Greek he heard, and God may have used the Hebraisms of Abaddon, Rev.9v11.; Armageddon, Rev.16v16.; Hallelujah, Rev.19v1,3,4,6.; and the unusual grammar of Rev.1v4,5,6, 2v20. 3v12. 4v1. 5v11,12, 6v9. 8v9. 14v12. for striking effect. Scholars say that the thought of the Greek is very clearly expressed, and the ungrammatical writing achieves a profoundly moving effect. The Greek oracles were also partial to barbarism's of style. Irregular and unusual language has the effect of detaching divine truths from normal language, as one has said, "only the mysterious appears divine."

There are real linguistic and doctrinal similarities between John's Gospel and Revelation. Jn.5v28,29. with Rev.20v4-15.; Jn.7v37. with Rev.21v6. 22v17.; Jn.1v1. with Rev.19v13.; Jn.3v36. with Rev.6v17. 14v10,11.. The description of Jesus as "The Lamb of God" "ho amnos tou Theou," is only recorded by the apostle John in Jn.1v29,36.; and "as a lamb," "hos amnos," in Acts.8v32., which quotes Is.53v7.,and "as of a lamb," "hos

amnou," in 1Pet.1v19.. It is significant that Jesus is described as, "The Lamb," "to arnion," 28 times in Revelation, and in Rev.5v6., once as "a lamb," "arnion." See Rev.12 7v14. 12v11. etc. There are certainly no doctrinal differences between John's Gospel and Revelation.

The early Church leaders who lived in the area to which the letters to the seven churches were sent, all testify that the Revelation was received, written and verified by the apostle John. Papias, a disciple of John, who lived at Hierapolis, a few miles from Laodicea, said that John the apostle was entrusted with the Revelation. The same testimony is given by Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexander, the Muratorian fragment, Tertullian of Carthage, Origen of Alexandria, and Hippolytus. The Revelation is pervaded with apostolic authority, and consists of heights of prophetic and spiritual revelation that were only experienced by the greatest Old Testament prophets, and by leading apostles in the New Testament. See Rev.12v1-4,12. The honest mind cannot doubt that the Revelation was given by Christ to His beloved apostle John; read and meditate upon it and you will be awed, inspired and blessed. Rev.1v3.

The Eastern churches were slower to recognise the Apocalypse of John than the Western churches, because it was not in the Peshitta Syriac Version. The Council of Laodicea (about A.D. 360) omitted it from the canon, but the third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) accepted it. However, after a period of doubt the Apocalypse was accepted as canonical in the East, just as Hebrews was in the West..

Of the five uncials that have the text of the Apocalypse, Aleph A C P Q, only Aleph, A, and Q are complete. Of these Aleph belongs to the fourth century, A and C to the fifth, Q (really B2) to the eighth, P to the ninth. C lacks Rev.1v1, 3v19 to 5v14, 7v14-17, 8v5-9:16, 10v10 to 11v3, 14v13 to 18v2, 19v5-21., P lacks Rev.16v12 to 17v1, 19v21 to 20v9, 22v6-21.. C and P are palimpsests. Because of the poor state of the text, the versions translated from the Greek into other languages are of considerable importance.

The book is an unveiling "apokalupsis," from "apokalupto," a special kind of prophetic revelation from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, which contains vivid pictorial images like those of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel in the Old Testament.

I apologise to the Lord and to the readers of my earlier books on Revelation, for not previously examining the subjects of death and eternal punishment in sufficient depth, and with the necessary clarity. I hope and pray that my 9 page study in the Appendix of this book, and my 35 page separate study on, "The Issues of Death and Judgement," will rectify this in some measure.

The background of John's imprisonment was severe persecution. The Roman emperors claimed that they were gods, and to a varying extent, insisted on being worshipped, and this was the reason for some of the major persecutions of the early Church. Satan was undoubtedly the power behind this persecution. Nero and Domitian were the two worst opponents of the Church, and huge numbers of Christians died at their hands. Domitian, insisted that he be called "Dominus ac Deus noster," "Our Lord and God." The deranged Emperor Caius Caligula claimed divinity, and insisted that his image should be set up and worshipped in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem, he was killed in January of A.D. 41 before this order could be put into effect. Nero also demanded worship and in A.D. 64 blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians, though he was the culprit, all kinds of lies and slander were circulated about Christians. Emperor worship did not effect the worshippers of other gods, but it caused problems for Jews, and even greater problems for Christians, for after the burning of Rome Christians were no longer categorised as a variety of Jews, and had no standing in law by themselves. Many Christians, like Polycarp, were martyred because they refused to say that Caesar was Lord and God. After Nero it was a crime to be a Christian, but some emperors were more tolerant than others, but even these recommended that "stubborn cases" should be put to death.

This prophecy assures us that Jesus watches over suffering saints and martyrs, and guarantees a certain triumph over Satan and evil in both Heaven and earth. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the victorious Word of God, over all evil enemies, and is worshipped in heaven like the Father. This same Jesus, who was John's Captain of salvation in the time of Domitian is the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith today. The Apocalypse inspires us with the true picture of our future, and fills us with faith, hope, joy and praise. The persecuted Christians in these churches would have listened to the reading of this great prophetic revelation from God with the most intense interest, in many churches their lives were under great threat, this greatly concentrates your attention to listen to what God has to say to you. The Revelation is compelling reading for those who are not under this kind of persecution, I remember how, as a child, I used to read it through time and time again, and I was always enthralled and fascinated by its vivid imagery, and captivated and blessed by its spiritual content, even though I failed to understand most of what I was reading. May you too be blessed by reading this prophecy from our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. W. H. Turner. Nov. 19th. 1998. Edited again Jan. 9th 2001.

The prophetic conclusions and teaching in this latest edition of my commentary on "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," have not changed from those in the previous edition of this book. However, I have added some new material, and rewritten some parts of the of the book, which were poorly, or not clearly written, in order to make the material more readable and easier to understand. I have also changed the format and text, from 10 point Arial Narrow to 11 point Arial Narrow, to make the book easier to read. May God's blessing rest upon it, and you, as you read it. W. H. Turner. Oct. 3rd. 2004, and August 27th. 2005.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

The person who received this remarkable revelation from Jesus, was undoubtedly the beloved apostle John. Jesus came to comfort His persecuted servant with a wonderful revelation of Himself and His eternal plans and purposes, while John was imprisoned on the island of Patmos. Our Lord gave John the privilege of revealing to His Church a series of remarkable prophecies concerning His second coming and eternal kingdom, as well as His personal instructions to the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. According to Rev.1v1., the title of the "Apocalypse," is, "A Revelation of Jesus Christ," rather than, "The Revelation of John," for we are told that Jesus personally received the "Apocalypse" from God the Father, and then communicated it to His servant John, through "His angel." "Apokalupsis," is derived from "apokalupto," to unveil, to uncover; in Rev.1v1., it is used without the definite article, it is, "a revelation, an unveiling." "Apokalupsis," is used in 1Cor.12v7. and Eph.1v17., of God-given spiritual enlightenment and insight, and in 2Thes.2v8,9. of the revelation and unveiling of Antichrist.

There were other churches in the Roman province of Asia, but the Lord confined the proclamation of this prophecy to these seven churches, which formed a circle where John had lived and worked for God. The prophecies for each individual church were understood because of their devastating accuracy. Some of the other prophecies are intended to guide the Church in the very last days of this age, and need a mind that has wisdom and divine revelation to understand. Rev.17v9. However, even when the prophecies are not fully understood, they all clearly reveal the different ends of the righteous and the wicked, and reveal in magnificent detail the glorious eternal future of the redeemed. The letters to the seven churches do not cover all types of churches, nor do they present seven dispensations or periods of Church history.

Jesus personally encourages us to read and understand His "Revelation," and promises a special blessing if we study it, and keep His words. He tells us to take heed to His prophecy and not to let the truths and prophecies of this book slip by, for the time of their fulfilment is near. Rev.1v3. Some prophecies concerning the seven churches had an almost immediate fulfilment, and even the most distant are near in the light of eternity. 2Pet.3v8,9. Rev.22v7,12,20. Ps.90v4. Jesus closes with the grim warning, that those who add to its prophecies can expect severe judgement, and those who take away its prophecies can even have their name removed from the book of life. Rev.22v18,19. We need to tremble at this Word of the Lord, and not misconstrue or neglect its truths and prophecies. Is.66v2-5.

Some of the details of the prophecies are not easy to apply or interpret at present. However, it is not necessary to correctly interpret every detail of each prophecy, as long as we have good knowledge of the "Revelation," and an accurate interpretation of the general outline and theme of its prophecies. The more obscure and ambiguous details of the prophecies will be made clear by their fulfilment in world events. Moreover, when Revelation's prophecies are fulfilled and made manifest by events, their fulfilment will give us a very accurate timing of the proximity of our Lord's coming, for some of these prophecies are given in days and months, and will accurately date last day events. This accurate fulfilment of prophecy will encourage us to hold on in faith, knowing that our Lord's coming will be as sure and certain as the fulfilment of these predicted events. These fulfilled prophecies will enlighten our minds and greatly encourage our faith during the dark days at the end of this age, and this is without doubt one of the major Divine purposes behind the prophecies revealed in Revelation.

A. THE VARIOUS THEORIES AS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

There has been a great deal of thought and much unreasonable speculation as to what the prophecies in Revelation mean. Many expositors have ignored the key facts and time periods mentioned in Revelation and the Book of Daniel; this has resulted in many different and obviously false interpretations. These interpretations fall into four main groups.

1. The Symbolic Interpretation.

Some expositors say that the majority of Revelation is only symbolic truth, and is not to be looked upon as a prophetic revelation of historical events which are to come. In saying this they reject the remarkable prophetic content of this book. Those who say, "The content of the Apocalypse is not merely prediction; moral counsel and religious instruction are the primary burdens of its pages;" are ignoring the fact that God says that it is primarily a prophetic revelation. God wants us to understand His prophetic truth, as well as keep His moral counsel. Let us remember Christ's awesome warning, in Rev.22v18,19., to those who take away the prophetic content of this book.

2. The Preterist Interpretation.

This school of interpreters views Revelation as dealing in a symbolic way with historical events occurring at the end of the first century A.D., and they look upon it as a means of comfort to a persecuted Church. This interpretation throws almost the whole, and some even the whole of the prophecy into the past as already fulfilled. For example, Augustine thought that the Millennium commenced with the reign of Constantine, A.D. 274; and Hengstenberg said that it commenced with the reign of Charlemagne and closed in the year 1848. This interpretation cannot be correct, for it is complete folly to say that the earthly rule of wicked men, is the Millennial reign of Christ. The Preterist school has many different interpretations in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant schools of thought. This interpretation allows the imagination to wander free from the constraint of prophetic truth. We see again that the interpretation of prophetic fact as symbolic truth always results in a

prophetic delusion.

3. The Historical Interpretation.

This view states that the Book of Revelation forecasts and embraces the chief phases of the whole history of the Church from the time of its writing to the consummation of the ages. Again the interpretation of the prophecies is left to the imagination, intuition and ingenuity of each individual interpreter. This has led to an great diversity of opinion, and those who interpret the "Apocalypse" in this way, find themselves in complete darkness and in a prophetic muddle. Our Lord desires us to hear, understand, and keep His Revelation, and such interpretations make this impossible. Rev.1v3.

4. The Futurist Interpretation.

This view assigns all from Rev.4v1. to 19v21., to a short period of time at the end of the age, which ends with the return of Jesus on the day of the Lord. There is a particular emphasis on the last 3½ years of this age; the period known as "The Great Tribulation." This view follows our Lord's own key to the interpretation of Revelation as given in Rev.1v19.. Christ said that "the things which thou hast seen," refer to Rev.1v9-20.; "the things which are," refer to the seven churches of Asia, in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation; (John seems to have been the apostolic overseer of these seven churches after going to Ephesus in about A.D. 70); and "the things which shall be hereafter," is said in Rev.4v1. to refer to the prophecies recorded in Rev.4v1 to 22v21.. Some futurist interpreters believe that the Church will be caught up before the great tribulation, others, like myself, believe that the Church will be caught up at our Lord's return **after the great tribulation.**

The first three groups of interpreters have ignored the basic facts in Daniel and Revelation, and the result has been a multitude of errors in their predictions of future events, and many unscriptural historical interpretations of prophetic events. The facts of Scripture and Church history prove beyond doubt that the Futurist interpretation of Revelation is correct.

B. THE KEY FACTS NECESSARY FOR A CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

God has given prophetic facts in the Scriptures, that are the key to a correct interpretation of the Revelation.

1. The vital connection between the Daniel's prophecies and John's Revelation.

It is obvious to the honest mind that many of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation are speaking of the same personalities and events, of Antichrist, the great tribulation, and the second coming of Christ, etc. This is proved by a comparison of the following Scriptures. Dan.7v24-28. 8v9,27. 10v14. 11v21 to 12v13. Rev.12v3,7-12. 13v1-10. 17v3,11-13. and 19v19-21. Compare Rev.12v7. with Dan.12v1. The strong link between some of Daniel's prophecies and the Revelation is also confirmed by the fact that the period of 3½ years is mentioned several times in both books and in obviously related prophecies. Dan.7v25 9v27. 12v7. with Rev.11v2,3. 12v6,14. 13v5. The literal translation of "week" in Dan.9v27. is "seven," and from the context, this is seen to be seven years, which is divided into two periods of 3½ years. The period of time spoken of as "a time, times, and half a time," is 3½ years; it is made up of a singular time, a dual time, and half a time. That it is a period of 3½ years is further confirmed by a comparison of Dan.12v6,7,11,12. and Rev.12v6,14..

2. These time periods prove that Rev.4v1 to 19v21.. is dealing with the last 3½ years of this age.

We can see from the number of times that the period of 3½ years is mentioned, that Rev.4v1. to 19v21., is concerned with this period of 3½ years. It is mentioned in Rev.11v2. and 13v5. as 42 months; in Rev.11v3 and 12v6. as 1260 days; and in Rev.12v4. as "a time, times, and half a time." Dan.12v6,7. 7v25. 9v27. There are no long periods of time mentioned in Rev.4v1 to 19v21.. The longest period of time is covered by the seven seals, which reveal the career of Antichrist during the last seven years of this age. Chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation speak of events in Heaven just prior to these last seven years. The only other periods of time mentioned besides the 3½ years, are short periods of time. Rev.6v11. 8v1. 9v5,10,15. 11v14. 18v9,17.

The year for a day theory is complete nonsense.

It is total folly to make a day mean a year, as some have done, for where God means a year, as in Rev.20v2-7., He says so. God gave this period of 3½ years in three ways, days, months and years, to convince us that He means just what He has said. Those who make 2Pet.3v8., Numb.14v34 and Ezek.4v6., the excuse for a year for day theory, are twisting the Scriptures; and disqualify themselves from being taken as serious prophetic students; and prove that they cannot "correctly analyse the Word of truth." 2Tim.2v15. Their absurd theories make prophetic dating quite meaningless. In Numb.14v34. and Ezek.4v6., the days are literal days, and the years are literal years, they are certainly not a principle of prophetic interpretation. In Numb.14v34., God states a fact of judgement, not a principle of prophetic interpretation; the 40 days of unbelieving spying out of Canaan, received a judicial sentence of 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and God's breach of promise. Numb.13v17. to 14v45. In Ezek.4v6., Ezekiel's symbolic act brought to public notice the 430 years of past sin for which judgement was to come, and in 2Pet.3v8., Peter compares the many years of God's longsuffering with His tremendous judgements on the day of the Lord. If we apply the year for day theory to Rev.12v6,14., we have a period of 1260 years from Satan being cast out of the heavenly places and the heavens cleansed, to the return of Christ, which is clearly complete nonsense. People use this method of interpretation, so that they can twist the facts, for a symbolically interpreted prophecy, can be made to mean almost any thing they desire. Who decides which dates are symbolic and which are literal? We should accept the time periods God has given to us and not tamper with them. How do these people explain the "half hour" of

Rev.8v1., and the "five months" and "thirteen months" of Rev.9v5,10,15.? If we fail to interpret Scripture dates literally, we end in utter darkness. Jesus interpreted these 3½ years of Daniel's prophecies literally as the other years in this prophecy, let us follow His example. Dan.9v20-27. Mt.24v15-21.

3. God wants us to understand the Book of Revelation.

When our heavenly Father inspired and wrote the Book of Revelation He intended that even the difficult parts should be understood. With diligent prayer and study, most of its prophecies can be understood; and the parts that we do not fully understand will be made more clear by their actual fulfilment. The key to the book of Revelation is found elsewhere in the Scriptures, particularly in Daniel's prophecies; they throw light on each other's predictions. It is not necessary, as some would have us believe, to have a course on Church History to understand the Revelation, the key is in the Word of God. The book of Revelation is intended to give us light on, and in, a dark future, and the glorious hope beyond it; not a muddled commentary on the past that many have made it. 1Pet.1v10-12. 2Pet.1v19-21.

Those who say that Revelation cannot be understood and serves no useful purpose, have in reality charged God with folly. God has written Revelation for our welfare and profit, He intended ordinary people to read His Word and understand it, He has not written a book which no one, or only the intellectual, can understand. Indeed, Jesus said that God often bypasses the intellectual, wise and prudent, and gives revelations of His power, plans, and purposes to "babes and sucklings," and this is "good in His sight." Mt.11v25-27. Lk.10v20-24. The spiritual "babe and suckling" has a far better chance of understanding the Word of God, than the "wise and prudent" unspiritual intellectual. Is.35v8. 2Pet.1v9,19. 3v16. Mt.13v10-17. This does not mean that we should be lazy in our study of the Scriptures; those "who labour in the word and doctrine," and are "labouring fervently in prayers," will be given the light they seek. In 1Tim.5v17., "labour" is "kopiontes," the present active participle of "kopiao," to labour, to work until one is exhausted." In Col.4v12., "labouring" is "agonizomenos," the present middle participle of "agonozomai," to struggle, to agonise. Obtaining divine truth and a God-blessed ministry is costly and demands a consecrated heart and mind, and real effort in study and prayer. Acts.17v11. Heb.5v11-14. 1Pet.1v10-13. Prov.16v3.

We must study God's Word with an open mind, for it is folly to twist the Scriptures to make them fit our theories. We recognise that God uses parables, figurative language, symbols, or heavenly cartoons in the prophetic truth that He has given to us in His Word, and that great truth is given by these means. However, it is important to recognise that prophetic truth should be interpreted, like any other Scriptural truth, the literal being interpreted as literal, and the symbolic as symbolic, otherwise the result will be a prophetic delusion. 2Pet.3v16-18.

4. The kingdom of the Antichrist is not based on Rome.

Rome is not the city of Babylon named in Revelation. The Antichrist has been linked with Rome on the basis that the seven hills mentioned in Rev.17v9., are the seven hills of Rome. Christians have felt that the great persecutions of the Church by the Roman state and Roman Church, also confirms their identification of the harlot city of Babylon in Rev.17., with the city of Rome. However, we will now show why this cannot be so.

a. The seven mountains are ruled by seven kings, and are seven kingdoms.

When the Scriptures speak of mountain in a symbolic prophetic way, it represents a kingdom. Dan.2v35,44,45. Is.2v2. Rev.13v1,7. with Rev.17v12,17. These seven hills are seven different kingdoms, over which seven kings rule.

b. The Antichrist is the seventh and eighth head of the Beast.

We are told in Rev.17v10. that the final Antichrist is the seventh and eighth head of the Beast, and that Rome, the sixth head, was in power in John's time, so the final Antichrist and beast cannot be Rome. We are told in Rev.13v3. and 17v8.; that Antichrist appears to imitate Christ's resurrection from the dead. We read in Rev.17v10,11., that before his death Antichrist is the seventh king, and after his resurrection he is the eighth king, when he becomes even more wicked, merciless, ruthless, and cruel. Antichrist is possessed and dominated by Satan, and puts all his desires and plans into operation; he will be the most evil and most malevolent and pitiless man, that the world has ever seen. In John's time it says that the seventh head of the beast of Rev.17., had yet to come, and when it did it would only last a short time.

c. The Antichrist is also spoken of as "the king of the North."

The kingdom of Antichrist is said to be north of Palestine in Dan.11v40 to 12v7., this kingdom cannot be Rome, for Rome is certainly not north of Palestine. We are also told in Daniel eight, that the Antichrist comes out of part of the Grecian empire north of Palestine. The legs of iron of Dan.2v33,40-43. and the fourth beast of Dan.7v7,8,17-28. were only partially fulfilled by Rome. The stress of these prophecies was upon the fourth kingdom and last days, as Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar; "God hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." Dan.2v28. The stone cut without hands, Christ and His kingdom, fell on the feet of the image and destroyed it. Dan.2v35,44,45. Antichrist will try to fight Jesus at His coming, and will be destroyed by Him for his gross wickedness and impenitence. Rev.17v11-14. 19v19-21. Dan.8v25,26.

C. THE CITY CALLED "BABYLON" IS THE CITY OF JERUSALEM.

a. "The city, the great one" is the city of Jerusalem."

The emphatic and exclusive phrase, "the city, the great one," which describes "Babylon" in Rev.14v8. 16v19,

17v18. 18v10,16,18,19,21.; is said, in Rev.11v8., to be the place "where also our Lord was crucified," that is, Jerusalem. Those who say that "Babylon" is Rome, admit that it is very difficult to ignore this plain statement that "the city, the great one" is Jerusalem. They admit that they lay aside the revealed facts of God's Word for their own opinion. In Rev.11v8., the name "Sodom" is given to Jerusalem to show the rioting in the sins of the flesh, and the going after "strange flesh." Dan.2v43. Gen.6v2. Jude.v6. Rev.12v9. Ezek.16v45-56. The name of "Egypt" is given to Jerusalem to show that her king sets himself forth as God, and rejects all the mighty manifestations of God's power through God's servants. Just as in the time of Moses and Pharaoh there will be a violent conflict between the powers of good and evil. 2Tim.3v8. Mt.23v31. John.8v44. The name of "Babylon" is given to Jerusalem to show its spiritual condition under Antichrist, its worship of false Gods, its hatred of God, its sinful luxuries, and the extent of Antichrist's power and kingdom. Dan.2v39. Rev.17v4. 18v2,3,9-19. The adjective "megale," great, is used in connection with Babylon every time it occurs in Revelation. Rev.14v8. 16v19. 17v5. 18v2,10,21. "Babylon" is also called "the great whore," who is drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs. Rev.17v1,6. 19v2.

These names give a very graphic description of the spiritual condition of Jerusalem under Antichrist; its abominable wickedness, idolatry, hatred of God, and its ultimate judgement by God. The city of God becomes the city of the Devil, and a partaker of the sins that resulted in the destruction of the other kingdoms that make up the head of the Beast. Jerusalem's trust in Antichrist will bring about its destruction, it will again taste the fruit of her unfaithfulness to God, and will be mercilessly ruled by men who are under Satan's control. Rev.17v5,16. Rome has never been looked upon as God's wife, so she can never have been His unfaithful wife; this is the sin and name that the prophets hurl against Jerusalem. Is.1v21. 57v8. Jer.2v20 3v1-25. 4v30. 11v15. 13v27. Ezekiel. Chapters. 16, 22 and 23.

b. Babylon has committed the sins which are exclusively Jerusalem's sins."

Babylon is said to have shed the blood of saints, martyrs, apostles, and prophets. Rev.17v6. 18v6,20,24. This is the righteous blood that our Lord said Jerusalem had, and would shed. Mt.23v29-34. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament saints suffered at the hands of apostate Jews. How can people say that apostate Jews, who kill the children of God, reject Christ and His Gospel, and accept Antichrist and partake of his wickedness, are the elect of Mt.24? Christ called such Jews serpents and vipers, and children of the Devil, and says that they are destined for the lake of fire. Mt.23v33. John.8v43-45. Rev.14v9-12. The Scriptures tell us that the only people who will not be deceived and will not follow Antichrist in the countries under his sway, will be those who are saved. Rev.13v8.

c. The destruction of "Babylon" is the destruction of Jerusalem."

The destruction of "Babylon" by Antichrist in Rev.17v16,17., occurs just before the end of the age, and cannot be any other than the destruction of Jerusalem just before the second coming of the Lord Jesus. It coincides exactly in time, place, and in fulfilment of prophecy. Mt.24v28. Lk.21v20-24. Rev.14v8,19,20. Zech.14v1. Joel.3 all.

d. Antichrist rules from Jerusalem in the great tribulation."

The fact that "Babylon" rules over the kings of the earth is another proof that she is Jerusalem, for Antichrist rules his kingdom from the Temple at Jerusalem, and sets up his image there. Rev.13v14,15. 17v18. 2Thes.2v3,4. Mt.24v15. Dan.9v17. 11v31. 12v11. The Scriptures we have examined prove that "Babylon" is Jerusalem, not Rome, and that Antichrist's rule is centred around Jerusalem, not Rome.

Conclusion. It is clear from the evidence that we have given, and from the number of times that the start of the kingdom of God, and the judgement of the wicked at Christ's coming, is mentioned in Rev.4v1 to 19v21., that they are a commentary on the closing events of this age. Rev.6v12-17. 7v9-17. 10v5-7. 11v15-19. 14v1-20. 15v1. 16v17-21 17v14. 19v1-21. These Scriptures prove, establish, and verify, that Revelation is not written in chronological order.

The above facts prove the truth of the Futurist interpretation and the error of the other schools of thought. It will greatly help the study of the Book of Revelation if the facts that we have stated are firmly fixed in the mind before the rest of the book is studied. A prayerful attitude is essential for a correct interpretation of God's Word, for the carnal, unspiritual mind will receive very little, if anything, from God. Rom.8v5-7. 1Cor.2v7-16. James.1v4-8.

D. A SKELETON OUTLINE OF REVELATION. Rev.1v19.

Introduction. The source of Revelation and John's greeting to the Churches. Rev.1v1-8.

1. Things Past. "The things which thou hast seen." Rev.1v9-20.

John's vision of our glorified Saviour, and the comfort and commission that He gave to His aged beloved apostle.

2. Things Present. "The things which are," in the seven churches. Rev.2v1 to 3v22.

Christ's revelation of the spiritual condition of the seven churches in Asia and His messages to them. These messages reveal the relationship and attitude of Christ to His Church on earth.

3. Things Future. "The things that shall be hereafter." Rev.4v1 to 22v21.

- a. Events in Heaven and earth from just prior to the last 7 years of this age, to the return of Jesus. Rev.4v1 to 19v21. This portion concentrates mainly on the last 3½ years of this age, the period of time known as the great tribulation.
- b. The Millennium. Rev.20v7-10.
- c. The last judgement and the second resurrection. Rev.20v7-10.
- d. The eternal kingdom and the ages of ages. Rev.21 and 22.

A Brief Outline of Rev.4v1 to 19v21.

1. **Rev.4 and 5.** The revelation of the events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. The vision of the glory, activity and holiness of God the Father and the perfect sacrificial devotion of Christ to His creation and His worthiness to open the seals and rule in the Millennial kingdom, that follows these seals.
2. **Rev.6v1-17. and 8v1.** The seven seals. These seals show the stages and results of the career of Antichrist, who at first seems to be a small and harmless peace-maker, but his career becomes more and more devilish and destructive, until Jesus destroys him at His coming.
3. **Rev.7v1-17.** The sealing of the faithful Old Testament saints for ruling in the Millennium, and the vision of the eternal blessedness of the victorious great tribulation saints.
4. **Rev.8 and 9 and 11v15-19.** God's answers to the prayers of His people, seven trumpet judgements.
5. **Rev.10v1-11.** God promises to set up His kingdom at the seventh trumpet.
6. **Rev.11v1-19.** A picture of the conflict in Jerusalem between Antichrist and God's two witnesses. This conflict ends when our Lord returns to destroy the wicked and judge and reward His saints.
7. **Rev.12v1-17.** The martyrdom of the manchild, and the escape of Christians into the wilderness. Mt.24v15-21. Dan.11v41. Satan is expelled from the heavenly places into the earth and his evil plans ("the mystery of iniquity," 2Thes.2v7.) and malicious interference in the affairs of the world causes the great tribulation. Rev.12v12.
8. **Rev.13v1-18.** Antichrist and the False Prophet, their character and power.
9. **Rev.14v1-20.** The Christian rulers, the angels and their messages, the two harvests.
10. **Rev.15 and 16.** The vials of God's wrath on the wicked.
11. **Rev.17v1 to 19v4.** The description of Jerusalem as the unfaithful wife, the scarlet women, Babylon the Great, who as the bride of Satan shares in the punishment of his sins.
12. **Rev.19v5 to 20v4.** Christ's returns and judges the wicked, the two suppers. Satan is chained for 1,000 years.

E. THE GREEK TEXT OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

I am not a Greek scholar, but I have gleaned the facts on the Greek of Revelation from those who are Greek scholars, and I, for one, am greatly indebted to them for their meticulous and exhaustive studies. We learn from them that the Authorised Version of the New Testament faithfully follows the majority of the Greek manuscripts except in "The Book of Revelation;" as the outstanding scholar, Bishop C. Wordsworth states; "The English Version of the Apocalypse does not rest upon the same sound basis of manuscript authority as the Authorised Translation of the other books of the New Testament. It stands in a place by itself, and ought to be regarded accordingly."

I have not commented on the minor textual variations, which do not effect the meaning of the text or prophecies, but have considered the major textual variations that effect or alter the meaning of the text and prophecies. The Authorised Version text is referred to as A.V., and it is based on Stephens 1550 Greek text, known as the Received Text or Textus Receptus, or T.R. in our evidence. In the Apocalypse the Textus Receptus often does not follow the Majority Text. Where there is a need, we will refer to the evidence of the major early translations from the Greek into other languages, and quotations from the "Church Fathers." We thank God for ALL those who have preserved the Scriptures and laboured in the field of textual criticism, we owe them an incalculable debt of gratitude, for giving to us the Word of God as spoken to and through His prophets and apostles. **For further study see, Appendix 2. The Greek Text of the Book of Revelation.**

JOHN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION.**A. THE SOURCE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION. Rev. 1v1-3.**

Most Bibles call the Apocalypse, "The Revelation of John," however, from Rev. 1v1., we see that it should rather be called "A Revelation of Jesus Christ." God the Father gave Jesus the Revelation, and He communicated it to the Church through John by angelic ministry. Jesus certainly knew all the prophetic facts contained in the book of Revelation, for the revelation of the last trumpet had been given in some measure to Paul many years before, but the timing in giving the Revelation was at the discretion of the Father. 1Cor. 15v50-53. The Scriptures teach that the two other members of the Trinity have subjected themselves to the Father for the work of creation, mediation, and redemption. Jn. 12v49,50. 16v13. 20v17,21. Lk. 10v22-24. Rom. 8v26-34. 1 Cor. 2v10. 15v24-28. Jesus is still speaking what the Father tells Him to speak, as He did on earth, He is still, "The Faithful Witness." Jn. 3v32. 5v19,20,30. 7v16. 8v28. 12v49. 14v10. Mt. 28v18. Jn. 20v21. Only the pure in heart shall see God and know his innermost secrets. Amos. 3v7. Jn. 14v21-26. Dan. 1v4,17. 5v11,12. 6v22. 10v11,12,19.

Christ sent "His angel" to reveal the Revelation to His beloved apostle by means of signs. "Signified," "esemanen," is the aorist active indicative of "semaino," which means to signify, to show by means of signs, symbols and emblems, from "sema," a sign or token. See Jn. 12v33. Acts. 11v28. Angels are sent to perform the desires of the Trinity and they often have great conflicts with the powers of darkness when they try to deliver their messages, as can be seen from Gabriel's three week conflict with the evil principality over Persia. Heb. 1v14. 2v2. Eph. 6v12. Dan. 10v12-21. Rev. 12v7-9,12. Jesus warns us not to let the truths and prophecies of Revelation slip by, as many have done, for there is a blessing on the book. In comparison with eternity these prophesied events were soon to be fulfilled, and when these events begin to come to pass, they will swiftly be completed. 2Pet. 3v8,9. Ps. 90v4. Rev. 22v7,12,20. Lk. 18v1-8. Bearing witness for Christ can be very expensive, and John suffered greatly for the truth and testimony he gave, and some of us have also been in peril of our lives for Christ's sake. Rev. 1v9. 6v9. 12v17. 13v7,10. 14v12. 19v10. 20v4. Jn. 19v37. Acts. 19v15,16. 2Cor. 11v23-33. 1Thes. 1v6.

B. JOHN'S GREETINGS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF ASIA.

When John speaks of the seven churches in Asia, he means the Roman province of Asia, not Asia or even Asia minor. (In Rev. 1v11., the phrase, "which are in Asia," is lacking in the Critical Texts, and Hodges and Farstad, and should be omitted.)

1. THE BENEDICTION UPON THOSE WHO READ AND HEAR THE REVELATION.

John gives greetings, grace and peace from himself and the hierarchy of Heaven. Rev. 1v4,5.

A. GRACE AND PEACE, -- FROM THE ONE WHO IS, AND WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME."

Grace and peace from our wonderful Father of lights. James. 1v17. His name, "tou ho on, kai ho en, kai ho erchomenos," "THE ONE WHO IS, AND WHO WAS, AND WHO IS TO COME," is almost certainly a paraphrase of the sacred Name, "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh," I AM THAT I AM, and the shortened version of the sacred Tetragrammaton, Y-H-W-H, from which we obtain "Jehovah," or better, "Yahweh," which was revealed to Moses in Exod. 3v14-16.. This expression of the eternal nature of God also occurs in Rev. 1v8. 4v8., and in 11v17. without "erchomenos," "who is to come;" and in 16v5. with "ho esomenos," "who will be," instead of "erchomenos." The whole purpose of this Greek construction is to convey to us the uncreated infinite timeless being and eternal unchangeableness of God. The Greek "on," is the present active participle of "eimi," "en," is the imperfect of "eimi," "erchomenos," is the futuristic use of the present participle. The oracle in Pausanias blasphemously applies these exclusive eternal attributes of God to Zeus, "Zeus en, Zeus esti, Zeus essetai," Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus will be." Satan and his demons falsely try to claim attributes which belong to God alone. In contrast to these false gods, the unlimited eternity of the true God is stated to show the blessedness of the benediction, and also to show that we should take this prophetic revelation from the Almighty very seriously. Rev. 1v8. "The Almighty," "Ho Pantocrator," carries both the thought of divine omnipotence and the thought of God's supremacy over all things, it occurs in 2Cor. 6v18. (from Jer. 38v35.) Rev. 1v8. 4v8. 11v17. 15v3. 16v7,14. 19v6,15. 21v22. The fact that God is on the throne has sustained persecuted Christians throughout history, and this will again be true when Satan and Antichrist are on the rampage in the last days of this age. "The Lord God Omnipotent reigns."

B. "GRACE AND PEACE, --- FROM THE SEVEN SPIRITS WHICH ARE BEFORE HIS THRONE."

Some think that the seven spirits that are before the throne of God represent the seven-fold ministry and perfections of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Is. 11v2-5.; however, they are undoubtedly the seven archangels referred to in Rev. 8v2., who stand before God and blow the seven trumpets. Rev. 3v1. 4v5. The benediction of grace and peace, not only comes from God our Father and the Lord Jesus, but also from the seven great angels that stand before the throne. These seven great angels, like all good angels, are full of love, good will and kindness towards us, they partake of the Father's heart and manifest love and all the other fruits of the Spirit to perfection.

In Rev. 5v6., these mighty angels are said to be the horns and eyes of the Lamb, who are sent into the earth, and Zech. 4v7-10., informs us that "those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." They were vitally connected with the revival which took place through God's grace in the time of Zechariah. They are almost certainly the "Watchers and Holy Ones" of Dan. 4v13,17,23,24., who have such

great delegated authority from God, that they could even make a decree that brought judgement upon Nebuchadnezzar, and their decree became the decree of the most High. Gabriel had authority to strike Zechariah dumb because of his unbelief. Lk.1v19,20.

C. "GRACE AND PEACE, --- FROM JESUS CHRIST." Rev.1v5.

"From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness." "ho martus ho pistos."

Jesus was the Father's faithful witness to us. God, desires a faithful witness even more than men, He longs to tell the world of His loving purposes and gracious character, and the evil consequences of sin. However, God often has great difficulty in finding those who are willing to face this great task. Many preachers refuse to preach the truth, preferring to teach the traditions of men, foolish fables or even Satan's lies. Mt.15v1-9. Mk.7v1-13. Col.2v8. 1Pet.1v18-20. 2Pet.1v16-21. 2Tim.4v1-5. Titus.1v14. God rejoices when His children preach and love the truth, great is their reward in the kingdom of Heaven. Is.6v8. 2Jn.v4. 3Jn.v1-4. Rev.17v14.

"From Jesus Christ, --- the FIRSTBORN of the dead." "ho protokos ton nekron."

"Firstborn," "protokos," is used to describe the firstborn of a human family, and it is so used to describe Jesus as being the Mary's firstborn Son, Lk.2v7. Mt.1v25.; and in Heb.11v28., of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. However, it can be clearly seen from the Scriptures that the title "firstborn" is also used in a special and unique sense in reference to the Lord Jesus.

1. "Firstborn" is used as a title of position and honour in relation to Jesus.

Jesus has won the right to be the Head and Lord of His brethren, of all creation, and of the dead. Jesus is "the firstborn of many brethren," Rom.8v29.; "the firstborn of every creature," Col.1v15.; "the firstborn from the dead," Col.1v18.; "His firstborn," Heb.1v6.; "Head of the Church of the firstborn," Heb.12v23.; "the firstborn of the dead." Rev.1v5. Jesus is the Head of all things, not just because of His deity, but through His sacrificial love, which brought about our salvation. Phil.2v1-13.

N.B. 1. The Jews applied the title "Firstborn" to God, to show His pre-eminence.

The title "firstborn" was used to denote pre-eminence, indeed, the Jews applied it to God Himself, to show His pre-eminence over the rest of Creation; they called Yahweh, "the Firstborn of all the world," and "the Firstborn of all creation," to signify that He was the Creator and Head of all things. This is the sense in which the title "firstborn," "protokos," is given to Jesus, it is used to show His pre-eminence over all creation, as the New English Bible shows by its translation of Col.1v15.; "He is the image of the invisible God; His is the primacy over all created things." The title of "Firstborn" is applied to Jesus to show His pre-eminence, dominion, and supreme position of honour.

N.B. 2. Paul uses "protokos," "firstborn;" not "protoktisteos," "first creation."

Some heretics have falsely taught that "protokos," "firstborn," suggests that Christ was the first creation of God, which is the very opposite of the truth that it was intended to convey. If Paul had meant that Christ was the first creation of God, he would have used "protoktisteos," meaning, "first creation." The Scriptures clearly state that Christ had no beginning and was from everlasting. Micah.5v2. Ps.90v1,2. and Neh.9v6,7. with Jn.1v1-3. Is.9v6. Heb.1v8-12. 7v1-3. Rev.1v8-11. etc. Jesus is, "That eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." 1Jn.1v2. Jesus is the uncreated Creator God of creation.

2. "Firstborn" is used as a title of pre-eminence, not just in a time sense.

God uses "firstborn" as a title of pre-eminence, and honour, and He applied it to men who were not the firstborn.

a. Jacob was the firstborn in God's eyes, even though Esau was the firstborn by natural birth.

God rejected the carnal and godless firstborn Esau, and gave Jacob the position of firstborn because of his integrity and godliness. Gen.25v23,27. 27v29. Mal.1v1-3. Rom.9v12,13. Heb.12v15-17. with Gen.25v33,34. In Gen.25v27., "plain" is "tam," (Strong 8535); it is used to describe Job as being "perfect" in Job.1v1. and 2v3. See Job.8v20. 9v20-22. Ps.37v37.

b. Joseph was given the title "firstborn," that Reuben lost because of his sin.

Reuben forfeited his position as firstborn because of his immorality. Gen.49v3,4. Jacob saw that God had given the birthright to Joseph, because of his godliness. Gen.49v22-26. N.B. v26. The coat of many colours signified the priesthood and spiritual leadership of the family. Gen.37v2-11. We read that later, "Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler." Gen.49v3,4. 1Chron.5v1,2.

c. God said the nation of Israel was His firstborn. Exod.4v22,23.

God chose Israel to be the spiritual leader and head of all the nations of the earth. Israel was not the first of God's creation, but God gave Israel the title of "firstborn," which meant that He gave them the primacy, the first position of honour, and spiritual leadership of all the nations, because of the faith and faithfulness of the patriarchs.

d. God said that David, Jesse's last-born son, was to be His firstborn. Ps.89v20,27.

Because of his shepherd's heart and faithfulness to God, God gave David the title of "firstborn," to show that he was His ordained shepherd and king of Israel. God was certainly not saying that David was the first of His

creation.

e. Jesus is called "the firstborn from the dead," even though others were resurrected before Him.

Jesus is called "the firstborn out from among the dead," "prototokos ek ton nekron," Col.1v18.; "the firstborn of the dead," "ho prototokos ton nekron." Rev.1v5. In a time sense others were raised from the dead before Christ; however, only Christ has conquered death and Hades, and owns and holds the keys to them. Jesus alone is the Lord of life and death. Rev.1v18. Jn.11v25,26. Jesus delivered all the redeemed from the power of death and Satan by His death, and so takes the position of primacy over the dead by right. Heb.2v14,15.

3. Paul uses the title "firstborn" to teach the absolute deity and divine Majesty of Christ.

a. In Col.1v15., the "Firstborn," the Lord Jesus, is said to be "the image of the invisible God."

In Col.1v12-20., Paul affirms the eternal being and absolute deity of Christ in the most definite way. Paul denounces the false philosophy of the Gnostic teachers at Colosse, who used a misinterpretation of the title "firstborn," to deny the uncreated and eternal deity of Jesus, and the truths recorded in Jn.1v1-18. Phil.2v4-13. and Heb.1v1-14..

In Col.1v15., Paul states that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, "image" is "eikon," which shows that Jesus is the perfect likeness of the Father, for "eikon" carries the thought of reality and exactness of likeness. Jesus is the exact and perfect image of the Father, not a vague and shadowy resemblance ("skia"). All the glories of the invisible God become visible in Jesus. The essential nature, perfections, attributes and character of the invisible God are clearly seen in the incarnate Son, as Col.2v9. states, "For in Him there is continually and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in bodily fashion." Christ is the very image of the Father, He completely portrays the boundless and infinite love of God. He communicates to us the otherwise unknowable immensity and incommunicable attributes of the invisible God; for the word translated "invisible," "aoratus," means "incommunicable" as well as "unseen," it occurs in Rom.1v20. Col.1v15,16. 1Tim.1v7. and Heb.11v27..

N.B. By contemplating our Lord's glory and wonderful character, we can put off the old man and put on the new man, and be progressively transfigured from glory to glory by the Spirit of God into our Lord's image; when this occurs the divine purpose to conform us to the image ("eikon") of Christ will be fulfilled. Col.3v10. 2Cor.3v18. Rom.8v29. In Rom.8v29., "conformed to the image," is "summorphous tes eikonos," the use of the adjective "summorphous," from "sun," which means "with," and "morphe," "form," shows that the conformity to the image is inward, deep and real. See Phil.2v6. We are not deified, that belongs to God alone, but Peter informs us that through the precious promises of God, we are made partakers of the divine nature. 2Pet.1v4.

b. In Heb.1v3., the Firstborn Son is said to be "the express image" of God the Father.

In Heb.1v3., Paul uses a different word from Col.1v15., when he says that Jesus is the "express image" of the being and substance of God the Father. "Express image" is a translation of the word "charakter," from which we get our word "character." The Greek word "charakter" is used to speak of **the exact reproduction** of an engraved character, or **the exact impression** made by a die upon a coin, or a seal upon wax. Paul states that Jesus is "the exact reproduction of the Father's very being," "charakter tes hupostaseos." "Hupostasis" speaks of that which lies or is placed underneath, and in common usage it speaks of the foundation or substratum, and in Heb.11v1. it is used of the faith being "the foundation" and "title deeds" (so used in the papyri) of things hoped for. "Hupostasis," is also used to describe essential being and essence, "ousia." If we are wise we will accept the meaning given to "hupostasis" by the early Church, and avoid the philosophical reasoning and speculative terminology on the nature of God that caused such great controversy in later Church history. It is enough for us to know that Jesus is the exact representation, as a die produces upon metal, or as a seal produces upon wax, of the Father's very being and character. Only God the Son can be the exact representation of God the Father.

c. The Firstborn, the Lord Jesus, is definitely stated to be the great Creator God. Col.1v15-17.

The Firstborn, Jesus, is set forth as the architect, constructor, sustainer, and purpose behind creation. Ps.90v1,2. Neh.9v6,7. Jn.1v1-3. Heb.1v8-12. Jesus is the great First and Last Creator God. Rev.1v8,11,17. 2v8. with Is.44v6. and 48v12,13. Jesus existed eternally before all things, and all things hold together through Him, He is the sustainer of the creation. Col.1v17. All creation, angelic or human, heavenly or earthly, exists because of Christ our Lord.

Paul writes in Rom.1v19,20., that the creation clearly reveals God's nature, attributes, eternal power and deity. However, the creation cannot perfectly reveal God, only God the Son can perfectly declare and reveal God the Father to the souls of men. Lk.10v22. Jn.1v18. Through the incarnation the glories of the invisible God's character are clearly revealed in Jesus. We see the amazing sacrificial love of God the Father in the incarnate God the Word. Jn.14v6-11. Jesus is the perfect revelation of God to man, as He said to Philip, he who has seen Me has seen the Father. Jn.14v9. Christ is God with us. Mt.1v23. with Is.7v14. In 2Cor.4v4., Paul again states that Christ is the image, "eikon," of God; Jesus shares in the Father's being and is a perfect revelation and manifestation of that being. Paul tells us in Phil.2v6., that Jesus existed in "the 'morphe' of God," that is "the essential form, nature and essence of God," and that He came to earth to reveal that nature and essence to us. This Jesus is our Great High Priest, He is "holy, without guile, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted higher than the heavens." Heb.7v26. Jesus is the Firstborn Head of all creation. Blessed be His Name!

"From Jesus Christ, --- the Ruler of the kings of the earth." "ho archon ton basileon tes ges."

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world that he had corrupted and usurped from God. Mt.4v8. Through shedding His precious blood, Jesus has won the right to be the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Dan.2v44,45. 4v25,32. 31-37. Mt.28v18. Eph.1v20-23. 1Tim.6v15. Rev.17v14. 19v16.

"From Jesus Christ, - who actively and continually loves us all the time." "toi agaponti hemas."

The best Greek texts inform us that Jesus loves us with a continuous present tense love, for "loves," "agaponti," the present active participle of "agapao," occurs in Ma, Aleph, A, C, the Critical Texts, and Hodges and Farstad. The A.V., T.R., and Mcde, reads, "loved us," "agapesanti," the aorist participle of "agapao;" and the Mb group reads "egapesen," the aorist active indicative of "agapao." The aorist tense would limit that love to a point in time. However, the best Greek texts, by using the present tense, inform us that our Lord's love has always been, and always will be, a continuous present reality, and is not just confined to the time when He died for us.

D. "From Jesus Christ --- who has washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Some of the modern translations follow the Critical Texts, Mde, Aleph, A, C, the Old Latin h and z; the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Armenian; Tyconius, Primasius, Cassiodorus, and Andrew's "a" commentary, and read, "having loosed or freed," "lusanti," the aorist active participle of "luo," to loose, to release. However, though the Critical Texts read, "loosed us out of," ("ek"), the majority of texts read, "washed us from," ("apo"). Hodges and Farstad follow the A.V. and T.R., "washed," "lousanti," which occurs in the uncials P, 046, 94, and 1006; most minuscules, i.e. Mac; the Old Latin, dem, div, gig, haf, and t; the Vulgate; the Coptic Bohairic, the Ethiopian; the bav and c commentaries of Andrew of Caesarea, who died 614 A.D. (Arethas, Mb, and Andrew c, read "elousen;" the third person singular first aorist active indicative of "louo," "to bathe.")

"Washed us," "lousanti," is the aorist active participle of "louo;" "to bathe and wash the whole body," (see Jn.13v10. Tit.3v5.); as distinct from "nipto," washing part of the body. See Jn.13v5,6,8., all the apostles, except Judas, were bathed and clean, and needed only to wash their feet, if they were defiled from their contact with an evil world. The aorist participle points to the point of time when we received the double blessing of justification, and release from guilt, through faith in Jesus, and the cleansing power of His precious redeeming blood. 1Pet.1v18,19. Rev.12v11. The Greek "en," means "in," in the phrase "in His blood," "en toi haimati;" "washed in Thy blood," makes much better sense than, "loosed in Thy blood." This reading is confirmed by the fact that in Rev.5v9. and 7v14., saints are definitely said to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

On page B-29 of "Unholy Hands On The Bible," a compilation of Burgon's works, the following comment is made on Rev.1v5. in favour of the Authorised Version reading "washed." "The beautiful expression which has found its way into so many tender passages relating to Christian devotion, 'Who has WASHED US from our sins in His own blood' has been replaced in many critical editions by 'Who has LOOSED US from our sins by His blood.' In early times a purist scribe, who had a dislike of anything that savoured of provincial retention of Aeolian or Dorian pronunciations, wrote from unconscious bias 'u' for 'ou', thereby transcribing 'lusanti' instead of the correct 'lousanti', unless he were not a Greek scholar enough to understand the difference. And he was followed by others, especially those who, whether from their own prejudices or due to sympathy with the scruples of other people, but in any case under the influence of a slavish literalism, hesitated about a passage in which they did not rise to the precious meaning really conveyed in it. So we find the three uncials which are nearest the point of corruption adopt it, and they are followed by nine cursives, the Harkleian Syriac, and the Armenian versions. On the other side are two uncials B/2 of the eighth century and P of the ninth, and the Vulgate, Bohairic, Ethiopic versions - and what is most important, all the other cursives." **End of quote.**

E. "From Jesus Christ, --- who has made us a kingdom and priests." Rev.1v6.

The Majority Text reading, "a kingdom," "basileian," occurs in Hodges and Farstad, the Critical Texts, Aleph, A, and C; and it is to be preferred to "kings," "basileis," which occurs in A.V., T.R. See Rev.5v10. which reads "kings and priests" in the Majority Text. God said in Exod.19v5,6., that Israel was to be "a kingdom of priests," He indicated by this precious promise that He desired Israel to be a nation of prayer warriors and priests for all the world, and the Temple at Jerusalem the house of prayer for all nations. Is.56v7. Mt.21v13. Mk.11v17. Lk.19v46. The Church has now become the true spiritual children of Abraham, and the true spiritual Israel, and God desires the Church to be "a kingdom of priests," who reveal His character, and impart His love, and Gospel blessings to the world. Rom.9v6-9,24-33. Gal.3v5-29. In 1Pet.2v5,9,10., Peter applies the promise and purpose of God in Exod.19v5,6., to the Church, and states that every member is given the privilege of this intercessory and priestly ministry with Jesus, our great High priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb.7v11-28.

N.B. Because of His humanity and work of mediation the Father is spoken of as Christ's God.

"He has made us a kingdom of priests unto His God and Father." "Unto his God and Father," "toi theoi kai patri autou," which is the dative case, and so the "autou," "His," applies both to "God," and "Father." Jesus said that the Father was His God, and Paul and Peter also speak of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mt.27v46. 2Cor.11v31. Eph.1v3,17. 1Pet.1v3. When Christ said that the Father was His God in Jn.20v17., He was still speaking, though risen and glorified, as the incarnate Son and perfect man, who became a servant for

the work of redemption. Christ is "Lord," and yet in His work as Redeemer and Mediator, God the Father is His God. When Christ spoke to Mary He was the Great High Priest of the Church, and the mediator and intercessor between God the Father and mankind, "the man Christ Jesus." 1Tim.2v5. The Incarnation was the most wonderful act of sacrificial renunciation, self-demotion, and humiliation, and cost our Lord more than words can ever tell. Unfathomable, all-embracing, all-giving Divine love, inspired the Trinity to make the Creation; and our Lord's willing self-humiliation, emptying, and subordination to the Father, were part of the enormous cost of the sacrifice, pain, work and suffering which the Trinity have had to endure, as a result of our creation and redemption. Phil.2v5-11. Amazing love!

In this age and the Millennial age, Jesus acts as Mediator between man and God the Father. Though Jesus is God and possesses absolute deity, yet as Mediator He reigns with the power delegated to Him by God the Father. Though Jesus is subject to the Father in His work as a mediator; yet even in His incarnation and earthly life He claimed equality with the Father in respect to His divinity, and the Jews fully understood this and tried to kill Him because of this claim. Jn.5v18,19,30. 8v58,59. After the Great White Throne judgement, Jesus, who existed eternally in the form of God, and claimed oneness and equality with God the Father, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father and demonstrate His subjection to Him for the work of mediation and redemption. 1Cor.15v28. Phil.2v6,7. Jn.1v1. Having conquered and subdued all foes, Jesus subjects His kingdom to the Father; and they will rule together over their kingdom. The Scriptures inform us that Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and that the saints will share in the rule of His kingdom. Dan.7v27. 2Tim.2v12. Rev.5v10. 20v6. 22v1-5. Jesus is God, and His throne is for ever. Dan.2v44,45. 7v13,14,18,27. Ps.45v6. with Heb.1v8. Is.9v6,7. with 2Sam.7v16. Lk.1v32,33. Having fulfilled His work as Mediator, and having eliminated evil from the Creation, and brought in everlasting righteousness, Jesus and the rest of the Trinity will rule and guide in love the redeemed creation. Dan.2v44. 7v22,27. 9v24. The creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and experience the true liberty and freedom ("eleutheria") of the sons of God. Rom.8v21. All the creation will applaud the triumphs of our Lord's grace, love and power; He will be worshipped for ever, as the eternally reigning King of kings and Lord of lords, and our Saviour God. Rev.5v10-12. 11v15. 19v6-16. 22v3-5. Titus.2v13. 2Pet.1v1.

2. "TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN." Rev.1v6.

John praises and extols Jesus and ascribes eternal glory and dominion to Him, for all His sacrificial love has done for the redeemed. Similar doxologies to Jesus are found in Rev.5v13. 7v10. 2Tim.4v18. 1Pet.4v11. 2Pet.3v18. In 1Pet.4v11., the same phrase, "he doxa kai to kratos" occurs as in Rev.1v6.. "He doxa" is used in 2Pet.3v18. and 2Tim.4v18., to state that glory is going to be given to Jesus for ever. "he doxa" is used with other attributes of glory and rank in Rev.5v13. and 7v10..

The phrase in Rev.1v6., "for ever and ever," "tous aionas ton aionon," means literally, "unto the ages of ages," it occurs on twelve occasions in Revelation, in Rev.1v6,18. 4v9,10. 5v13. 7v12. 10v6. 11v15. 15v7. 19v3. 20v10. and 22v5. When God made His creation, He had a clear plan in His mind, He divided time into various ages. In Eph.3v11., "eternal purpose," "prothesin ton aionon," means literally, "the plan of the ages." In Heb.1v2. and 11v3., "worlds," is, "ages." In each of these ages God has brought to pass one aspect of His plan of the ages. In each age God has tried a different way of dealing with part or all of His creation. These ages have been; the ages of angelic administration; the short Adamic age of innocence; the age of forbearance ending with the flood; the age of Law which ended with our Lords first coming; the age of grace ends with Christ's second coming; the next age is the Millennial age where love is mixed with stern justice; then follows the ages of ages of God's eternal kingdom. These ages are God's wonderful plan of the ages, a vast thing which staggers the mind and makes us realise the immense wisdom, power and knowledge of our God and the wonderful future that He has for His children.

Before creation time was not measured by ages, and so it was called, "before the ages, or age times." 1Cor.2v7. 2Tim.1v9. Titus.1v2. The preparatory or probationary ages, as we may call them, finish at the close of the Great White Throne judgement, and then begins the ages of ages. Life in these endless ages will be filled with the beauty, delight, inexhaustible variety, joy and love, which flow from the being and nature of God. God is the supreme treasure of Heaven, and through His grace we shall enjoy fellowship with Him for ever. During these endless ages God will bestow upon us lives of the fullest possible joy and happiness, there will be no disappointment or disillusionment, there will be a fulfilment of our hopes, which will be exceedingly more abundant than anything we can ask, or our minds can conceive. This was the reason for God's creation, God longed that untold millions of men and angels could enjoy His treasures and blessings for ever. To this end the Trinity have worked and suffered down the ages, giving and sacrificing to the very uttermost. How great and good they are.

3. "BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS." Rev.1v7.

These are clouds of heavenly glory, like the glory cloud at the Transfiguration. Mt.17v5. 2Pet.1v16-19. We read in Dan.7v13., of Jesus coming with the clouds of Heaven to God the Father to receive the kingdom. Oh, may that day come quickly. These clouds of glory are mentioned in the Old Testament, the cloudy pillar, the Shekinah, the glory that filled the heavenly Temple. Ex.13v21,22. 14v24. Num.12v5. Deut.31v15. Neh.9v19. Is.6v4. 19v1. Nahum.1v3. Jesus said He would return in the clouds of Heaven, Mt.24v29-31. 26v64. Mk.14v62. Rev.14v14-16.; He ascended to Heaven in clouds, Acts.1v9-11., we too shall caught up to Heaven in the clouds at His coming. 1Thes.4v17.

4. "AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, AND THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM."

This is certainly no secret coming or secret rapture, both Jesus and Paul forcefully warn the Church against the false doctrine of a secret coming of Christ and secret rapture of the Church. Lk.17v23,24. 2Thes.2v1-8. Even Balaam knew this. Num.24v17. The Lord will come with a strong arm and all will mourn. Is.40v9,10. Zech.12v9-12. Mt.24v30. "Pierced," is "exekentesan," the aorist active indicative of "ekkenteo," to pierce, it is used in Jn.19v37., in a quote from Zech.12v10. This will be a mourning day for the worldling because of the fiery judgement, but a happy day for the Church and the Old Testament saints. 2Thes.1v7-10. 1Jn.3v2. Jude.v14. Job.19v25-27. 33v26. "Shall mourn," is "kopsontai," the future middle indicative of "kopto," to cut, as mourners often did; or, to smite the chest in mourning, and to lament and wail. All the nations of the earth shall mourn and weep in sorrow, fear, and terror when Jesus returns, this is certainly no secret second coming.

N. B. THIS INTRODUCTION AND GREETING IS BOTH A BENEDICTION AND A WARNING.

God the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the heavenly angelic hierarchy, give all readers of this book their greetings and their benediction of grace and peace. They come to us with good will and blessing, however, the majesty of these messengers warns us to take the Revelation very seriously. Jesus comes to us as God the Word, and He gives to us precious and eternal truth in the Revelation, however, the only ones who will be able to understand and properly interpret its moral truths and prophecies, are those who accept the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus. This is not difficult for genuine servants of God and believers in Jesus, for our Lord's divine credentials are absolutely irrefutable.

Nobody has made the claims that Christ made and substantiated by His character, life, teaching, miracles and actions. Jesus claimed that He had shared an eternally divine fellowship, oneness and equality of glory with the God the Father. Mt.11v27. Jn.1v18. 5v18. 10v30. 16v15. 17v1,5,9,10,20-23,25. Jesus said that He had been sent by the Father to live on earth the beautiful divine life that He had lived in heaven with the Father. Jn.5v17. 16v28. 20v21. "Through the tender mercy of God: the dayspring from on high has visited us." Lk.1v78. Jesus said that His life was the perfect expression of the Father's being and character, and that He and the Father share an interfusion of nature and being. Jn.10v38. 17v20-23. 14v7-11. Heb.1v3.

Jesus claimed, enjoyed, and will for ever receive, the worship and praise that can only be given to God. Jn.5v23. Phil.2v9-11. Rev.1v5,6. 5v11-14. etc. In heaven Christ shared with the Father the divine qualities and prerogatives that only belong to God; omnipotence, Mt.28v18-20. Rev.1v8.; omnipresence, Mt.18v20. 28v19,20.; omniscience. Rev.2v23. with 1Kings.8v39. Christ claimed he had authority to forgive sins. Mk.2v5-10. Lk.24v46-48. He also proved that He had the authority and power to raise the dead, and said that at His command all the dead would be raised, and that He is the judge who will decide the eternal destinies of all mankind on the great judgement day. Jn.5v22-29. 6v39,40,44,54. 10v17,18. 11v25. Mt.25v31-46.

The Scriptures warn us that many false prophets would arise and deny the absolute deity of Jesus, His atonement, and the truths that He has revealed to us. 2Pet.2v1-3. These heretics are not Christians, and until they repent and believe the truth, they can have no place in the kingdom of God. Acts.4v12. Gal.1v6-12. 1Jn.5v12. 2Jn.v9,10. Jude.v4. The deity of Jesus is a vitally important fundamental Christian truth, and eternal life and eternal death depend on whether we accept Jesus as our God and Saviour. 2Pet.1v1. R.V. Acts.8v35-37. 20v28.

The full complement of the Divine qualities of character are fully revealed in Jesus. Col.2v3,9. The disciples who lived and walked with Jesus viewed His life with awe and wonder, and gave unanimous testimony that He was "that eternal life, which was with the Father." John proclaims the awesome truth, "The Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jn.1v1,14. 1Jn.1v1-3. True Christians worship the Lord Jesus, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Jn.20v28. Let us recognise the majesty and glory of His deity, and listen with the same humility, awe and wonder to what our divine Lord has to say to us in His Revelation.

PART 1. THINGS PAST. "The things which thou hast seen." Rev.1v9-20.

1. PATMOS.

The island of Patmos where John was imprisoned is off the South West coast of Asia Minor, it is to the West of Miletus and 50 miles South West of Ephesus. Patmos is 10 to 12 miles in length, 6 in breadth, and 28 in circumference; it has two rocky peaks which are joined by a narrow isthmus. The Romans banished criminals and political prisoners to hard labour in the mines on Patmos. The best authorities say that John was exiled on Patmos in the reign of Domitian, and received this glorious revelation during the latter part of Domitian's reign. Domitian was a cruel and ruthless opponent of the Church, he has been called "the second Nero," because of his vicious persecutions against the Church. After the death of Domitian in A.D. 96, John was released and returned to Ephesus during the reign of Emperor Nerva. John suffered a great deal for his loyalty to Jesus, His hoary head of about 90 years of age, did not move the Romans to mercy, or exemption from working in the mines of Patmos, but God met with His aged servant and gave him the greatest prophetic revelation of all time. The hard labour prison camp on Patmos became holy ground with the presence of our beloved Lord. Exod.3v5. Josh.5v13-15.

Leaders in the early Church knew what it was to suffer and die for the truth. John was a co-partner and fellow partaker ("sunkoinonos"), with multitudes of other Christians in the pressure, persecution, and tribulation

("thlipsei"), and in the kingdom ("basileiai"), and patient courageous endurance ("hupomonei"), of Jesus Christ. John Bunyan in Bedford prison, Moses in exile, Ezekiel and Daniel in captivity in Babylon, Paul in chains at Rome, and multitudes of others have proved the faithfulness of their faithful Lord. How often in circumstances like these God has given wonderful revelations of His plans and purposes, and on Patmos Jesus meets with His beloved servant John, and gives him a glorious revelation of Himself and His eternal plans and purposes. Circumstances can never separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom.8v31-39. Christ will come in power and blessing where there is one receptive, loving and longing soul. Though God's dear children may be denied earthly comforts and necessities, they will not be denied the consolations of Heaven. 2Tim.2v9. Acts.23v11. Those who endure persecution and tribulation for Christ's sake, will always enjoy His heavenly consolations. Dan.7v27. Jn.16v33. Acts.14v20-22. 1Cor.4v9-13. 1Thes.1v6. 2v14. 3v3,4. 2Thes.1v4,5. 3v5. Rom.2v7,8. 5v3,4. 8v17,25. 2Tim.2v12. Heb.10v36. 6v11,12,15. 12v22-24,28. Lk.12v32. 2Pet.1v11. Mt.24v13,14. James.5v7-11. 1v12.

2. "I CAME TO BE IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY." Rev.1v10.

"On the Lords day," "Lord's," "kuriakos," means "pertaining to the Lord," (only here and in 1Cor.11v20., "the Lord's Supper, "kuriakon deipnon"), many think that this could be Sunday. See Acts.20v7. 1Cor.16v1,2. Jn.20v19,26. Rom.14v5. It certainly does not refer, as some have suggested, to the day of judgement on the day of the Lord, "hemera kuriou." 2Pet.3v10.

N.B. VISIONS WHILE IN THE SPIRIT.

Many of God's children have experienced visions while, "In the spirit." Rev.17v3. 21v10. Mt.22v43. Acts.10v10. 2Cor.12v2,4. Our spirit is renewed at the new birth. Jn.3v1-9. Eph.2v1-10. Titus.3v5. Our renewed spirit is the organ of communion with God, and the means whereby He communicates with us, and imparts to us the gifts of the Spirit. John was given a remarkable series of visions while he was, "In the Spirit." See Jn.4v23,24. 1Cor.2v9-16. 14v15-18. A vision is an accepted New Testament experience. The noun; "horasis," describes the act of seeing, it is used of visions in Acts.2v17. and Rev.9v17.; the noun "horama," which means, that which is seen. The verb "horao," to see, is used of visions in Mt.17v9. Acts.7v31. 9v10,12. 10v3,17,19. 11v5. 12v9. 16v9,10. and 18v9.. The noun "optasia," which also describes the act of seeing, is from "optano," to see, is used to speak of visions in Lk.1v22. 24v23. Acts.26v19. and 2Cor.12v1.. Supernatural sight is a reality.

During some of the more important visions, God can cause Christians to become oblivious to their surroundings; this is what happened in Acts.10v10. 11v5. and 22v17.; where the Authorised Version states that both Peter and Paul experienced a "trance;" an "ekstasis." "Ekstasis," literally means, "a standing out," and so it means a transportation out of a person's normal condition or state of mind. It is used of people being carried out of themselves with extreme astonishment in Mk.5v42. 16v8. Lk.5v26. and Acts.3v10.. God even spoke to the sorcerer Balaam in a trance. Numb.24v4,16. "Ekstasis," speaks of an elevated consciousness during which God suspends ordinary perceptions and the awareness of natural surroundings, and the person is only conscious of the vision imparted by God. Paul said that on one occasion, when he was having visions of Heaven, he did not know if he was in or out of the body. 2Cor.12v1-4. This does not mean, of course, that the intellectual powers of Paul were suspended, they were enlightened and carried to the greatest heights of spiritual revelation. This is in direct contrast to the experience of mediums, who completely lose consciousness when they go into a trance. Raphael Gasson, in his book, "The Challenging Counterfeit;" tells us from his own pre-Christian experience as a medium, that he lost consciousness when he went into a trance, and had to be told what had taken place during a seance.

The majority of Old Testament prophets received their revelations by vision. Is.1v1. Jer.1v11. Ezek.1v1. Dan.1v17. Amos.1v1. Zech.1v8. etc. The prophets were called "seers," Hebrew "chozeh," and "roeh," because God taught them by visions. 1Sam.9v9,15-20. Vision was the highest form of revelation in both the Old Testament and New Testament; however, visions can vary a great deal in importance in both their method of communication and their content. The vision of John on the island of Patmos reached the very highest height of continuous revelation from God by "ekstasis" visions.

3. JOHN'S VISION OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST. Rev.1v9-20. See Heb.6v20. 7v23 to 8v2.

A. CHRIST REVEALED TO JOHN THE AWESOME MAJESTY AND GLORY OF HIS PERSON.

The great Old Testament prophets were enabled to carry on against fierce opposition through the strength imparted by visions of God. John was about 90 and was suffering greatly under the severe prison regime and hard labour in the mines of Patmos. Jesus came to comfort, strengthen, and encourage His suffering friend John, through a wonderful vision of Himself. Christian in difficulty, look for the light that surprises, for the Lord who rises with healing in His wings. Jesus still had great need of His aged servant, He desired to give John one of the greatest prophetic revelations of all time, and few are spiritually able to receive revelations of this kind. Old age and confinement does not mean that useful service has finished; look to Jesus, He has great need of you, and so has His Church. Heb.6v10. The gentle welcoming love and gracious disposition of Jesus are exactly the same as when He was on earth, He is greatly moved by our needs, feelings, and infirmities, and all power is given to Him in Heaven and earth to aid us. 2Cor.5v16. Ezek.1v26-28. Dan.7v9-14. 10v5,6. Mt.17v2. 28v18. 2Pet.1v16-18. Phil.2v9-11. Is.9v6. The majesty and glory of Jesus was so great, that even the beloved apostle John was totally overwhelmed by the vision of his risen Lord, and he became greatly afraid. See Hab.3v1-19. Acts.22v9. Heb.12v21. Gen.17v3. 2Sam.6v9. Ez.1v28. This wonderful vision of our glorified Lord corrects any wrong earthly ideas that we may have about Him. He is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The majestic King

of Heaven is our dearest and closest friend. Blessed be His name!

Jesus is abundantly able to help us in our trials and temptations. The importance of Heb.2v17,18. and 4v15.

We see from Heb.2v17., that Jesus was **in all things ("kata panta") made like us**, in order to become our perfect, merciful, and faithful High Priest. God tells us in Heb.4v15. that Jesus **was tempted in all points ("kata panta") like us**, yet without sin. "Tempted," is "pepeirasmenon" the perfect passive participle of "peirazo" 3985, to test, to make trial of, to tempt, the perfect tense shows that temptation and trial was a permanent part of Christ's experience. There is no calamity or trial of life which Jesus has not experienced, and where He has not gone before us. Jesus knows all our trials, temptations, and difficulties, and is totally sympathetic with us, and manifests perfect compassionate love towards us. Jesus does not just passively watch us, He actively comes to our aid in time of need. We read in Heb.2v18., "For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted (the aorist passive participle of "peirazo" 3985), He is able to succour them that are tempted (the present passive participle of "peirazo" 3985)." In Heb.2v18., "to succour," is "boethesai," the aorist active infinitive of "boetheo," "to run at a cry or call for help." Jesus is glorified and exalted, but He "runs to aid us when we cry for help. In Mt.15v25., the Syrophenician woman used "boethei," the present active imperative of "boetheo," to ask Jesus to run to her aid.

In Heb.2v18., "hath suffered," is "peponthen," the perfect active indicative of "pascho" 3958, the perfect shows that suffering and temptation was a permanent part of the experience of Jesus. The soul anguish and suffering of Jesus was at times utterly devastating and extreme. We read in Heb.5v7., that Jesus wept "with strong crying and tears," "meta krauges ischuras kai dakruon." "With loud cries and tears," RSV. "With vehement cries and tears," NKJ. Christ's mental and spiritual agony and anguish was so great, and so physically destructive, that it seems an angel had to strengthen Jesus, in order to preserve His life. In Lk.22v43,44., "agony" "agonia," means, anguish, conflict; "strengthening" "enischuo," only occurs here and Acts.9v19.

God's Word tells us in Heb.2v18., that Jesus is "absolutely able" ("dunamai"), to aid us in our temptations, and trials, not just because of His almighty power, but also because of His human experience of our trials. Jesus fully partook of our humanity, and personally experienced multitudes of really horrendous trials of life because of it. Jn.1v14. Rom.8v3. Phil.2v7. Heb.2v9. We can totally rely on the compassionate sympathising humanity of Jesus, as well as His omnipotent Deity. We read in Heb.2v17., "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." "It behoved him," is "opheilen," the imperfect active of "ophello," 3784, to owe money; a debt to be paid, a duty, an obligation. Mt.18v28. Lk.17v10. Rom13v8. Before the foundation of the world Jesus dedicated Himself to be the Lamb of God to take away our sins, He paid this debt of love on the Cross at Calvary. In Heb.4v15,16., God promises to dispense mercy and grace in time of need from His throne of grace. "In time of need," is "eis eukairon boetheian," help given because of the heartfelt cry of the person in distress, for "boetheia" means to run at the cry, (as in Heb.2v18.) we cry "for well timed ("eukairon,") help," or "for help in the nick of time."

Christ's humanity was complete and real. John states, in 1John.4v3., "every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God." "In the flesh," "en sarki eleluthora," is included by Hodges and Farstad, Aleph, the vast majority of Greek texts," the Syrian Peshitta and Harklean, the Armenian, Theodoret etc., (a few manuscripts including B and A omit it). Those who deny our Lord's humanity are "not of God." Never forget that Jesus has suffered infinitely more than we can ever do, the worst of all our griefs and sorrows can never reach the awful soul destroying depths that He endured for us.

a. "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." "hos erion leukon hos chion."

"Erion," wool, only occurs in Rev.1v14., and as scarlet wool in Heb.9v19.; and "chion," snow, only here, and of the angel's clothes in Mt.28v3.. In Dan.7v9., the Ancient of Days is described as having garments "as white as snow," and hair "like pure wool," this declares far more than the honour, wisdom, and dignity that was ascribed to the wise experience of an hoary head in the Scriptures. Lev.19v32. Prov.16v31. It is speaking of a manifestation of the effulgent glory of the being of God. It is the shining forth of the uncreated light and glory that was manifested in the "holy Mount," when Jesus was transfigured, and His face shone as the sun, and His garments became shining, exceeding white as the snow, as white as the light. 2Pet.1v16-18. We read in Mt.17v2., that our Lord's garments were "white as the light," "leuka hos to phos;" and Mk.9v3. reads, "glistening, exceeding white," "stilbonta leuka lian;" and Luke.9v29. reads, "white and dazzling," "leukos exastrapton." Jesus was, "crowned with glory and honour, for the sufferings of death." God the Father let Jesus experience His former glory in Heaven, to strengthen Him to "taste death to the full for every man." Heb.2v9. "Taste," "geusetai," the aorist mid. subj. of "geuomai," means that Jesus did not have a sip, but experienced and drank to the full, the bitter cup of death and the darkness and isolation of confinement in the Abyss for our redemption. Mt12v12v40. Rom.10v7. Eph.4v7-11. Heb.5v7.

b. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." "ophthalmoi autou hos phlox puros."

This description is again applied to Christ in Rev.2v18. and 19v12.. In Dan.7v9., the throne of God is said to be, "like the fiery flame;" and the eyes of the mighty angel in Dan.10v6., are described "as lamps of fire." "Thy kind, but searching glance can scan, the very wounds that shame would hide." Rev.2v23.

c. "His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

The word for "fine brass," is "chalkolibanoi," it only occurs here and in Rev.2v18., some think it speaks of the metal referred to as "amber," "chashmal," (Greek "elektron"), in Ezekiel's vision of God in Ezek.1v4,27. 8v2., Strong. 2830. It was a bright metal compound of gold and silver, and possibly copper, the whole picture is one of burning and shining glory and purity.

d. "A great voice, as of a trumpet, --- as the sound of many waters." Rev.1v10,15.

The Lord's voice is majestic and mighty in its authority; but it can also manifest the indescribable beauty, concerned love, and giving goodness of His being; and speak with a voice of gentle encouraging stillness, as He did to Elijah at Horeb, which is equally as awesome as His voice of authority and command. Ps.29. Ez.43v2. 1v24. 1Thes.4v16. 1King.19v12.

e. "Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."

This is literally "a sword two-mouthed sharp," "romphaia distomos oxeia." The sword here is not the "machaira," spoken of in Heb.4v12., it is the "romphaia," the long and heavy broad sword which the Thracians and other nations were armed with, some say the word speaks of a Thracian javelin. The word only occurs here in Rev.1v16. 2v12,16. 6v8. 19v15,21. and in Lk.2v35., of the terrible inner pain that Mary felt when Jesus became "a sign which was spoken against," and was "despised and rejected," persecuted and crucified. The sword of our Lord's mouth is a fearsome weapon that will be manifested at His second coming with devastating effect on the wicked. Rev.19v15,21. Zech.14v12. The sword of the Lord makes demons fear and fly, and He has said that through His Name we can exercise His authority.

B. JESUS REVEALED TO JOHN HIS CARE OF HIS CHURCHES. "He had in his right hand seven stars."

As we follow our Lord, we are safely kept in the hand of the Father and the Son, and no one can pluck us out of their hands. Jn.10v27-29. Jesus gives us the gift of eternal life. See also Jn.6v27,40,47.. "Give," is the present active indicative of "didomi," "to give." Eternal life is a present reality, not just a future hope. There has been a great deal of controversy over whether the eternal security of Christians is conditional or unconditional. Is the will of God irresistible regarding salvation, or can a believer frustrate the will of God and become an apostate from the faith? The Scriptures teach that believing in Jesus does not take away our free will, and that it is possible for Christians to apostatise and lose their salvation. However, the Scriptures also emphasise the eternal security of those who cling to and follow their Lord. Jn.10v27-29.

C. CHRIST HAS COME TO PURIFY HIS CHURCHES.

a. Jesus has come to make us shine with a clear pure light.

We can only derive true spiritual life from Jesus, this is why the churches are looked upon as a lamp, and not a candlestick, which has the energy to burn within itself; a lamp needs a constant supply of oil to keep it burning. We can only shine as we derive our life from our Lord. Ex.25v31-40. Zech.4v1-14. Mt.5v14,15. 25v1-13. Jn.1v16,17. 6v53-58,63. Rom.3v24. 5v2,17,20,21. 2Cor.12v9. Phil.2v15,16. Our Lord's eyes, which are like a flame of fire, see all, His ears hear every thought and word. Nor is He just passive, the sword of His mouth encourages and commends, rebukes and judges. Jesus has not come into His Church as an idle bystander, He has come as Lord as well as our best friend, and we all need to obey His instructions to us through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Ps.2v11,12. God is not a sugar daddy, for even though His love, tenderness and gentleness are wonderful, His judgements upon serious sin can be very severe. Is.11v4. Acts.5v1-11. Rev.2v5,16,22,23. Heb.3v6. 4v12. 12v25-29. Rev.19v15. We need to tremble at the Word of our Lord. Is.66v1,2.

b. This vision shows us that Jesus will never fail us in life's great trials.

This vision of our glorious Lord was intended to bring us to a fitting state of mind to hear Christ's words to us, and a realisation of His continual care for His sheep. 1Pet.5v7. Jesus will never fail us, He is the Good Shepherd who died for His sheep, and here we see Him in His watchful visitation of His churches and His continual intercession for them. Jesus has not gone to Heaven to enjoy Himself, He has gone there to work hard on our behalf. It is His love for us that makes Him so desirous of having us pure. Christ's care and love for His people are wonderful. Eph.5v25-27. 3v16-21. In Jn.13v1., "eis telos" is better translated, "to the uttermost," as in 1Thes.2v16.. This vision of Jesus, which fills the Church with joy and delight, causes the wicked to express bitter hatred, anger and blasphemy. Antichrist and his followers even try to destroy Jesus when He returns. Rev.16v9,11,21. 19v19. Ps.2v1-3. The wicked will even blaspheme God to His face at the last judgement, and gnash their teeth in bitter anger and hatred against Him. Mt.8v12. 13v42,50. 22v13. 24v51. 25v30. Lk.13v28.

4. JESUS IS THE GREAT "FIRST AND LAST"

One of the most striking titles of Jesus is the title "First and Last," for in Is.41v4. 44v6-8. and 48v12., God claims that He alone can be called "the First and the Last," yet this title is directly claimed by Christ in Rev.1v17. 2v8. and 22v12-16. The title "The First and The Last," is used by God to emphasise that He is the great Creator who foreknows and declares the future; when Jesus claims this title, He declares to all that He is the Creator God who unveiled future events to John and His Church. Indeed, Christ declares that He is not only "the First and the Last," but that He is "the Alpha and the Omega," and "the Beginning and the Ending." These exclusive titles of absolute deity are used by the Father in Rev.1v8. and 21v5,6., when He proclaims Himself as "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Since all these exclusive titles of Deity are applied to Christ; the irrefutable conclusion is that Jesus possesses absolute deity.

Textual note. In Rev.1v11., the "I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," is omitted by Aleph, A,

C, the Critical Texts, Hodges and Farstad, and is only in part of the Andreas Me texts. However, Rev.1v17. 2v8. and 22v12-16., say Jesus is "The First and the Last," the conclusion cannot be denied, Jesus has Jehovah deity.

5. JESUS OUR LORD HAS THE KEYS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

We have already seen our Lord's deity revealed in His title, "the Firstborn from the dead." Here our Lord reveals that the destinies of all of the dead are in His hands, and that He has the keys of death and Hades. Jesus stated that John's life and death were in His hands, not in the hands of Emperor Domitian. Jesus was shortly to bring Domitian's life to an end, and He was going to imprison this evil Emperor in Hades, and He was going to release John, and give him almost ten more years of valuable ministry to the Church. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades, our lives, deaths, and ministries are in His hands.

N.B. IN REV.1V18., "HELL," SHOULD BE TRANSLATED "HADES," THE ABODE OF THE DEAD.

"Hades" occurs 10 times in the New Testament Mt.11v23. 16v18. Lk.10v15. 16v23. Acts.2v27,31. Rev.1v18. 6v8. 20v13,14. The Hebrew equivalent of "Hades" is "Sheol," which occurs 65 times in the Old Testament, it too has been wrongly translated in places as Hell, e.g. Ps.66v10., and in other places as "the grave," e.g. Gen.37v35.. "Sheol" should be translated as "the place of the dead," or simply as "Sheol" in every place where it occurs in the Old Testament. The word "Sheol" never means grave, "Qeber" is the Hebrew word that is used to describe the burying place, grave, or sepulchre, into which the dead are laid. Compare the use of the words in the following Scriptures, the grave and "sheol" are seen in vivid contrast. In each case the first Scripture uses "Qeber" and the second one "sheol." Gen.50v5. with Gen.37v35., 1Kings.13v30,31. with Ps.30v3., Is.22v16. with 38v10., 2Chron.16v14. with Ps.49v15., Is.53v9. with Ps.16v10. Acts.2v17,31.

"Sheol," and "Hades," both speak of the same place, the temporary abode of the dead, from which everyone who is in there, will come out for the Great White Throne Judgement, at the end of the Millennium. Rev.20v11-15. Jesus said that Hades has two parts between which there is a great impassable gulf, and before His death all went to one side or the other. Lk.16v26. The good side was not in God's presence, but in Abraham's bosom, and even though the Old Testament saints who were there had the comfort of their faith in God, none of them wanted to die and go to this place of darkness, and so they lived their lives in fear of death. Is.38v1-3. Heb.2v15. Job.10v20-22. 19v25-27. This outlook was completely changed by the death of Jesus, for He said that, unlike the Old Testament believer, those who believed in Him would not lose their spirit at death and go to Hades, but would go into the presence of God in Paradise in Heaven. Jn.8v35. 11v24-26. 2Cor.5v1,6-8. 12v2-4. Rev.2v7. 21v10 with 22v2. Phil.1v21,22. Heb.12v22-24. Ez.28v13.

Many believe that the Old Testament saints were among "the multitude of captives," that Jesus led out of Hades. Eph.4v8. 1Pet.3v18-20. 4v6. We should translate Lk.23v43., "Verily, to thee I say today; with me thou shalt be in Paradise." The thief asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus told him that he did not have to wait until the kingdom came for that answer, his faith had saved him THAT DAY, and he was going to enjoy Paradise with his Lord. Paradise is in Heaven. Rev.2v7. 2Cor.12v1-4. Jesus did not go to Paradise that day, He went to the sinners side of Hades for our redemption, and suffered its pains. Acts.2v23-32. 1Pet.2v14. 2Cor.5v21. Mt.12v40. Heb.5v7. Is.53v10. This victory over death and Hades was our Lord's greatest victory of faith and love. Blessed be His lovely Name!

We must not confuse Hades with "Gehenna," also known as "the lake of fire," into which the wicked go after the Great White Throne Judgement. Mt.25v41,46. "Gehenna" occurs 12 times in the New Testament. Mt.5v22,29,30. 10v28. 18v9. 23v15,33. Mk.9v43,45,47. Lk.12v5. James.3v6. Fire is often associated with the judgement and doom of the wicked. Mt.7v19. 13v40,42,50. 18v8,9. 25v41. Mk.9v44,46,48. Lk.16v24. Jn.15v6. 2Thes.1v8. Heb.10v27. Jude.v7. Rev.14v10. 19v20. 20v10,14,15. 21v8. Characters and will are permanently set by the passage of time, and by our acceptance or rejection of the truth. A fixation of purpose towards righteousness or evil is inevitable for everyone. This is why Paul said, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." We must set our wills in the paths of righteousness, not in the ways of the wicked. Jer.13v23. Rom.2v1-11. 9v22-27. 2Tim.3v13-17. 2Pet.2v1-22. Rev.2v21. 9v20,21. 16v9,11,21. 21v8. 22v11. Jesus has the keys of Hades, and at present only the unsaved go to Hades to await judgement. The first people to be put in Gehenna are Antichrist and his followers, at our Lord's return. Satan is not in charge of Hades and Gehenna, they are God's prisons, which Satan and his demons are terrified of being cast into. **See Appendix 1. The Issues of Death and Eternal judgement.**

PART TWO. THINGS PRESENT. "The things which are." Rev.2v1 to 3v22.

The letters to the seven churches are not prophecies of different periods of Church history, they are messages to each named individual church. However, each letter to the churches has lessons for all of Christ's Church in all ages. We need to take note of the warnings, and rejoice in the promises, that Jesus gives to these churches. There have been many different kinds of churches in every period of Church history. The word of God is the eternal voice of God to His people. The Holy Spirit meets the particular and local needs of each church through His gifts. There is a framework common to each letter.

1. The letters are all addressed to the angels of the seven churches.

"Angelos," means "messenger," it occurs 185 times in the New Testament; "archangel," "archangelos," occurs in 1Thes.4v16. and Jude.v9.; and "like the angels," "isangeloi," occurs in Lk.20v36.. "Angelos" is mostly used of angelic beings, and is used of human messengers only 13 times; of John Baptist, "My messenger," in

Mt.11v10. Mk.1v2. Lk.7v27., quoting Mal.3v1.; John's messengers, Lk.7v24.; Christ's messengers, Lk.9v52.; the spies Rahab received James.2v25.; and the seven messengers to the churches in Revelation. "Angelos" can hardly refer to an angelic messenger in the letters to the seven churches, for Jesus has no need to write letters to His heavenly messengers, they receive His instructions directly from Him. Some say these seven messengers may simply be the postal messengers to the seven churches. Lk.7v24,27. 9v52. James.2v25. 1Cor.11v10. Others say that they are the presiding elder, pastor and overseer of each of the churches. In the early Church the elder, "presbuteros," and the bishop, or better, the overseer, "episkopos," were different names for the same office, one tells us that they were older respected leaders of the local church, the other tells us that they were the overseers and shepherds of the local church, Acts.14v23. 20v17,28. 1Tim.3v1-7. Titus.1v5-9. 1Pet.5v2. The most senior and most spiritual elder presided and took the leading part in the church, and so had the greatest responsibility for the church. Some have thought that the honoured place in the hand of Christ is that of the leading elder and shepherd of the sheep. 1Pet.5v1-4. There is a great responsibility resting upon those who are leading the flock of God, they can make or mar their flocks.

2. Each letter describes some attribute of Christ particularly applicable to each church.

We need to be stripped of all false ideas of Jesus for they mislead the soul, and it is only the truth about Him that gives us victory in the day. This is why the prophets were given notable visions of God, their tasks were so difficult that it was only their vision of God that gave them strength to go on. It is the revelation of God to our soul that brings us life and victory. Jn.6v53-58,63. Ezek.1v26. Dan.7v9-14. 2Chron.18v18. Acts.9v1-16. 22v6-14. 26v12-23. The particular need of each church is revealed by Jesus in the light of some glorious attribute of His own Person, which can meet that need, all we need is in Jesus. Rev.2v1,8,12,18. 3v1,7,14. We are instructed in Heb.12v1,2., to look away from all the distractions and problems of life, and even the cloud of witnesses, and to look instead into the inner being of Jesus and feed our souls on His beauty. "Aphorontes eis," "looking away into" Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

3. There is a description of the condition of each church.

Christ starts with the solemn words, "I know thy works;" words intended to sober and prepare the heart to listen to Him with a befitting seriousness. Our Lord's address to the church follows the following pattern. He first of all commends whatever He can find to commend, then tells them the things that are wrong with the church, only two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia escape rebuke. Jesus closes with an exhortation either to hold fast or repent, and warns that discipline or judgement will come upon those churches that do not repent. Christ and His angels watch our lives and works, and a kind but searching examination of the detailed record of our lives and works will take place at the judgement seat of Christ. Unseen watchers record our lives and works, for they show what we are, and the value of our faith. Dan.4v13,17-31. We shall not just be judged on our condition when we meet Jesus, but on our past life as a whole after salvation. 2Cor.5v8-11. Sin that has been repented of will of course be forgiven and forgotten by our gracious Lord, but He will be perfectly honest and just with us. The fire will try our works. 1Cor.3v10-17. Only real repentance will blot out our sins. Mt.12v36,37. James.2v14-26.

The picture of a lamp stand conveys the truth that the churches are intended to be lights that shine in the darkness of the world. The powers of darkness try to extinguish or pollute this light, and so the church is attacked by temptation, persecution, by infiltration of Satan's children into the Church, and by treachery, sin or division from within the Church. Josh.7 all 9v3-27. Acts.5v1-11,13. 20v28-31. 8v1-3. Gal.1v6-9. 5v7,11,12. 3Jn.v9-11. Jude.v3,4,12-21. 2Pet.2v1-3.

4. Jesus reveals the people and means by which Satan attacks the churches.

A. False Religion. This, rather than atheism, is Satan's objective, for by this means he can deceive more people, and his real aim is worship of himself. False religion is seen in the following ways in these churches.

Synagogue. Rev.2v9. Even the order laid down by God can become the instrument of Satan, if only the outward form is carried out, and truth and Christ are rejected in favour of man-made tradition. The Temple of God at Jerusalem became a den of thieves instead of the house of prayer for all nations, and Israel's religious leaders rejected and crucified their Christ.

Paganism. Rev.2v20. The gods of the heathen are really demons, or Satan, who desires to be like God and be worshipped, he is the god of this degenerate world. 1Cor.10v19-21. 2Tim.3v7,8. 2Cor.4v4. 2Thes.2v7,8. Rev.13.

False Doctrine. Jn.8v44. Satan had infiltrated several of the seven churches with deadly false doctrines that included immorality and idolatry. Sensuous evil teaching such as this was part of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes, Baalamites, and the followers of Jezebel, and this kind of lawless Antinomianism has been a bane of the Church throughout its history. The voice of God repeats again and again, "Be ye holy, as I am holy." 1Pet.1v15,16. Rev.3v7. 4v8. 15v4. 6v10. 22v11.

B. Martyrdom. Rev.2v10. What Satan cannot win by seduction he tries to destroy by persecution, he has often used those who have unscriptural traditions, or practice false religion, or have political power, to persecute God's dear children.

C. Worldly Interests. Satan once offered Christ the world in exchange for His cross and he still comes with the same offer to the brethren of Jesus. The church at Laodicea had succumbed to this temptation, and many others who resist Satan in other ways often fall prey to prosperity. We are urged to keep ourselves from the idols of the world and all worldliness. 1Tim.6v17-19. 1Jn.2v15-17. 4v4,5. 5v4. A struggle for power in the church is one of the most dangerous and sinful of the worldly attitudes that can attack the church, this sin cost Satan his place in Heaven, this struggle for power is sometimes disguised by a false claim to divine illumination and prophetic authority, we judge all such claims in the light of the Scriptures. God reveals the truth about the activities of seducing spirits to spiritually minded Christians. 1Cor.14v29. 1Thes.5v19-21. Godly spiritual elders can guide the flock of God out of spiritual danger and deliver the flock from ambitious persons. Heb.13v7,8,17. 1Tim.3v1-13. Tit.1v5-16.

D. An attack on their personal communion with God and their love for God. Our Lord's rebuke to Ephesus was absolutely necessary, for if a church is lacking in prayer and communion with God, it is totally defeated. If Satan can defeat us here, he has defeated us everywhere. A church can have a reputation for evangelism and spirituality, that is quite false, its inner communion with God can be almost non-existent, like Sardis it can be said of it, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Prolonged earnest seeking of God is essential, if we are to preserve the spiritual effectiveness of a church.

E. Satan's Throne. Satan follows God's pattern and puts angels in charge of the nations. Dan.10v13,20,21. It could be that Satan made himself personally responsible for Pergamos, but it could refer to the Caesar worship that was practised at Pergamos, Satan was certainly the power behind Caesar's throne. Rev.12v3,9. 17v10.

5. There is a precious promise to those who are overcomers.

In Rev.2v7,11,17,26. 3v5,12,21. and 21v7., Jesus uses the present active participle of "nikao," to be a victor, to be victorious, to gain a victory, to speak of the overcomers. The present tense indicates continuous victory. This verb occurs 16 times in Revelation, see Rev.5v5. 6v2. 11v7. 12v11. 13v7. 15v2. and 17v14. as well. Jesus gives these precious incentives to us, to inspire us to live victoriously, and He tells us to repent if we are living in defeat, or we will not experience a full reward. 1Cor.9v27. 2Tim.4v7,8. 2Jn.v8. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev.3v11. The grace of God can enable us to overcome. Rev.12v10,11. Jn.16v33. Rom.8v28-39. Phil.4v19. 2Cor.12v9. 1Jn.5v4,5. We have to fight to keep our garments clean, from defilement by the world, the flesh and the Devil, the believer who is living in sin has dirty garments. Zech.3v1-7. 2Cor.5v3. 7v1. 1Jn.2v14-17. Rev.3v4,5,17,18. 19v8. Some have said that the overcomers are a select group among Christians, others, like myself, believe that they are all Christians who get the victory over the trials and temptations of life, and endure to the end. Those who do not overcome are those who apostatise from the faith.

To Ephesus. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Rev.2v7. All who are saved will eat the fruit of the tree of life, so overcomers cannot be a select group of Christians.

To Smyrna. "He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev.2v11. It is unbelievers who are cast into the lake of fire, not Christians. This again shows that overcomers are not a select group of Christians.

To Pergamos. "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it." Rev.2v17. God gives soul satisfying manna, and public acclaim which is signified by a white stone, and a secret name of precious significance, to every Christian who wins through to the heavenly kingdom.

To Thyatira. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I have received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. Rev.2v26-28. Power over the nations in the Millennium is promised to the overcomers, a similar promise is given in Rev.3v21.; for further exposition of this, see comments on chapters 12 and 20 of Revelation.

To Sardis. "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 the Holy angels." Rev.3v5. Overcomers do not have their names blotted out of the book of life, but those, who apostatise and lose their faith, do.

To Philadelphia. "He 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 from Heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Rev.3v12. All believers in Jesus have this heavenly calling, and are "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Heb.3v1. Eph.1v18. 2v19-22. 1Cor.12v12,13.

To Laodicea. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev.3v21. A similar promise to that given to the church at Thyatira in Rev.2v26-28.; If we suffer for Christ's sake, we shall reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will deny us. 2Tim.2v12.

To All. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev.21v7. All true Christians are heirs of God and joints heirs with Christ. Rom.8v17. In Gal.3v1-5. and 4v4-7., God makes us sons and heirs by redemption grace, and not by attainment through works of the Law. Our inheritance is received entirely by grace, through faith in Jesus. 1Pet.1v3-7,17-19. Col.1v12. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Rom.8v32. All things are freely given to us in Jesus. In 1Cor.3v21-23., Paul said to the wayward Corinthians, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." However, in 1Cor.3v10-17., Paul warns us that the fire will test the quality of our works, and that if they are not acceptable, they will be burnt up, but we shall be saved, "yet so as by fire." In this same passage, the destruction of those who defile the temple of their bodies and souls with evil, is also stated by Paul. 1Cor.3v17. Persevering faith and love are the distinguishing characteristics of the overcomer.

6. The spiritual qualities that make up the character of the overcomer.

Mention must be made of this subject as it is so important, the promises given to the overcomer are so great that the subject deserves special consideration. Christ has solemnly warned the Christians of the last days that they will have to live very careful, prayerful and godly lives if they are to overcome and come through the gross darkness with flying colours. Matt 7v24-29, 24v11-13, 42-25v13, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v14, 18v1-8, 1John 2v28. Let us consider the the spiritual qualities that cause a person to be an overcomer and the things an overcomer does and is.

1) They Love The Word Of God. They are not lazy in Bible study, they learn the doctrines and truths of God's Word, they know truth and long for more, it is the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Joshua 1v8, Psalm 1 all, John 17v17,26, Acts 17v10,11, 20v32, Rom 6v17, Eph 6v14,17, 2Tim 3v15-17, Heb 5v11-14, 2Pet 2v2.

2) They Love To Do God's Will. They actively serve God, they seek the lost, they have an evangelical fervour. Isaiah 52v7, Matt 6v10, 26v42, 28v18-20, John 4v34, 5v30, 12v26, Rom 12v1,2, Col 1v9, Heb 10v7, 12v23. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Spirit of God. Rom 8v14, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v17, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Word of God, eg. "follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Matt 7v21, 12v30, Luke 6v46, 11v34, John 14v21-24.

3) They Love To Seek Their Father's Face. They love to pray, they have a life of public and private praise and prayer, they tarry for the Spirit, they wait on God. Psalm 27v8, 34v3,6, 37v9, 62v1,2,5,6 84v4-10, 91v1,2,9,14,15, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13, 18v1-8, Eph 6v18,19, 1Thess 3v10, 5v17, Jude v20,21.

4) They Love To Walk With God In Their Daily Lives. They live a practical holy life. Rom 8v5-14, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v1-3,17-32, 5v1-6v9. By the grace of God they keep themselves pure and in victory. They are not in bondage to sin. By the grace of their Saviour they have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. Psalm 37v23,24, Matt 5v8, John 16v33, Rom 6v14-23, 2Cor 7v1, Phil 3v7-21, 1Thess 4v2,3, 1John 2v13-17, 3v1-10, 4v4, 5v4, Rev 14v1-5.

5) They Love the Brethren. Psalm 133v1-3, John 13v34,35, 15v12-15, Acts 1v14, 2v1,44-47, 4v32,37, Phil 4v1, 1Thess 2v11, 1John 3v10-24, 4v7-5v3. They love to have fellowship with God's people, and dwell on the things of God together. Deut 6v4-9, Prov 27v17, Mal 3v16-18, Heb 10v24,25. In the home as well as the church building. Matt 23v37-39, Acts 2v1-4 with 1v13, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Our conversation should be centred on heavenly things and should be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, gracious and loving like those of our gracious Lord, "They were all astonished at the beautiful words that fell from His lips." Luke 4v22 cf. Col 4v6. If this is not so, there is a definite need of reconsecration. Matt 15v10,11, Mark 7v20-23, Eph 5v4,5.

6) The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation give us a very good idea of what the Lord expects of the Christian, and what an overcoming Christian is like. We read the Christians are to have works, love, service, faith, patience, increasing works, a willingness to be faithful unto death, a separation from the world, spiritual alertness, and the thing that will assure all these, they must keep their fervent first love for Christ. Perhaps more qualities of the overcomer could be added to these, but these will suffice. In ALL things we are to follow the example of Christ, for by His grace we can overcome ALL that comes our way. Matt 11v28-30, 13v23, Luke 8v8,15, John 15v1-8, 1John 2v6, 4v17, Rev 12v10,11.

7. The saints are exhorted to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In spite of importance of the Messenger, we can refuse to hear "Him who speaks from Heaven." Heb.12v25. God is looking for people who will tremble at His Word and obey it, whether it comes through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or His written Word, but, alas, this is rare. Ps.2v11. Ezra.10v3. 9v4. Is.66v2,5. Phil.2v12.

Some examples of those who heard God's Word and obeyed. Noah and Abraham. Heb.11v7,17-19. Rehoboam. 2Chron.11v4. Compare 12v14. Pekah. 2Chron.28v9. Ahab. 1Kings.21v27. Even Ahab gained a respite by trembling at God's Word. Amaziah. 2Chron.25v7. What a good man Josiah was! 2Chron.34v18-33. Paul. Acts.16v19.

Some examples of people who heard God's Word and rebelled.

Noah's contemporaries. 1Pet.3v20. 2Pet.3v5. Lot's son in law. Gen.19v1,12-15,24,28. The generation which had not seen the mighty acts of God's power in action in Canaan. Judges.2v1,2,10-19. This is a solemn warning to any movement that is brought into being by the power and grace of God, but which later loses that power. Balaam and Balak. Numb.22v1-12. 24v1-9. 31v8-16. Rev.2v14. Saul. 1Sam.18v12-29. 13v8-14. 15v3,9,15,26. 1Chron.10v13,14. What a warning! Asa, a godly man rebels at God's Word through a prophet. 2Chron.16v7-10. Jeroboam. 1Kings.13v33. Israel. 2Kings.17v13-18. Neh.9v26,27. Judah. 2Chron.24v19-22. 36v15,16. The religious leaders of Israel in Christ's day. Mt.21v32. Lk.7v29,30. Mt.23v1-39. etc. God's people often rejected the Word of God, and the leaders that God appointed. Moses. Acts.7v25,35-39. Samuel. 1Sam.8v1-8. Jeremiah. Jer.42v1-6. 43v1-4. Paul. 2Cor.10v10. 11v4,12,13,20,-22. Gal.1v6-9. People can tremble in fear at God's Word, they know it is true, but will not accept it, or obey it. Josh.2v9-11. 5v1. 9v9,24. 1Kings.22v14-35. Acts.24v24-27.

Those who had once loved Paul turned away from him in favour of false apostles. 2Tim.1v15. The motives of such false prophets and apostles will usually be quite plain. They seek such things as popularity, financial betterment, position, prestige, or a following of worshippers or disciples. 2Chron.18v12. 1Kings.18v19. Neh.6v12-14. Jer.5v31. Lk.6v24-26. 3Jn.v9-11. False prophets condone the practice of the sins that people love. 2Pet.2v1-22. Acts.20v29,30. Jude.v3,4.

The Scripture warns us that there will be a great deal of false prophecy in the last days by the Devil's disciples. 1Tim.4v1-3. Mt.24v24. Rev.13. all. 1Jn.4v1-3. False prophecy comes out of a bad heart, but if the people of God are walking with God, they will recognise the true prophet of God even when they are surrounded by many false prophets who are all saying the same thing. Mt.7v15-23. 2Chron.18v4-27. Jer.20v1-18. 37v19. There is a difference, however, between false prophecy arising from a bad heart and wrong prophecy arising from ignorance and stupidity, for example, when Christians are told to prophesy in faith when they have nothing from God. You only have the authority to prophesy when the Spirit of God has come upon you and given you a message to speak. The honest heart that fears the Lord never need fear, but the Lord will severely punish the wilful false prophet. Jer.28v17. 29v21-32. Acts.13v11. Rev.2v20-23. 19v20. It is a sin to make a false claim to speak for God.

The Holy Spirit is Lord, He has come to do His will, not ours, and we should obey Him. We should not make our plans and then ask His blessing, we should seek His plans and then His blessing will automatically follow. This shows the importance of genuine prophecy, for prophets are the mouthpiece of God to the churches. Ez.3v1-11. Jer.1v9. Prophets, however, differ a great deal in the importance of the things that they say, and the people to whom they speak. One may speak only words of comfort to the local church, another may speak words of wisdom and knowledge to the church universal. There are many that prophesy, but there are few set in the Church universal as prophets. Compare the importance of Isaiah's prophecies with those of the old prophet of 1Kings13v20-22.. 1Cor.12v28. Eph.4v11.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were operating in all of these seven churches, for they had been led into these experiences by the apostles, and about a hundred years later they were still operating in Lyons in France in the church of Irenaeus. It could be that no one was willing to give the messages of rebuke that were necessary for some of the churches, or that the prophecies that were given were ignored and rejected, it is necessary to not only admire, but obey the voice of God through His gifts. We must also take care that we are not stumbled by the kind of person that God uses to speak for Him, for God has chosen some strange people, at least by the worlds standards, to speak for Him. 2Kings.1v8. Amos.1v1. Mt.3v4. Is.28v11-13.

The following things characterise the true prophet of God.**a. An anointing of the Holy Spirit, which on matters of importance will be very great.**

Spiritual people will recognise God's prophetic word and witness to its truth. 1Jn.2v20,26-29. This anointing is not to be confused with oratory, a fluent flow of words, or a lot of noise, it can be discerned by a spiritual and prayerful Christian without any difficulty. Ez.3v22. 8v1. 11v5. 1Cor.14v29. 1Thes.5v18-22.

b. A man of God will have a good life. Mt.7v15-23.

The gentleness, tenderness, and love of Christ should be abundantly manifested, even when severe rebukes are given by God. Hos.11v1-8. Mt.11v29. 1Thes.1v6-8,11,12. James.3v13-18. Rev.3v15-20. Compare Dan.1v4,8,17. 10v11,19. with Is.28v7. Jer.23v9-32. See Titus.1v10-16. 2Pet.2v9-22.

c. A prophet's message will be confirmed by other prophets.

Just as the Old Testament prophets confirmed each other's prophecies. 1Cor.14v29.

d. If a prophecy contains a prediction, it will be fulfilled. Deut.18v20-22.

However, promised blessing can be withheld because of sin, or judgement withheld by repentance. Deut.13v1-3. Jer.28v9. Jonah.3v3 to 4v2.

e. There will be a patience in suffering if the prophetic word of God brings suffering upon the prophet. James.5v10. Lk.6v14-29. 2Chron.16v10. 18v26,27. False prophets say nice things to please people, but true prophets often suffer for their message. Jer.6v14. 8v11. 2Pet.1v20,21. 2v1. Mt.24v24. 1Kings18v25-41. 22v6-28. Gal.4v16. Rev.11v3-12.

f. A true prophet will never contradict Scripture.

Nor will they claim that their revelations take precedence over Scripture. Is.8v19,20.

1. EPHESUS. Rev.2v1-7.

Ephesus was about sixty miles from Patmos, and the postal messenger would reach it first. It was the most important city of the province of Asia, even though Pergamos was the official capital of Asia. Ephesus was near the sea on the river Cayster, and being on the sea end of the principal trade route with the East, there was as a consequence, a constant flow of trade through its port, which had some problems through the silting up of the mouth of the river Cayster. It was an extremely busy city full of merchants, traders and workmen, and was for a long time the greatest commercial centre of the country, many side roads and sea routes converged there. Corinth was the next great city on the way westwards to Rome. Ephesus was a large busy city, where multitudes of people, and great areas of new people could be easily reached with the Gospel, so we can see why God directed Paul to Ephesus, and why he stayed so long here. Ephesus had one of the seven wonders of the world, it was a great temple dedicated to the worship of Diana, better, Artemis, she had many worshippers, and a very profitable business was done in the sale of silver shrines and magic charms. Acts.19v19,20,24. It was the home of mystery cults, magic, and idolatry, and the conflict with this idolatry finally drove Paul from Ephesus. When the persecutions under the Caesar's started, many of the Christians who were condemned, passed through Ephesus to be executed at Rome.

1. The tremendous privileges that the church at Ephesus had enjoyed.**A. The short visit of Paul. Acts.18v19.****B. Apollos had ministered to them.**

Luke states that Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures and fervent in spirit, he was full of passionate sincerity and heavenly energy, even before Priscilla and Aquila instructed him more thoroughly in Christian things. The memory of this man of keen intellect and burning heart should have kept their hearts burning. Acts.18v24-28. Luke uses the word "zeo" to describe Apollos, it means "to be hot," and is used to describe boiling liquids and glowing solids. "Zeo" and its derivatives is used in either a good sense or a bad one, either of fervent godly zeal, or ungodly jealousy, covetous anger. Jn.2v17. Rom.10v2. 12v11. 13v13. Acts.7v9. 13v45. 17v5. 1Cor.3v3. 12v31. 13v4. 14v1,39. 2Cor.7v7,11. 9v2. 11v2. Gal.4v17. Phil.3v6. Col.4v13. James.3v14-16. 4v2. 5v16. Rev.3v15,16,19. Let us glow with heavenly love and zeal, not boil with anger, envy or jealousy.

C. Paul was at Ephesus for almost three years. Acts.19v26. 20v31.

There was a tremendous revival with great persecution because of the financial loss that the idol makers suffered due to the reformed lives of many of their former customers. Acts.19. all. N.B. v8,10. Acts.26v18-20. 1Thes.1v9.

D. Paul's meets with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus in A.D. 58. Acts.20v17-38. N.B. v31.

Paul reminds them of his sacrificial and loving ministry among them in the past, and asks them to care for their flocks in the same way. Paul then gives them a prophetic warning that they would be attacked by false teachers from without and ambitious leaders seeking a following of disciples from within. It seems from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in A.D. 64, that his warning was heeded for a time, for there is no mention of any problems in it. However, by A.D. 66 or 67, when Paul wrote in 2Tim.1v15., "This thou knowest, that ALL they which be in Asia are turned against me;" it seems that even Ephesus was estranged from Paul for a while. It appears that by the time that this letter in Revelation was written, any false prophets and ambitious leaders had been rejected. Rev.2v6. We also need to beware of wolves who wear the sheepskin of the Gospel. Mt.7v15-23. 2Cor.11v13-15,26. 2Pet.2v1-3. 1Tim.1v19,20. 1Jn.2v19. 3Jn.v9-10.

E. Paul wrote one of the most spiritual epistles of all to the Ephesian church.

They must have been in a spiritual position to understand Paul's epistle. It was written in about A.D. 64, and in around A.D. 96, about 32 years later, Jesus said that they had lost their spiritual foundation, their first love for Him.

F. They had enjoyed prolonged oversight of the highest quality.

Tradition informs us that Timothy was an overseer here for a long period of time. 1Tim.1v3. 2Tim.4v19,20. with Acts.18v24-26. Phil.2v19-22. John had a long ministry here, it was his home and administrative centre, and he returned here from Patmos.

2. The spiritual condition of the Ephesian church when Christ addressed them.

The Ephesian church had many commendable points and by modern standards we would say it was a good church. They had "works," "erga," Jn.5v17. 6v29.; had "toiled hard with exhausting work," "kopos;" had "steadfastly endured," "hupomene," and had not grown weary or flagged, "ou kekopiakes," in their service for God. They had faithfully served God and had rejected false apostles and false doctrine, which other churches had accepted. This church had enjoyed the most spiritual and loving leaders possible, but they had failed in the most vital part of Christianity, they had lost their first love for Jesus, and probably because of this their fervent love for each other. "Aphekes," the aorist active of "aphiemi," to leave, forsake, or abandon, is a strong word, they had left their first enthusiastic love for Jesus. What had cooled off their love and zeal for Christ? Was it the loss of their pastor John, the apostle of love? Had they neglected fellowship, earnest prayer and love of God's Word? Did they feel that supreme spiritual effort was no longer necessary? Had they cooled off to become more accepted by the worldlings and Jews to avoid persecution to give their families security? Had the church become more worldly-minded and gone after material possessions? Whatever the cause of this loss of first love, remember nothing can take the place of love for Christ and communion with Christ. We need a tender heart full of deep affection for Jesus, as well as a clear well-informed mind.

Jesus tells them to keep on remembering ("mnemoneue," the present active imperative of "mnemoneuo," continue mindful), from where they are fallen and to repent and do (the aorist active imperative of "poieo," "Do at once") the first works ("ta prota erga") and renew the first love which had grown cold. Act.19:20; 20:37; Eph.1v13-16. Action was needed, we cannot live on past memories, even though we may be encouraged by them. Our love for God must be nourished and kept alive day by day, or the first love, and first works that spring out of that love, will die away. The first and greatest commandment directs us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, this will decide the quality of work that we do for our Lord.

The Ephesian Christians still laboured for Christ, they had evangelistic endeavour and good works, but they had lost some of their original power to bless; for Christ demanded a return to both first works and first love. A fullness of ministry can only flow from fervent and genuine Christian love. Acts.2v1 to 4v37. 1Cor.12v31 to 13v13. 1Pet.4v8. Christ knew that unless they repented, they would degenerate to the place where they would have all the words and outward form of Christianity, without the inner reality of the power and love of God, and would end up with a dead form. In 2Tim.3v5. "form," is "morphosin," which means, the outline of the "morphe," without its substance and reality. Rom.2v20. Jesus, therefore, told them to remember the spiritual loss that they had sustained, and to repent and do the first works. This church had great privileges, it must therefore have a corresponding life. To whom much is given, much shall be required. Lk.12v48.

In the first "repent" in Rev.35., Jesus uses the aorist active imperative "metanoeson," of "metanoeo," to change one's thinking, to repent, when He said that He would come and remove their lamp stand if they did not repent. The aorist imperative suggests a decisive break; this is in contrast to the present imperative, "repent," which suggests a continuing attitude. The second "repent" in Rev.3v5., is "metanoeseis," the aorist active subjunctive of "metanoeo." The removal of the lamp could mean either that the church would cease to exist as a light for Christ, or He was going to move the shining of His light to another place. Since Jesus said he would remove the lamp, not extinguish it, the second is more likely. Jesus could have meant that He would bring a remnant out of the church, or raise up another group of spiritual Christians. It is often easier for God to raise up a new church than to give life to a dead form. Churches can carry on for centuries with a dead form without God's blessing, and can drift so far from the truth that they shed darkness instead of light, and even persecute the true Church of God. Jn.16v1-4. It is our personal affection for Christ that determines our position in the Christian life. This love will be manifested in the fruits of the Spirit and not just in lip praise or emotion. Mt.5v1-16. Mk.4v25. Jn.14v15.

3. False apostles. Rev.2v2.

These false teachers arrogantly proclaimed that they had an apostolic ministry, and assumed an air of authority, the Ephesians had tested them and proved that they were deceivers and not apostles. Paul often had to write in defence of his apostleship, and he tells us how to recognise a true apostle. He states that God, not men, sets apostles in the Church, and confirms their ministry by signs, wonders and miracles. Rom.15v18-20. 1Cor.12v28. 2Cor.12v11-13. Eph.4v11. 1Thes.2v1-14. True men of God have an outstanding revelation of Christ and truth from Christ. Gal.1 and 2. 2Cor.12v1-10. They also manifest a Christ-like life. Gal.1v15,16. 1Thes.2v10. 1Cor.11v1. True apostles have to suffer for their ministry, it is the way of the cross. Paul bore in his body the scars that he had received for Christ's sake, they proved his love for Jesus. 2Cor.11v23-33. 12v7-10. 1Cor.4v9-13. Gal.6v17. Paul had continual opposition from the Judaizers, right from his first controversy with them over whether Gentile Christians should keep the Law in Acts.15v1-34. N.B. v1,24.. Some Judaizers falsely claimed that they were apostles, and they won the allegiance, and corrupted the faith, of many of the churches that Paul founded.

Here we see that over 30 years after Paul's warnings, the church at Ephesus is again plagued by false apostles and by evil false doctrine through the Nicolaitanes and Balaamites. Some say that Nicolas is the Greek version of the Hebrew Balaam, however, Jesus differentiates between them in Rev.2v15,16.. Both groups had immoral teaching in their doctrine, and they appear to have said that it did not matter what your morals were as long as you believed, and that sin made the grace of God to abound more. This evil antinomian doctrine is with us

today, those who teach unconditional eternal security go a long way down this dark road. We have been redeemed from the curse of the Law, but we will always have to obey the moral law of God, it will be the basis of the happiness of Heaven. We can never sin and get away with it, for wilful sin destroys the soul. 2Pet.2v9-16. Jude.v4,11. Rom.6. all. Prov.3v18. 11v30. 13v13-15. Ez.18v4,20,30-32.

Jesus closes his exhortation by encouraging the Ephesians with the promise of eternal life in Paradise for those who overcome and faithfully follow Him. Jesus knows all about our lives, and knows if there is any cooling off of our love for Him.

2. SMYRNA. Rev.2v8-11.

Smyrna was about 50 miles north of Ephesus, and was almost as important as Ephesus. It had a very good harbour at the head of a well protected gulf, and was at the sea end of another great trade route, and had a flourishing trade that was almost as good as that of Ephesus. It was a seat of Emperor worship with a temple to Tiberius. There were many Jews here who were very hostile to Christianity, and they joined with the Romans in persecuting and killing Christians. In Rev.2v9, "tribulation," is "thlipsis," which indicates crushing pressure; the word for "poverty" is not "penia," which means they had only life's essentials, but the more severe word "ptocheia," which means they were totally destitute. Trench writes, "The "penes" has nothing superfluous, the "ptochos" nothing at all." The church at Smyrna was financially destitute but spiritually rich. This poverty was probably due to a trade boycott by the traders of Smyrna, and it was probably inspired by the large numbers of Jewish traders at Smyrna. These Jews had rejected their Messiah, and were certainly not looked upon as God's elect; they had set themselves against the Christians at Smyrna, and had become the servants of Satan, and their synagogue Satan's house. The Christians at Smyrna were the spiritually rich poor among the spiritually bankrupt rich, their Christianity was costing them something. Though poverty is not in itself commendable, the poor are looked upon by God with special concern. In his earthly life Jesus was poor and He came to preach the Gospel to the poor, and the early Church was mostly made up of poor people. 2Cor.8v9. Lk.4v18. Rom.15v26. 1Cor.1v26-31. Gal.2v10. There has always been a vivid contrast between the financially poor but spiritually rich church, and the materially rich but spiritually bankrupt church.

Jesus says, "I know thy tribulations and poverty," this must have given great comfort to these hard pressed suffering saints. He who is the First and the Last has suffered and died for us, and he knows our suffering and lives to meet our every need. "Jesus knows," these are sweet words when the trials of life beset us. The crown of life is promised to martyrs from a martyr. Trials even unto death are not out of the will of God. There is no certainty of deliverance from, or out of, persecution, but there is a sure promise for grace to have victory in tribulation and temptation. Rom.8v37. Just to be saved and be in God's kingdom will be wonderful, but to overcome all that opposes us and to reign with Jesus, and care for the creation, will be beyond all thought. If we Abide in Jesus we will not be ashamed at His coming. Ezek.44v10-16. Lk.19v11-27. 2Cor.5v1-11. 2Tim.2v12,20,21. James.1v12. 1Pet.1v7. 2Pet.2v9-12. 1Jn.2v28. Rev.16v15. 17v14.

Polycarp.

The church at Smyrna was privileged to have Polycarp as a member of their church, he had been a Christian about 26 years when this letter was written. Eusebius puts the date of the death of Polycarp at A.D. 166, others put it at A.D. 156. When Polycarp was martyred he had been a Christian for 86 years, for he said at his death, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ." This would, taking the date of Eusebius, A.D. 166, put Polycarp's conversion at A.D. 80; the earlier date would put it at A.D. 70. Polycarp was obviously converted as a child, and had about 20 to 30 years contact with the apostle John. During the lives of John and Polycarp huge numbers of Christians died for their faith. Our Lord never deceives us when He asks us to follow Him, He warns us that it may cost us our life. Ignatius, while on his way to Rome to be martyred for Christ in 108 A.D., wrote a letter to Polycarp which showed that Polycarp was the leader of the church at that time, so he could well have been one of the leaders of the church at Smyrna when Christ wrote this letter to it. Irenaeus writes in his work "Against Heresies," Book 3. c3. 4.; "Polycarp was not only instructed by apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna; whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried on earth a long time, and when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffered martyrdom."

Jesus warns the Christians at Smyrna that greater problems than poverty, discrimination and slander were about to overtake them, some of them were about to die for their faith in Him. Jesus tells them, "Do not at all fear," "meden phobou," and arms them against the fear of imprisonment and death by telling them with a strong double negative, "ou me," that those who are faithful to death will not be hurt of the second death. Untold millions of Christians have been martyred in this century. At the end of this age there is going to be an even worse persecution of Christians, this letter to the church at Smyrna should strengthen the resolve of all who will suffer and die in this future time of trial. Rev.6v9-11. 12v17. 13v7. Mt.24v9. etc.

The name Smyrna was derived from myrrh, with which our Lord's body was embalmed, Jn19v39.; the Christians at Smyrna knew the shadow of death was upon them. Jesus warns them that Satan would be behind the coming persecution, and that he would imprison and kill some of them. Jesus assures them that this trial of faith was for a limited period of time. Satan had corrupted the Church at Laodicea by getting them to compromise and seek worldly things, but he had failed with the Christians at Smyrna, and so he comes in like a roaring lion. The persecutors were the servants of Satan, he was the one who drove and prompted them. The Church has been well warned of these sufferings by Jesus. Mt.10v17-19. Lk.21v12-17. Phil.1v29. 1Pet.2v20. 3v14. Acts.8v3. God allows Satan to try the faith of the saints in order that the world might see and be challenged by the faithful witness of God's people. The faith of Christians is established and proved by such experiences and it is found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus. Deut.8v2,3. 1Pet.1v7. 5v10 James.1v3,12. God uses Satan to try and purify His saints when He knows that it is necessary, e.g. Peter. Lk.22v31-34. Jesus searches our hearts and then allows trials to show the good, as well as the bad, that is in them. While we are in the trial He is interceding for us and making His grace available to us. Tribulation, temptation and trial faced with Christ can only do us good. Rom.5v1-6. Heb.4v14-16. 7v25-28. The Christ who was faithful unto death promises those who are faithful unto death a crown of life, this was the victors "stephanos," the garland of life, not a "diadema," a royal crown. 2Tim.4v8. 1Pet.5v4. Jn.14v28-31.

3. PERGAMOS. Rev.2v12-17.

Pergamos was an ancient city about 55 miles Northeast of Smyrna, but some 15 miles in from the coast. At one time it had been more important than either Ephesus or Smyrna, being the capital of the Pergamenian kings and the chief town of the Roman province of Asia. However, because of the better commercial position of Ephesus and Smyrna, it had lost much of its importance. It had a medical university, and a library of 200,000 volumes until Anthony removed it and gave it to Cleopatra. Parchment was first made at Pergamos and was called "charta Pergamena." Pergamos was said to be "full of idols beyond the rest of Asia," it was a city of temples devoted to sensual worship. It was the chief centre for the worship of Asklepius, the god of healing, whose symbol was a serpent. There were temples to Zeus, Athena, Dionysius, and Asklepius. A statue to Zeus was built here and called "Zeus the Saviour." It was the chief centre for the worship of the Roman Emperor, the first temple dedicated to the worship of Augustus (Octavius Caesar) was erected here in B.C. 29, and other shrines dedicated to other Roman Emperors followed. Some think that "Satan's throne" refers to Emperor worship, while others think that Pergamos was the place where Satan set up his headquarters on earth. The phrase "where Satan dwelleth," shows that it was certainly a place where Satan was most active. Rev.2v13. What a dreadful place to live in! The worship of idols is really the worship of demons and Satan. The Scriptures reveal to us that the real rulers of the nations are evil angels under the control of Satan. Eph.3v10. 6v11,12. 2Cor.4v4. Rev.12v7-12. 13. all. Dan.10v10-20. 2Thes.2v9. 1Jn.5v19. Jn.14v30.

The church at Pergamos had allowed worldly, sensual and Satanic doctrines to enter the church. All lies are dangerous, but moral lies are especially dangerous, for they destroy the character and testimony of the church. Rom.2v24. Oecumenius tells us that the Nicolaitanes "were most impious in doctrine and in their lives most impure." We also know that the Balaamites incited people to idolatry and immorality, so this church had two groups of immoral people with corrupt doctrine in it. Numb.25v1,2. 31v16. Jude.v11. Acts.15v29. 1Cor.8v9,10. Jesus twice threatens them with "the sword, the two-edged, the sharp," if they don't repent. Rev.2v12,16. All Antinomianism, that is, false doctrine that says moral law is not binding upon Christians, must be rejected. Christ's death does not give us a means of sinning without reaping the consequences. His death established the moral law and taught that the wages of sin will always be death. Rom.3v26,31. 6v1-4,11-18,23. 8v1-13. Jude.v3-25.

In the past this church had been faithful to God even in severe persecution, but gross immorality and idolatry had come in and ruined its testimony. It seems that while Antipas was alive this evil was not tolerated in the church; the loss of a godly leader can certainly make a tremendous difference to a church. Had the persecution in which Antipas was martyred caused some of them to compromise and lower the standard? You get little persecution from the world when you are as worldly and sinful as they are. Jn.16v8-11. Jesus demands repentance from those who had sinned, and action to purify the church by those who had not fallen, or certain judgement would follow.

We have to be very careful what we allow to take place in our Christian fellowships, and who we allow in as members, people who are living in sin should be dealt with by the church, or the church can expect judgement from Christ. With some the sentence is passed and executed now, but others pass on for judgement. 1Kings.18v40. 2Kings.10v19-30. Jer.28v17. 29v21,22,31,32. Acts.13v11. 1Tim.5v24. Christ reminds this church that He comes to judge sin and purify His church, and warns them that they have to repent or expect judgement. The reward to those who overcome is hidden manna and a white stone. The hidden manna is the eternal friendship of Christ and His unsearchable riches. 1Cor.2v6-12. Col.2v2,3. Eph.1v13,14. The white stone was used for many purposes, as a pass into a banquet or assembly, as a pledge of friendship and worth, as a sign of acquittal to those who were tried, a black stone was given to those who were condemned. To those who reject the deep things of Satan, Christ promises His eternal riches and His eternal friendship and blessing.

4. THYATIRA. Rev.2v18-29.

Unlike the previous cities we have considered, Thyatira was a place of little importance, but it was famous for its flourishing industry of dyeing. The waters of Thyatira were so suitable for dyeing cloth that no one could match the brilliant and permanent colour of their purple and scarlet. Lydia, Paul's convert at Philippi, was involved with the export of this dyed cloth. Acts.16v14,15. Thyatira was a commercial centre and was noted for its guilds, William Ramsey informs us that there were more trade guilds in Thyatira than any other Asian city. The leading false deity of the city was Apollo, who was worshipped as the sun-god under the surname Tyrimnas. Thyatira was an inland city about 40 miles South East of Pergamos. It is possible that these strong trade guilds made it difficult for Christians to earn a living. Membership of these guilds involved attendance at guild banquets, which usually involved sexual immorality, and eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols. Perhaps "Jezebel" had collapsed under financial pressure and had compromised truth in order to make a living. Expediency may have replaced integrity and principle.

The church at Thyatira tolerated people who should have been disciplined. Rev.2v20-22.

Jesus says the Christians here had many good points, "agape" love, faith, service, patience and increasing work for Christ, and unlike Ephesus their last works were more than their first. However, the church had allowed a false prophetess and her followers to come in and corrupt the church. They had lacked the moral courage to deal with this "Jezebel," and allowed her to carry on her evil practices unchecked and unrebuked. Though many church members had not participated in her sins, they were guilty of allowing her evil influence to continue in the church. The woman's real name was almost certainly not "Jezebel," Jesus was obviously trying to shock the church into action by naming her after Ahab's evil wife to show what He thought of her, and how wicked and dangerous she was. Jesus had even given this evil "Jezebel" space for repentance, but He warns that if she and her followers do not repent He will personally execute them. 1Kings.15v13. 16v30-33. 18v22,40. 21v25,26. The failure to repent for similar gross sin in the Corinthian Church had resulted in the death of some of its members and the sickness of many more. 1Cor.5v1-13. 11v29-32. Acts.5v1-11. 1Tim.1v20. Those who trade on the great grace of God and harden their heart, mistaking His kindness and longsuffering for weakness, are only bringing upon themselves more severe judgement. Prov.29v1. Eccles.8v11. Rom.2v3-5. Rev.2v23. Heb.10v26-31.

The A.V. and T.R., "thou sufferest," "eas," the present indicative of "eao," "to let, allow, permit, leave alone, suffer to be done;" should read, according to Aleph, A, C, Hodges and Farstad and the Critical Texts, "thou sufferest," "apheis," the present active indicative of "apheo," an irregular form of "aphiemi," which means "to send away," in this application it means "to allow," "to permit," "to forgive." See Mt.9v2,5,6. 12v31,32. Acts.8v22. They suffered and forgave people who should have been disciplined. Truth and principle were sacrificed for expediency, something which often occurs today.

N.B. Jezebel could have been the leading Pastor's wife.

The A.V. and T.R. reading of, "that woman," "ten gunaika," is based on Me, Aleph, C, the Critical Texts; the Old Latin; the Vulgate; the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic; the Armenian and Ethiopic versions, the Church fathers, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Tyconius, Epiphanius, Haymo, and the bav commentary of Andrew. Most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;" the evidence for this reading is found in Hodges and Farstad, Mabcd, Q, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Church fathers, Cyprian; Primasius; Andrew's a, c, and p commentaries; and Arethas; Codex A adds "sou ten." Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel, so this gives more evidence to show that Jezebel was the leading pastor's wife.

Jezebel actively and continually seduced people into immorality and idolatry.

Jezebel, like Balaam, seduced the children of God from the truth and godly living. Balaam cast a snare, a "skandalon," the bait stick of a trap, before Israel, Balaam knew that they would forfeit God's protection, if he could tempt them to idolatry and immorality. Num.31v16. The A.V. and T.R., "didasken kai planasthai," "to teach and seduce," should read, according to Mabcede, A, C, the Critical Texts, and Hodges and Farstad; "and teaches and misleads," "kai didaskei kai plana," the present active indicative, "plana," describes the active moral seduction and wickedness of 'Jezebel' far better than the present passive infinitive "planasthai." "Jezebel" was a dominant false prophetess and false teacher, whose teaching and life of continual sin led many in the church at Thyatira into immorality and idolatry. Jesus even gave this evil woman space to repent, but He said that lack of repentance meant that divine judgement and death was about to come upon her and her followers. Those who backslide into evil like this destroy their born-again spirit, and without repentance can only expect judgement. Jude.v11-13. "twice dead" in spirit. 1Jn.3v9. 5v18. 2Pet.2v4,12-22. Heb.6v4-8. 10v26-39. Mt.7v13-29. N.B. v23.

Space for repentance had been treated with contempt. Rev.2v21-23.

The Authorised Version and Aleph, read, "And I gave her time to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." The Majority of Texts, C, Hodges and Farstad and Critical Texts read, "And I gave her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her sexual immorality." All efforts to bring her to repentance had failed. Jesus wept over Jerusalem when His great ministry and love failed to convince them of the error of their ways, and turn them from the evil that was destroying them. Mt.23v37-39. Lk.19v41-44. It is not easy for Jesus to let people reap the fruit of their evil ways, His amazing love and grace gives rebellious sinners time to repent, and tries hard to restore them.

Our Lord repeats the solemn words, "All the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and the hearts: and I will give to everyone of you according to your works." Rev.2v23. Our private lives are lived in public; the eyes of the Lord Jesus search our hearts and then He allows trials or Satan to expose them. 2Chron.16v9. 32v31. Job.1 and 2. N.B. 1v22. and 2v10. Lk.22v31-34. In the case of Job the trial was allowed to prove his worth, whereas, in the case of Peter, it was to rid him of the thought that he was more devoted and more spiritual than the other disciples. The Lord Jesus is purifying our hearts and some trials can be very severe, and as in the case of Peter, they can give us some startling revelations of our hearts. Mal.3v1-3. Deut.8v2-6. Lk.22v61,62. Jesus had searched out the sin in this church and He was going to crush it in such a way that all would know that it was the judgement of God. Christ's examination and scrutiny of the soul is exact and irresistible, He blesses the righteous and judges the wicked in the churches with perfect justice and love. The Lord Jesus exhorts the righteous saints in this church to hold fast to what they have got. Jesus promises power over the nations and the morning star to the overcomers. When the morning breaks they are promised a kingdom and glorious fellowship with the King of kings. Dan.7v17. 1Cor.6v2. Dan.12v3. Rev.5v10. 12v5. 22v16. Rom.8v18. 2Cor.4v17,18.

5. SARDIS. Rev.3v1-6.

Sardis was about 30 to 35 miles South East of Thyatira, it was the chief city of Lydia and had once been a very prosperous and flourishing city, it had been the capital city of the very wealthy Croesus, however, under the Romans its rank and importance had rapidly declined. In A.D. 17 a great earthquake devastated Sardis, some say it never recovered from the enormous amount of damage that was done, others say it was quickly rebuilt through generous aid from Emperor Tiberius. Sardis was a city famous for its arts and crafts and notorious, even by heathen standards, for its loose, luxurious and licentious living. The more wealthy took up mystery cults, of which the most notable was that of the licentious worship of Cybele, and we are informed that the temple ruins still survive today.

The church at Sardis had a false reputation for being spiritually alive, Jesus said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." They were living on their past reputation, and on the reputation of the few who had white garments in this church, the rest of them were spiritually dead. They were a church in name only, for their vital communion with God had ended. They still claimed to be a Pentecostal church, but they had words but no power they had lost God's anointing, they had fallen from experiencing the truth. It is possible to have great intellectual knowledge of truth, and yet be a spiritual babe in the God's eyes and without either spiritual power or love. We can have truth without experience, the letter without the spirit, and even have a measure of spiritual gifts and yet be powerless and dead. Jesus warns that if their deadness of soul continues their names will be blotted out of the book of life. The book of life only contains the names of those who are spiritually alive to God, and are living in fellowship with Him. Jn.17v3. Lk.10v20. Phil.4v1. 1Tim.5v6. Jude.v12. Rom.8v13.

Many churches today have only a reputation, they have a name without an experience, like the church at Sardis, only a few things remain, and the rest are ready to die. Genuine repentance is the only possible way to experience renewal in such cases. There will be no getting away from the facts at our heavenly trial, our lives are under the scrutiny of God and His Watchers and Holy Ones. We may not realise it but we live our secret lives in public, the Holy Spirit will give perfect evidence as to the condition of our lives. Mt.12v36. 24v43,50,51. Dan.5v5,27. Jn.14v17.

This church had accepted the Gospel with great joy and for time had lived for Christ with great enthusiasm and diligence, for Christ says "remember how thou hast received and didst hear." How tragic it was that they had so fallen, but there are many churches today in the same condition and we all need to be careful lest we go the same way. The Lord Jesus warns this church that in spite of all His efforts by earthly and angelic ministry the majority of the church had degenerated and there were only a few faithful Christians in the church, the rest were spiritually dead and almost devoid of any work for Christ. How grand it is to see some of the church were still walking with the Lord in victory in spite of the depressing standard of the rest, the Lord Jesus promises these overcomers white garments and eternal fellowship with Himself in Heaven. The white garments of the Christian are the result of a righteous life. The apostle Paul tells us that he strove to serve Jesus so that when he met Him he had some works to present to Him. Rev.16v15. 2Pet.3v10. Mt.24v43. 1Thes.5v2,4. Rev.19v6-8. 2Cor.5v1-4. 6v14. to 7v1.

The Lord warns them to repent and be watchful, and strengthen and stabilise the things that remain, or He will come as a thief and find them wanting. Like Joshua the high priest, they would be clothed in filthy garments, or like the church at Laodicea, they would be naked and without any Christian works. Eternal life is the gift of God to all who believe in Christ as their Saviour, but we will be rewarded according to our works, shame or glory are the results of our own actions. Compare Abraham and Lot. Rev.3v18. 16v15.22v12. The garments that were renewed at salvation will become filthy if we live in sin, the Lord Jesus can give us the grace to overcome temptation and sin. Jn.8v31-36. Rom.6v11-14,15-23. 1Cor.10v12,13. 2Cor.12v9. Phil.4v13,19. 2Pet.1v5-10. 1Jn.1v6. 2v1,4,6,13,14. 3v3-10. 4v4,17. 5v4,16-21. Jude.v20,21,24.

There is no mention of persecution in this church and this is no surprise, for the majority of the Christians were so spiritually dead that they did not trouble the conscience of the unsaved, Christians with dirty garments are little respected and very little troubled by the worldling. These Christians probably prided themselves on their reputation, what a shock it must have been to them, to hear from the lips of Christ that the vast majority of

them were terribly backslidden. Jesus tells the church at Sardis that there is still hope for them, they can still be among the overcomers and wear white garments, they are to remember, repent and hold fast, repentance and earnest prayer can renew their spiritual glow and cleanse their garments. Are your garments white?

6. PHILADELPHIA. Rev.3v7-13.

Philadelphia was in Lydia, and was about 28 miles South East of Sardis, it was a rich and powerful city, but it suffered frequent earthquakes being placed directly on a fault in the earth's structure, the earthquake of A.D. 17 ruined it completely and it suffered 20 years of earthquakes after this great earthquake. The Lord's words to this church take into account their perilous past, they were promised a temple which they would not have to flee out of, they would be a pillar that would be forever established. The reference to "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." and "my new name," is almost certainly a reference to the proposal to give the city the new name of "Neocaesarea" in gratitude to Tiberius Caesar for his generous financial help towards earthquake relief. These frequent earthquakes tended to make the city smaller than it would have been, for it had good trade from large areas to the East and North.

THE OPEN DOOR FOR MATERIAL PROVISION AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE?

The church at Philadelphia, like the church at Smyrna, received no criticism from their Lord, both churches had stood true to their Lord in spite of severe persecution. Christ promises that He will open a door for them which no man can shut. This open door could have been a commercial door, for the strong Jewish guilds had obviously greatly persecuted and opposed them, and caused them very considerable financial distress and problems. God is very concerned about our financial welfare. Mt.6v19-34. N.B. v30-32. Christ the Door opens doors for us. Jn.10v7,9. This open door could also refer to an open door into prayer and Christian service. 1Cor.16v8,9. 2Cor.2v12. Col.4v3. Acts.14v27. 16v6-10 10. all. 13v1-4. God opens doors to service by our gifting, Prov.18v16., by men, by circumstances, by His Spirit's express instruction, or a great need set before us, and even by heavenly vision. When God calls us to a work He will confirm it in many ways and will give us an great peace and assurance that we are walking in His way. The ambiguity of this promise of an open door is probably deliberate on the part of our Lord, so that both the church at Philadelphia, and ourselves, can apply it to our many different needs.

THE OPEN DOOR INTO HEAVENLY PLACES?

The open door may also refer to the open door into heavenly places as experienced in Rev.4v1. by John. It is very sad that the heavenly places in Christ have been totally unreal to many Christians, and they have thought that these heavenly and supernatural experiences are symbolic descriptions of spiritual truth. Other false teachers have said that the experiences of these men of God were the results of either a heated imagination or a deranged mind. Many others say, in spite of all the evidence against this view, that these experiences happened in the past, but "they are not for today." Christian teachers and preachers have hidden this key to a vital experience of God by wilful omission, false tradition, distorted and false exposition, and unbelieving example, and they will have to answer for it on judgement day. Lk.11v52. Mal.2v7. Mk.7v13. God wants His children to taste the powers and blessing of the age to come NOW, so that we can take the riches and blessings of God to the world around. This will demand faith, patience, endurance and courage., and will bring an inevitable conflict with the powers of darkness. We can respond to this challenge like Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Peter, John, Paul, and many others, or we can draw back, and like Esau, despise our heavenly birthright, and let our minds be taken up with worldly things and so lose the ability to be a blessing. Heb.6v11,12. 12v15-17. We should, as we grow in grace, become increasingly aware of the following.

a. God's throne and the tremendous activity around it. Rev.4 and 5. Ez.1. Is.6v1-8. 1Tim.6v15,16.

The Scriptures reveal that the heavenly places are crowded with life and activity. There is the incessant activity of countless numbers of angels. Dan.7v9-14. 2Kings.6v17. 1Kings.22v19. Rev.5v11. Heb.12v22. Jn.3v13. with 17v24. There is continual conflict between good and evil angels, and we have to fight our way into these heavenly places. We can, unfortunately, imitate the ten spies, whose hearts failed when they saw the difficulties ahead, and draw back in fear and unbelief. However, those who fight through, like Caleb and Joshua, can possess a rich spiritual inheritance from their heavenly Father.

b. The suffering of the Godhead over a rebellious creation and a suffering world and Church.

See Rom.8v22,23,26. Acts.9v5. with Is.42v13-16. 63v9. Hosea.11v8. Lk.12v50. There is the continual conflict of the good angels and saints on earth with the powers of darkness. Job.1v6-12. 1Kings.22v19-23. Dan.10v13,20,21. Rev.12v7-12. Eph.6v10-20. Mt.4v1-11. Lk.10v18-20. 22v39-46. The suffering of His Creation causes immense suffering to our loving God.

c. The joy in Heaven in the character of the Father and Son and their victories over evil. Rev.4,5.

Ineffable joy and thanksgiving over the blood of Christ. Heb.12v4. Rev.12v7-12. Col.2v14,15. Great joy when sinners are saved. Lk.15v7-10. Joy over the glorious future of the inhabitants of God's kingdom. Rev.11v15-17. There is the glorious city and garden of God, His Paradise in Heaven. Rev.2v7. 21 and 22. Heb.11v16. 12v22,23,28. Ps.24v7-10. Ez.28v13-16.

d. The longsuffering love of God, and the just anger of God that flows from that love.

Rom.2v2-5. 2Pet.3v9-11. Is.42v13,14. The saints will rejoice when the unreconcilable wicked are destroyed or judged. Rev.15v2-6. 18v20. 19v1-6. This is not pleasure or satisfaction in seeing the wicked suffer and die, it is the thankfulness that their evil influence and the suffering that they caused is forever finished. Ez.18v23,32.

33v11.

N.B. Christ's power, strength and grace are given to the humble weak.

Jesus said that the church at Philadelphia had little strength, and so He moves to act on their behalf. Jesus gives the kingdom of Heaven to the beggars in spirit, He makes those strong who realise their weakness, He opens doors for those who can't open doors for themselves. Is.9v6. 22v22. 40v27-31. Mt.5v3. Eph.6v10. Jesus is, "Him that is holy and true," and those who rely on Him will find that He works on their behalf. This is a strong consolation for all who have fled to Jesus for refuge; He is utterly devoted to us, and absolutely faithful to His Word. Heb.6v13-20. Rev.6v10. Job.6v10. Is.40v25. Hab.3v3. These Christians at Philadelphia needed this comfort, for they had suffered a great deal of persecution from Jews who thought that they were obeying and following God, when they were really being used by Satan. Jesus was going to make these Jews see their true spiritual condition and relationship to God, He was going to make them prostrate themselves before the Christians they had despised and persecuted. Rev.3v9. Ez.5v13. 6v7,13. 7v4. Is.49v23.

The Lord also promises that He will keep the Christians here from some kind of ill that was to befall all in that area. This deliverance from trouble is by no means the rule in the Christian life, the contrary is more true, God keeps us from being overcome by trials, if we face them with Him, not from being tried. There is a real need for us to be faithful in the trials and temptations of life. It is worth noting that Peter was delivered from death, whereas James was killed, we can rightly pray for deliverance from trial and temptation but we cannot always expect it. Lk.11v4. Acts.12v1-17. James.1v2. 1Pet.1v4-7. The Lord promises that those who overcome will be a pillar in the temple of God. There is a position of privilege and responsibility awaiting the faithful in Heaven. 1Kings.7v16-22. Gal.2v6. The writing of a name is obviously a mark of approval and affection; those who overcome will be on the honours list in Heaven and be near to their God forever.

7. LAODICEA. Rev.3v14-22.

Laodicea was some 40 miles East of Ephesus, it was a small and unimportant place before the time of Rome's power, but it grew very rapidly into a city of great power and wealth, becoming one of the richest commercial centres in the world. It was so rich that when the city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, it did not accept the financial help of the Emperor, as many of the greatest cities of Asia had done which had suffered from the earthquake. It was the frequency of these earthquakes that many years later made the people abandon the spot altogether. Laodicea was ideally situated at a point on the great trade route that connected the interior with the West, and several branch roads joined there. Laodicea was famous for the garments made from the beautiful black wool of its sheep, it was also a centre of banking and business transactions and was well known for the business that it did in gold. It was an assize town, it also had a celebrated school of medicine, its most famous medicines were an ointment that strengthened the ears, and a powder made from crushed Phrygian stone for the eyes. Thus we see the force of our Lord's words, He counsels them to obtain from Himself the gold of heavenly riches instead of placing such great value on the gold of Laodicea. Jesus urges them to desire the white garments of a righteous life instead of the beautiful glossy black garments which they made. Jesus warns them that they also needed to be healed of their spiritual blindness and self-deception, for this was of more importance than their enthusiasm over their medical school and ointments.

This church at Laodicea had been tended by Epaphras, a most sacrificial and prayerful servant of God, but the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and other worldly desires, had dominated their lives and choked the Word of God. Mt.13v22. Mk.4v19. Lk.8v11-15. Church History and the Laodiceans prove that nothing can corrupt a person's character and spiritual life as quickly as wealth and affluence. Mk.4v19. All the Laodiceans actually possessed was a blind self-conceit and complacency; the fire, enthusiasm and love that Christ expects were gone, they had got to the place where they thought that their godliness was proved by material gain. 1Tim.6v5,6. compare Phil.1v21. 3v7. 2Cor.8v9. Col.1v7. 4v12. The Lord Jesus emphasises that His judgement of them is true by calling Himself "The Amen." What He says is always the truth, and what He says He will do, He will always perform. His judgement is perfect and we can only say "Amen" to all that He does. Rev.7v12. 19v4. 22v20. 2Cor.1v20. In Is 65v15,16., "truth" is in both cases the Hebrew "Amen."

Robinson's Greek Lexicon makes the following instructive note on "Amen."

"Amen, -- is strictly an adjective, true, certain, faithful. The Hebrew word occurs often in the New Testament as an adverb, truly certainly, surely; usually at the fulfilment of them, so be it. So in oaths and imprecations where the people answer amen and bind themselves. Neh.5v13. Or in praising God, when the assembly respond to the reader or choir, Ps.41v13,14. 72v19. Or lastly by individuals after an imprecation, or to a command. More rarely amen stands in the Old Testament at the beginning of a sentence, for the sake of emphasis, assuredly, verily, in truth. **Hence in the New Testament.**

1. From the Hebrew as an adjective. true, faithful. Rev.3v14. the true, the faithful and true witness, where the last words explain the first.

2. As an adverb at the end of a sentence. viz. after ascription of praise, hymns, etc. amen, so be it. Mt.16v13. Rom.1v25. 9v5. Rev.1v6. 5v14. 19v4. Also after benedictions, invocations, etc. Rom.15v33. 16v24. 1Cor.16v24. Heb.13v25.

3. As an adverb at the beginning of a sentence by way of asseveration. (i.e. solemn affirmation) truly, assuredly, certainly, Mt.5v18. 16v28. Lk.9v27. Mt.25v40. Lk.4v24. 5v25. In John it is repeated, amen, amen,

Jn.3v3,5,11. 5v19. 8v51. etc. Very rarely in this sense in the end or middle of a clause. Rev.1v7. yea verily. 2Cor.1v20. are yea and amen, i.e. are most true and faithful." **End of quote.**

Jesus emphasises His faithful, true and reliable character, which is in sharp contrast with, and a rebuke to, the unfaithful and worldly Laodicean church. He states His claim upon them as their Creator, by calling Himself, "The beginning of the creation of God." Those who say that the word "arche," "beginning," in Rev.3v14. teaches that Christ was a created being, must also say that the Father was created too, for "arche," "beginning" is used, in Rev.21v6., by the Father to describe Himself, when He says that He is "the beginning and the end."

The Abbot and Smith Greek Lexicon, states that "arche" in Rev.21v6. refers to God as the eternal and first cause, and this is what Jesus is claiming in Rev.3v14..

The New English Bible, translates Rev.3v14., as, "The prime source of all God's creation." Only the Creator is the origin, prime source and active cause of creation, this verse does not teach that Jesus was the first created being, it clearly states that He was the one who brought creation into being. We see in Rev.1v8,11,17. 2v8. and 22v13., that Jesus is, "The First and The Last," another title of the Creator God, and Great I Am, and many Scriptures confirm this fact. Neh.9v6. John.1v3. Col.1v15-17. Heb.1v3,8-12. Rev.4v11. Jesus, like the Father, is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting. Micah.5v2. Is.63v16. Ps.90v2. 93v2. Is.9v6. Jn.17v5,24.

The Laodiceans were deceived by their wealth and filled with an arrogant self-sufficiency, they said, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Their wealth and spiritual poverty is in sharp contrast with the Christians at Smyrna, who were poor but spiritually rich. Rev.2v9. The Laodicean Christians were completely ignorant of their true spiritual condition, they had been blinded by wealth and worldliness, they were rejoicing in their wealth when they should have been repenting of their spiritual poverty. They had deceived themselves but they could not deceive the Lord Jesus. There can be no doubt that the Christians gathered together for prayer and worship at the Lord's table, and probably exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit to a certain extent, but they lived lives completely out of the will of God. In the face of great spiritual needs around them they were taken up with worldly interests and petty pursuits. In an hour of crisis when the Lord was imploring them to listen to Him, they were deaf to His voice, and His interests and plans were completely ignored.

Jesus, the foundation stone and prime source of the creation, tells the Laodiceans that their foundation was built upon sand. He that was clothed with zeal as with a cloak, finds their lack of zeal spirituality distasteful. Is.59v16,17. When Jesus told them that He desired them to be either hot or cold, it cannot mean that He desired them to be spiritually dead and unsaved in preference to them being just lukewarm. Jesus was saying that they had only the nauseating effect of a lukewarm drink, just as the hot springs at Hierapolis six miles away were lukewarm and useless when tapped at Laodicea. Jesus threatens to spue them out of His mouth, which probably means that He would cast them on one side as useless in His service.

Those who realise the poverty of earthly things and seek first the kingdom of Heaven can taste the riches of Heaven while here below. Mt.5v3. 6v31-34. The Christians at Laodicea needed the gold of character and not just gold in their bank, this gold is a love, faith and obedience that stands true under trial, a tried faith which has passed the test. They were naked and needed the white garments of a pure, faithful and righteous life. 2Cor.5v3. 1Pet.1v7. James.1v12. Rev.3v4,5. 4v4. 7v9,13. 16v15. 19v7-9. They needed to have their spiritual blindness healed, so that their eye could again be single and their whole personality full of light. Mt.6v19-24. "Blind," is "tuphos," spiritual blindness, as in Mt.23v17.. They needed to behold the city of God and desire to lay up treasure there. They had neglected the one thing that was needful and could make them truly rich, communion with Jesus. Heb.11v10,13-16. Lk.10v41,42. So Jesus reproves them with some very strong words, "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "Wretched," is "ho talaiporos," which means wretched and pitiable, only here and Rom.7v24.. The word for "miserable" is "eleeinos," which speaks of a person who the object of the most extreme pity, Paul uses it in 1Cor.15v19.. "Poor," is "ptochos," which speaks of total spiritual destitution and beggary. Compare 2Cor.8v9., where it states that Jesus, who was rich and owned all things, became as poor financially as the poorest beggar, so that He could make us rich with the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Heaven.

If Jesus spoke to us in the way that He spoke to the Laodiceans, many would say, "That is not the Lord, He loves us too much to talk to us like that." Prophecy is nearly always intended to comfort us, but we should take heed if godly, loving and spiritual people are used by God to correct us. Jesus corrects us because He loves us, and His love flowed out to this conceited, self-satisfied and disobedient church at Laodicea. He would not let them continue on the path to spiritual destruction, if He could stop it. Jesus commands them to repent, and replace their lukewarm service by zeal. Jesus reproves and chastens those who He loves, if we will not listen to His wise counsel we must be taught to do so by a chastening that must of necessity be painful. Heb.12v1-17. Jn.3v20. 16v8. Job.5v17. Prov.3v12.

The Lord uses some very strong words in the Scriptures to show us the enormous privileges of those who overcome and the fearful loss of the slothful, timid and unbelieving. Mt.25v14-30. Heb.3v6-19. 6v1-20. Jesus makes the most tremendous efforts to save us from such a dreadful fate, He stands and knocks at the door of the heart, urgently, plainly and persistently, with great condescension, forbearance and importunity, and for

those who hear there is complete restoration, they sup with God. Lk.12v36,37. Jn.10v4,27. 14v23. They also have the glorious prospect of reigning with Christ, a glorious promise that shows how the grace of God can restore the backslider. Jesus says that they could still overcome and reign with Him.

Jesus was standing and knocking, not at the hearts of sinners, but at the hearts of the saints. How awful! Jesus was shut out of the lives that He had saved. They thanked Him for His love, but would not listen to His plans, His guidance, or His desire to use them to bless a needy world. This happens today in many modern Laodicean churches. Jesus still knocks upon the closed door of the heart of lukewarm Christians, by the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, by the example of spiritual Christians, and sometimes by painful means such as sickness, bereavement and persecution. 1Cor.11v27-32. 2Kings.10v31,32. 2Chron.16v7-12. with 2Chron.15v1-8. and 1Kings15v1-15. He chastens in this way, so that we might have our eyes turned from the transient riches of earth to the eternal riches of Heaven. Jn.17v24. Lk.22v30. Mt.19v28. 2Tim.2v12. 2Cor.4v17,18.

There is no mention of persecution in this church, though there may have been, we know that those who live godly in Jesus do suffer persecution. 2Tim.3v12. It could be that their Christian standards were so low, that they did not convict the ungodly of their sin. If we are Laodicean we can soon find out, no works, no first love, an emphasis on worldly things, no burden for the lost, a deaf ear to the voice of Jesus, and a life that is tolerated by the world, because it is so very little different from their own.

CONCLUSION.

We see the spiritual condition of these seven churches about 40 to 50 years after they had been established by the apostle Paul and his helpers, only two out of the seven escape rebuke from the Lord Jesus. It is impossible to tell from the condition of these towns today, what the reaction of these churches was to the message of Jesus. Their response is to be found in Church history, if the facts are at all available. Church history reveals that every revival started by God has spiritually degenerated, and in the end has been ruled by men instead of God. The further churches are from the source of revival, the more polluted the river of church life becomes with the traditions of men, Jesus made this very point in Mt.15v3-9. and Mk.7v5-13.. Even Jesus found it impossible to revive these tradition-bound formal religionists. God has almost invariably raised up a new revival movements, by moving upon new seeking hearts, and bringing out a faithful remnant out of the existing churches. This does not mean that Christians should leave dead or lukewarm churches without an effort to renew their spiritual glow, they should strive in prayer, love, and witness to revive their churches. However, Paul tells us that the time may come when we have to "turn away" from those "who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." 2Tim.3v5.

When God has raised up a faithful remnant into a new movement full of His power, there has almost inevitably been violent opposition from other churches, and even from Christians from the same church background. Earnest Christians who have desired and experienced revival have often been expelled from movements and denominations by those who have objected to their experience of God, and refused to listen to the voice of God. Christ's true Church has always experienced criticism and opposition, and God-inspired revivals have, like our Lord, invariably been, "a sign that is spoken against." Lk.2v34. The early Church was looked upon and persecuted as an heretical dangerous sect by both Jews and worldlings, the Jews at Rome said to Paul, "for as concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against." Acts.28v22. Martyrdom is a real possibility in genuine revival. Jn.16v1-3. We need to take to heart the words, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," or we shall fail to be among those who overcome and inherit the promises.

PART 3. THINGS FUTURE. "Things which shall be hereafter." Rev.4v1 to 22v21.

In Rev.4v1. "After these things," "meta tauta," often occurs when a new section begins. Rev.4v1. 7v1,9. 15v5. 18v1. 19v1. The greater part of the book of Revelation, from Rev.4v1 to 19v21., deals with events in Heaven and earth during the last few years of this age, and particularly the last 3½ years of this age; that is, about the period known as "the great tribulation."

A. THE LAST FEW YEARS OF THIS AGE. Rev.4v1 to 20v3.

1. EVENTS IN HEAVEN JUST BEFORE THE LAST SEVEN YEARS OF THIS AGE. Rev.4 & 5.

Daniel's striking prophecy, in Dan.9v20-27., tells us in verse 27, that the last seven years of this age will start when Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews. The end of these last seven years "will bring in everlasting righteousness and will seal up the vision and prophecy," that is, they will usher in the Millennial Kingdom. Rev.10v7. Daniel's prophecy states that between Jesus "making reconciliation for iniquity" by being "cut off" at Calvary for our redemption, and the last seven years of this age, there has been a period of time unknown to all but God, during which God has been calling out the Church and preparing it to rule with Christ. In the fullness of time God will allow the last seven years of this age to start. We see in Rev. 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years are started. The seven seals reveal Satan's evil plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan's plans "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thes.2v7. The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close.

A. John's glorious vision of God the Father.

This vision of God's overriding providence has given comfort to Christians throughout Church history in their times of trial, but it is especially given to comfort the Christians who will be on earth during the last seven dark years of this age. This vision declares to us, that no matter how evil the world becomes, God is still on the throne, almighty in power and completely devoted to His creation. The Scriptures give us many instances where people have been sustained by a vision of God's majesty and glory. Exod.24v10. 2Chron.18v18. Is.6. all. Ezek.1. all. 10. all. Jer.17v12. Dan.7v9-14. Acts.2v2. 7v55. Heb.12v22-24. Rev.20v11. 21v13. Job.42v5,6. 19v25-27. Ps.99v1. Heb.1v3. 4v16. 1Tim.6v12-16. 2Cor.12v1-4. John uses the brightness and splendour of precious stones to try to convey to us the indescribable glory and majestic brightness of God our Father. John says that God was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone. Jasper was one of the gems in the High Priest's breastplate, and one of the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. Ex.28v20. Rev.21v18. In Rev.21v11., John describes jasper as "most precious," and as clear as a crystal, so it cannot be the gem known as the jasper in our day, which is looked upon as an opaque stone of red, brown, green or yellow colour. Some think that Jasper may be the diamond because of this transparency. John Wesley says that the jasper stone "is transparent and of a glittering white, with an intermixture of beautiful colours." The sardius is a blood red colour, or almost a blood red colour, which was prized according to its depth of hue and translucency.

This is the glory that Ezekiel described in Ezek.1v27., "and I saw as a colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and from the appearance of His loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire." The Hebrew word "chasmal" which is translated as "amber" in Ezek.1v4,27. 8v2., is used for a metal which was a compound of gold and silver, and was remarkable for its shining brightness. These words give us a very striking picture of the dazzling splendour of our heavenly Father, He shines with an overwhelming lustre and glory like that of precious stones magnified a million-fold. There is, however, one great difference, the splendour of precious jewels is a result of reflected light, the blazing glory and indescribable beauty of the colours that stream from God, are from Himself, uncreated and eternal, and filled with love. The most beautiful vision that one can ever see is a vision of God. The phrases, "burning bliss," "eternal light," "uncreated light," and "greatness unspeakable," are all to mean to show His worth, too mean to set our Father forth. "Oh height immense, what words suffice, thy countless attributes to show?" The continual cry of holy, holy, holy, ("hagios"), from the living creatures, proclaims the amazing and lovely truth that the Trinity have set themselves wholly apart to procure the happiness of their creation, no matter what the cost is to themselves. This is why they can each be called "The Holy One." Their dedicated love is perfect, every hour of every day is spent lovingly caring for their creation.

John is given a lovely picture of the dedication of God to His creation. Not only light, but life and love stream endlessly from God's throne to His creation. God's ceaseless activity in caring for His creation is seen in the lightnings, thunders and voices that issue from His throne, and the millions of angels that speed to do His will and accomplish His manifold works. Col.1v17. Heb.1v3. Jn.5v17. Lk.1v19,26. Ps.121v1-8. Rev.4v5. 8v2. Dan.7v9,10. In Jn.5v17,18., Jesus answered His critics, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." "Worketh," is the present middle indicative, "ergazetai," 2038, "keeps on working until now," continuous work, without a break, from the dawn of creation until the present. God instituted the Sabbath for us, but His dedicated love for His creation drives Him on, and makes it impossible for Him to observe it. In Jn.5v17,18., Jesus claimed equal deity with God by saying God was His father, and so the right to work on the Sabbath, like His Father. The Satan inspired lie that God is inactive in Heaven, and is just idly pleasing Himself, could not be more wrong. God works ceaselessly every day, "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." Ps.121v3,4. Untold millions of angels wait upon the Trinity to do their will, they never have a second's respite from the responsibility of lovingly caring for, and upholding, their creation.

The majesty, glory, and power of God are indescribably great and wonderful, but the greatest attribute and glory of God is His love and devotion to His creation, that is, His holiness. Holiness does not just mean purity, though it obviously includes it, holiness means much more than purity, it means consecration and dedication to a purpose. The words sanctification and holiness are translations of the same Greek noun, "hagiasmos," and it is twice used in connection with the Lord Jesus. Jesus twice stated that He sanctified Himself. Jn.10v36. 17v19. He did not mean that He purified Himself, He was always pure, it means that He was twice set aside and dedicated to a definite work, the first work was that of being Redeemer, the second work was that of being High Priest.

The righteous find it astonishing that wicked men and evil angels have set themselves against God's loving and beautiful eternal purposes. Though the wicked cannot successfully fight God's Almighty power, or defeat His eternal purposes; they have set themselves to frustrate God's will on earth, and this is allowed for a limited time to expose their hearts.

It is very necessary to correct the Authorised Version mistranslation of Rev.4v11.; "for Thy pleasure" should be translated, "because of Thy will." God did not make the Creation to make Himself happy, or to get anything out of it for Himself, He made it in order to give His creatures eternal life, and eternal joy and happiness, and it was at the most tremendous cost to Himself. Some have taken the evil doctrine of "The divine right of kings," and applied it to God, they say that God has no duties and man has no rights, and that the power and position of God give Him the right to do anything that pleases Him. This theory is Satanic; God is love, and love has always got duties, **God is completely unselfish and never does anything just to please Himself.** Rom.15v3. The wonderful truth is, that so far from creating things for His pleasure, God, has at tremendous cost to Himself, procured the eternal happiness and joy of His redeemed creation. God will indeed get pleasure

out of His creation, but that is the by-product of the creation and not God's motive for making the creation.

The Trinity did not need to make a creation at all, they were perfectly happy as they were, it was a love that desired to give to the uttermost that drove them to their tremendous sacrifice. The cost of this immense project was weighed up before the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus had to be willing to die before the creation could be made. 2Tim.1v9. Titus.1v2. Rev.13v8. **Such was the grace and love of the Lord Jesus, and, indeed, all the Trinity, that they did not allow the appalling cost to deter them.** Once they had made the Creation, the Trinity were obliged to make all the sacrifices that they had realised were necessary before they started the creation. This they have done, **no sacrifice has been too great for them, and they have earned the love, praise and admiration of all their children who love the way of truth.**

WHO ARE THE ELDERS? Rev.4v4,10. 5v5-8,14. 19v4. 7v11,13. 11v16. 14v3.

Some have said that the elders are the raptured Church, or a company of Christians in Heaven. The Authorised Version of Rev.5v9,10., makes the elders Christians, however, several versions follow the Greek texts which put "men" for "us," "them" for "us," and "they" for "we," see the study on this later in these notes. The alternative reading makes it clear that the elders are singing a song about another group of people and not a song about themselves. The matter cannot finally be settled by an appeal to the Greek text, both versions have good authority, one has to study the relevant Scriptures to decide which is correct. That the elders are singing a song about another group of people is clearly seen from the following facts:

a. There are only 24 elders and the raptured Church does not consist of only 24 Christians.

This number 24 is no more symbolical than the number of the living creatures, or the number of angels. Rev.5v11. God does not use a symbolic number, when he tells of the number of Christians who go through the great tribulation, He says that they are "a great multitude which no man could number." Rev.7v9-14.

b. The song is sung by the living creatures as well as the elders and they are certainly not raptured saints.

c. In Rev.7v9-11. 11v16-18. 19v4,7. 14v3., a clear distinction is made between the elders and Christians.

Notice how the elders are not able to sing the new song of the Christians of Rev.14v1-3..

d. The Church is praying and suffering on earth right until the coming of Christ after the great tribulation.

See Rev.6v9-11. 8v3,4. 12v17. 13v7. 14v13. 17v6. The great tribulation ends when the seventh trumpet sounds and the dead are resurrected, this is years later than the first seal. 1Thes.4v16,17. 1Cor.15v51-53. Rev.11v15-18. In Mt.24v31., the elect which are gathered are not Jews, for Is.66v19,20., informs us that the Jews are brought back to Israel by the Gentiles as an offering to the Lord. Is.14v2. 45v19,20. Christians are being martyred on earth until the end of the great tribulation and do not sit on thrones until the Millennium begins, which is about seven years later than Rev.4. and 5.. The Christian dead, whether they be martyred or otherwise, are resting, not reigning, until the Millennium starts. Rev.6v9-11. 14v12,13. 20v4-6. 6v9-11.

e. These elders are undoubtedly the angels that share in the government of Heaven.

The word "seats" should be translated "thrones," and Col.1v16. speaks of the thrones that are in the invisible world, the thrones of great angels that rule the heavenly world. These angelic elders have white robes and crowns of gold, and they have proved their right to them, for they remained true to God and righteousness, and resisted the rebellion that Satan started in Heaven. They overcame Satan's lies in Heaven even as we have to overcome them on earth.

The Living Creatures. Rev.4v6,8,9. 5v6,14. 6v1,3,5,7. 7v11 14v3. 15v7.19v4.

The word "beasts," "zoa," should be translated, "creatures full of life," and is in stark contrast to "the Beast," "to therion," a fierce wild animal, which describes Antichrist in Rev.11v7. 13v1. etc.. See Mt.7v15. The living creatures of Rev.4. have six wings like the Seraphim of Is.6, and as "Seraphim," means "burning ones;" so "burning with heavenly energy," is probably the same as, "creatures full of life." The Cherubim of Ez.1 and 10., are called living creatures, but they have only four wings. Another difference between the living creatures of Revelation and Ezekiel, is that in Revelation each living creature has only one face, whereas in Ezekiel each living creature has all four faces. The Seraphim of Is.6. are above the throne, the cherubim of Ez.1 and 10 are below the throne and move it. Ez.1v12,19-21,26. The living creatures of Revelation have no rest, they praise God day and night, what a joyful experience, what glorious unrest. Compare this with the followers of Antichrist, who have no peace or rest of soul because of the torment of evil within them. Rev.14v11.

B. John's vision of Christ, the Lamb of God taking the book with seven seals. Rev.5.

The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev.5v5,9,10. Rom.8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev.14v1-5. 17v14. 2Pet.3v12. John's vision in Rev.4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of

this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan.9v20-27. The "He came and took the book," is the fulfilment of the "ask of me" of Ps.2v8., it is when God brings to pass the prophetic events that will close the age, and bring in Christ's kingdom. Ps.2v8. Dan.2v44,45. 7v13.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations; after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Is.11v1,10. Rev.22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. Jn.1v29,36. Acts.8v32. 1Pet.1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has known. Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary.

The Lamb of God has not only redeemed sinners, but has made them kings and priests unto God as well, and the faithful saints will reign with Christ in the Millennium and eternity. Rev.20v4-6. 22v3-5. Christ has won the right to reign, the Father has no favourites, He has "no jobs for the boys," those who rule will have to prove their worthiness to rule. Jesus has proved His worthiness to reign. Rev.3v21.5v5. Phil.2v6-11. Rom.2v11. Acts.10v34. Heb.5v5-10. Dan.7v13,14.

The seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb are said to be, "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth;" these are almost certainly the seven great angels that are spoken of in Rev.8v2., the great angels that perform the most important errands for the Father and Son. Zech.3v9.4v10. Dan.4v13,23. Ps.112v9. 148v14. There is a mighty chorus of praise when the Lamb takes the book, "Thou art worthy," is the cry, and John tells us that every creature who can speak, worships the Father and Son and recognises and rejoices in their right to rule forever. It is very unlikely that the wicked are among those worshippers, for though they will be unable to deny the fact that He is Lord, and will have to bow to His authority as their judge, they will never bow the will and worship the creator, indeed, they blaspheme the Lord even on judgement day. Phil.2v11,20. Rev.16v1,9,11,21. 19v19. Ps.2v1-3. Mt.8v12. 13v42,50. 22v13. 24v51. 25v30. Lk.13v28.

Christ does not stand in Heaven in the form of a lion or a lamb, and none of the symbolic figures of Rev.12, 13 and 17 are seen as such in Heaven. These are symbolic pictures that represent people and kingdoms that will play a leading part in the events of the last few years of this age. From Rev.4 onwards we get a series of these heavenly cartoons. The Lord Jesus used stories, pictures and parables to tell the truths of the kingdom of Heaven while He was upon earth. When Jesus gave great prophetic truth concerning the last few years of this age to the apostle John in the Revelation, He illustrated it with unforgettable pictures and heavenly cartoons, and they make it easier for us to grasp the dark and difficult subjects connected with last days prophecy. These divine cartoons, pictures and parables express in a nutshell, truths that would take a great many words to express and explain. They bring a great deal of truth into a small compass, and express it in such a vivid and interesting manner, that it is much easier to understand, and very difficult to forget. Jesus said that He spoke in pictures and parables in order to reveal truth to His disciples, and at the same time hide it from the worldling. Mt.13v10-17. God can also by these means hide truth from His children until the time is ripe for it to be revealed. Dan.12v4,9,10. 10v1.

The vials full of odours are said to be the prayers of the saints. Rev.5v8. We, like the apostle John cry with all our hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The whole creation groans and longs for the coming of the Prince of peace. Ps.141v2. Rom.8v18-25. Is.9v6,7. It says that the Lamb is "as though slain", but is still very much alive. The victory and power of His death is irresistible, and still continues. From Rev.8v3-6., we see that the prayers of the saints can produce judgement, as well as mercy.

N.B. The Authorised Version readings need to be corrected in 3 places in Rev.5v9,10..

1. Rev.5v9. Most scholars follow the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus and the Ethiopic, and state that "emas," "us," in "hast redeemed us," should be omitted, because the overwhelming evidence for "autous," "them," in the next verse, proves that "emas," "us," is an emendation of the text, even though the manuscript evidence for it is considerable, occurring either added or prefixed to "Theo" in Mabcde, Aleph, and T.R..

Wordsworth, omits "emas," "us," and says that it is not received by Lachmann or Tischendorf, and says that it is inconsistent with the reading "autous," "them," after "epoiasas," "made," in v10.

Alford says of the reading: "Thou wert slain, and didst redeem:" "the object is not expressed, nor need it be: see similar constructions with "ek", Mt.25v8. 1Jn.4v13. The "emas," (us) which is in the manuscripts added or prefixed to the verb, has considerable authority, but on the whole seems more likely to have been inserted, considering the prevalent early interpretation of the elders as Apostles and Prophets, than omitted because

they were imagined to be angels."

Bruce M. Metzger's "Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament," says that those who emended the text of Rev.5v9. by adding "emas," ("us,") wished to provide "egorasas," ("redeemed,") with a more exact object than, "out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." He adds that they overlooked how unsuitable this was with "autous," "them," in v10. The literal translation of Rev.5v9. is, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals of it, for Thou wast slain, and didst redeem to God through Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." The object of the words "didst redeem" are the people out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and so translations that read "didst ransom men for God," accurately convey the meaning.

In, "thou wast slain and didst redeem;" "redeem," is, "egorasas," the aorist active indicative of "agorazo;" which means literally "to purchase at the market place," the "agora;" the aorist tense indicates that most blessed point in time, when Jesus publicly purchased our redemption and freedom by His death on the cross. The strengthened form "exagorazo," "to buy out," "ex" for "ek," is used especially of the purchase of a slave with a view to giving them freedom. Both words are used by Peter and Paul to describe our redemption from sin by Jesus. 1Cor.6v20. 7v23. Gal.3v13. 4v5. 2Pet.2v1. See 1Pet.1v18,19..

2. Rev.5v10. The A.V. and T.R. reading, "us," "emas," in "didst make us," should read "hast made them," "epoiesas autous," the aorist active indicative of "poieo," "to do, to make." The "autous," "them" occurs in Mabcde, Aleph, A, Hodges and Farstad, and the Critical Texts. Wordsworth says "autous" has the backing of Aleph, A, and at least 40 cursives, and by the Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and other versions, including the Amiatine manuscript of the Vulgate, and is received by Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Bloomfield.

3. Rev.5v10. The A.V. and T.R. reading "we shall reign," "basileusomen," the first person plural future indicative of "basileuo," "to reign," has very little textual support. The best reading is the future tense "basileusousin," "they shall reign," which is found in part Ma, Mbc, part Md, part Me, Aleph, P, the Critical Texts, Hodges and Farstad; The Old Latin c, div, gig, haf, z; the Vulgate ww; the Syrian Philoxenian; the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic; the Armenian; Hippolytus; Cyprian; Fulgentius; Andrew's bav, c, and p commentaries; and the commentary of Arethas. The reading found in part Ma, part Md, part Me, and A, is "basileuousin," "they reign," the present active indicative, which is prophetically incorrect as saints were not then, or now, reigning over the earth, that must wait until the Millennium. Dan.7v21,22,27. Mt.13v43. Rev.20v6.

In Rev.5v10., the Majority Text reading, "kings and priests," "basileis kai hierais," occurs in the A.V., T.R., Mabcde, the Syrian Harklean, and Hodges and Farstad. The reading, "basileian kai hierais," "a kingdom and priests," occurs in Codex A, a few Latin, the Syrian Philoxenian, the Coptic, and the Critical Texts. Codex Aleph reads, "basilian kai ierateian." All Christians have the privilege of being kings and priests. For "kings," see Ex.19v5,6. 1Pet.2v5,9. Is.61v6. Mt.21v43. Rom.12v1. Rev.5v10. 20v6. We are made "kings and priests" by being "washed" from our sins in His own blood." Zech.13v1,6,7. Jn.13v8,10. Acts.20v28. 1Cor.6v11. Rev.7v14.

2. THE SEVEN SEALS. Rev.6v1-17. and 8v1.

The seals show the stages in the evil career of Antichrist, he comes to power with a small number of people, but rapidly increases his power and influence. He enters the scene as a peacemaker, but his true character soon reveals itself. The best manuscripts omit the words "and see." from "come and see." Some say that it is the cry of the living creatures for Jesus to return. Others think that it is John being called to see what happens at the first four seals, and still others think that it is a call for the riders of the horses to make their appearance. The horses of Zech.1v7-11. and 6v1-8., represent divine angelic ministry, and contrast sharply with the horses of Rev.6., which reveal Satan's evil plans through Antichrist.

The First Seal. Rev.6v1,2.

Antichrist comes seated on a white horse and the bow and a crown. He will follow the example of Antiochus Epiphanes and come in "peaceably," and by "working deceitfully" and "with flatteries," he "obtains a kingdom." Dan.11v21-23. The phrase in Dan.8v25. "by peace shall destroy many," gives the picture of a man who acts as if he were a champion of peace, when he is really using a peace image to delude and deceive people, and hide his intention to conquer by war. The bow has no arrow in it, it is not in use, or John would have told us, it is probably the protection that is offered to Israel when the "holy covenant" is made. Compared with the sword, the arrow is a long distance weapon, and probably signifies that he is not defending his own kingdom, or fighting a neighbour, but threatening someone a distance away, He is probably threatening those who are threatening Israel. Though a crown is given to Antichrist, he is not content with it, he lusts for more power, his aim is conquest, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer, to extend his power and influence.

The Second Seal. Rev.6v3,4.

In the first seal Antichrist has only one crown, here we see how he gets the other nine, he uses a great sword, and begins to show his true character. The key to the second seal appears to be in Dan.7v8,20,24., which states that there is an alliance of ten kings, Antichrist fights against three kings and rules over them. Rev.17v12,13. Antichrist has some connection with these ten kings before he rules over them, for in Dan.7v8., we read that the little horn comes up "among them." He rules over one of the kingdoms before he brings all ten under his rule. They seem to have some alliance between themselves before Antichrist brings them all

under his control. The key phrase here is, "**one another** they should kill," it seems that Rev.6v4., is probably Antichrist fighting the three kings of Dan.7v8.. It is a dreadful war and results in awful slaughter until Antichrist is established as the undisputed ruler of the ten kingdoms. Dreadful purges will doubtless follow this fighting, and this struggle for power will result in huge numbers of people who are not politically safe being put to death, as they were in the days of Stalin and Hitler.

The Third Seal. Rev.6v5,6.

Here we see another dreadful result of Antichrist's career, a black horse and a pair of balances. This is a period of famine. for the prices for food stated here are famine prices, £10 for a £1 loaf would convey to us better the prices here mentioned. Lev.26v24-26. Ezek.4v16. Gen.41v49. A full days wage will only buy a day's ration of wheat for a man, there would only be sufficient food for dependants if barley was bought instead of wheat. All the income of a family can only buy enough food to keep them alive. This time of famine could probably be the result of the wars of the previous seal. It appears that there will be an abundance of oil and wine, the luxuries of the rich, while the necessities of life for the poor will be in very short supply.

The Fourth Seal. Rev.6v7,8.

At this seal there emerges a pale horse, the Greek word "chloros," means a yellowish green, and is the word from which "chlorine" is derived. Death is seated upon this horse and Hades follows. Death reaps and Hades garners, a terrible picture of the most dreadful slaughter that the world has ever known. Multitudes die in the wars and purges that Antichrist starts to further his design for conquest and worship. This seal can be no other than the time of great tribulation that the Lord Jesus warned us about. Mt.24v21,22,29-31. Dan.12v1,6,7. Rev.13v5. Death and Hades have power over the fourth part of the earth, this shows that there will be very wide-spread war around the Middle East, that will have its effects on a large part of the world. We know that Antichrist loses some battles earlier in his career and does not achieve total victory in the Middle East until a few days before the end of the great tribulation.

The main area of conflict during the great tribulation will be in the Middle East and Palestine, this is why it is called "the time of Jacob's trouble." Jer.30v7. The fourth seal gives a ghastly picture of death, bloodshed and horror. Antichrist will excuse the carnage and distress he causes with the usual dishonest and deceitful political excuses that are made by megalomaniacs like Hitler and Stalin. The result will be a travail and sorrow that effects much of the world. Most people have thought that Satan's way of selfishness and greed is the way to Utopia, the great tribulation will prove that this is not true. God allows Satan to fulfil his desires and plans for 42 months, and the world experiences death, destruction and Armageddon. Antichrist is the embodiment of evil and Satanic power, and will cause even greater carnage, death, and destruction than those two other arch villains, Hitler and Stalin. God allows the fruits of men's evil ways to come upon them to prove to all, that the way of the transgressor is very hard indeed. Exek.14v21.

The Fifth Seal. Rev.6v9-11.

The souls of the saints, who had been killed by Antichrist and his followers, and other evil people, cry to God for vengeance upon their murderers. In Lk.18v1-8., Jesus informs us that persecuted Christians who are alive at this time will pray that these evil people will be judged by God. These martyrs in Heaven are told to rest for a little while and wait until their fellow servants and brethren are also killed as they have been. Mt.24v9. Lk.21v16. Dan.11v32-35. Rev.12v11,17. 13v7. 17v6. These Christians overcome the terrible darkness of the last days and are faithful to death, and pure in soul, for they are clothed with white garments. Rev.3v5. 16v15. 19v8. This vision proves that a great number of Christians will be martyred during the great tribulation. We need to remember that the key words for this time are "endure," "beware," and "watch and pray," for failure to pray through in these evil days will almost certainly result in backsliding or apostasy.

These Christian martyrs address God as "Ho Despotas," which means one who exercises absolute authority, Lord, Master, Ruler; it is applied to God in Lk.2v29. and Acts.4v24., and to our Lord in 2Pet.2v1. and Jude.v4.. Though "Ho Despotas," speaks of God being the ruler who has absolute power, there is no thought of tyranny here, for these martyrs also call God, "the holy and true," "ho hagios kai alethinos," that is, He rules with perfect dedicated love, and faultless truth and justice. The answer to the world's problems will never be found in human politics; it will only be found in the perfectly loving and selfless rule of the God of love. God's benevolent rule is infinitely superior to the rule of selfish and sinful men, whose desire to rule often springs out of a corrupt ambition for political, worldly and religious power and wealth.

The torture and murder of God's dear children produces tremendous anger in God, and He pours His judgement out on the wicked. Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Rev.15 and 16. The souls that had been slain are spoken of as under the altar, because they had been slain for God's sake, their blood had been poured upon the altar and flowed down beneath it. Their blood will cry from the ground, like the blood of Abel, the first martyr. Gen.4v10. 9v4. Mt.23v35. The blood of the sacrificial animals was received by the Old Testament priests and poured out at the foot of the altar. Ex.40v29. Lev.4v7. 8v15. Is.29v1. The souls of the righteous receive white garments and rest in Paradise, but they are first seen under the altar, the place where righteousness, justice and the Law, as well as forgiveness, was established by Christ's shed blood. Rom.3v31. The place where mercy is bestowed, is the place where justice is dispensed. Christ's atoning death established the Law and righteousness, and ensures pardon for every repentant sinner, but it also makes condemnation sure for every hardened impenitent sinner. Rom.3v21-31.

The Sixth Seal. Rev.6v12-17.

The sixth seal shows the awesome events that take place on the last day, the great day of the wrath of the Lamb. Numerous signs in the earth and heavens precede and accompany the coming of our Lord, the sun goes black, the moon red, the stars fall, and the heavens roll up as a scroll. The geography of the whole world is changed as it is shaken with a series of colossal earthquakes, when the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives. Is.24v18-20. 34v4. Zech.14v4,5,10-12. Mt.24v29-32. Mk.13v24,25. Lk.21v25. Acts.2v20. 2Pet.3v10. Rev.16v18,20. 19v11. Haggai.2v6,7. The glory and majesty of Jesus and the Father terrifies many of the unconverted, and they try to hide themselves underground, to escape from the wrath of Christ. Hardened by years of rebellion against God, Antichrist and his armies turn to fight against Jesus, boasting that their modern weapons of war will annihilate Him. Is.2v10,19,20. Lk.23v30. Rev.6v15-17. They are amazingly arrogant, and are confident that they can assassinate and murder Jesus, but Ps.2v1-12. tells us that He laughs at their reckless folly, nothing can protect them from the wrath of the Lamb. Antichrist's armies are killed by huge hailstones and spiritual weapons against which they have no defence. Zech.14v12. Rev.16v21. 19v21. Antichrist and the False Prophet are put directly into the lake of fire, and Satan himself is put into the abyss for 1,000 years. Rev.19v19 to 20v3.

This seal speaks of the wrath of the Lamb. The rest of the wicked, who are spared sudden destruction, come before Christ's throne for judgement before they "go away into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt.25v31-46. The phrase "the wrath of the Lamb," is only found in Rev.6v16., and it is full of meaning. The lamb is the gentlest of all God's creatures, and here we see the gentle, kind and lowly Saviour, stirred to fury by the suffering that the wicked have caused. This judgement is "His strange act," for a God of love, and He does it because He is determined to make sure that the wicked will not cause any more suffering in the world. Is.28v21. 34v1-6. 42v13-17. 63v1-6. Joel.2v10,11,30-32. There will only be freedom from tyranny, and "quietness and assurance for ever," when Jesus, the Prince of peace, comes to judge and reign. Is.32v1,16-18. 9v6,7.

The Seventh Seal. Rev.8v1.

All of the inhabitants of Heaven look down upon the shattered earth in shocked silence. The Devil's proud boast that he can be like God, and rule like God, are seen to be empty lies, and an evil lust for power that produces misery, destruction, and death. Man's arrogant and foolish boast that he can run the world without God's help, is seen to be utter folly. The evil consequences of millenniums of political corruption and greed is openly manifested in the fullness of its evil, and its most ghastly scenario, for all to see. The citizens of Heaven look down upon a truly terrible sight, great areas around the Middle East, and elsewhere, are almost destroyed by war, and stripped of all vegetation and life, and are filled with the dead and dying. All in Heaven view in shocked silence the results of people following sin, selfishness, and Satan. The heavenly videos record the horrific effects of Satan's holocaust, before the work of restoring the earth begins.

3. THE 144,000 ISRAELITES AND THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIANS. Rev.7v1-17.

Jesus reveals to us two things that will happen at the resurrection on the last day, the great day of the wrath of the Lamb. The faithful Old Testament saints will be raised from the dead, as well as Christians. Some Israelites never enjoyed the promise of an earthly kingdom while they were alive, and it caused them great sorrow, God promised them a kingdom in the Millennium, at the resurrection. Ezek.37v1-14. The seventh chapter of Revelation is dealing with two groups of people, one group from the Old Covenant of Law, the other group from the New Covenant of Grace, that come before God at the resurrection on the last day.

The sealing of these Israelites in Rev.7v1-8., cannot be protection against the trials of the great tribulation, for they are sealed after the great tribulation is ended. It is a seal of ownership and approval for a select company of Old Testament Israelites who have proved their right to rule in the Millennial kingdom. The number of 144,000 is no more symbolic than "the great multitude which no man can number." It is the Old Testament counterpart of Rev.14v1-5., which speaks of the Christian overcomers who will rule with Christ. God seals the 144,000 of Rev.14v1-5., not to protect them, but to show that they have overcome and won the right to rule with Christ. Rev.3v12. 14v4. 17v14. God promised the faithful Old Testament saints that they would rule in the Millennium, and here we see the faithful Old Testament saints who will rule with the faithful Christians in the Millennium. The names of God's great ones of the Old Testament, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Samuel, David, and so many more spring to mind. Ps.89v35-37. These faithful Old Testament saints must be included in the Millennial kingdom, if God is to fulfil His promises to the children of Abraham and Jacob. We certainly know from Gal.3v28,29. 5v6. and 1Cor.12v13., that in this present age of grace, no special privileges are given to Israelites. In this age of grace, the Church out of every nation, including Jewish Christians, is looked upon as God's elect, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Gal.6v16. Eph.1v11-14. Titus.2v14. Phil.3v2-10.

Judah stands first in the list, though fourth in order of birth; perhaps this was due to the fact that Christ was born of this tribe, or that Judah assumed the leadership after the sin and failure of Reuben. The tribe of Dan is omitted altogether, the Hebrews say it was reduced to one family, the family of Hussim, which perished in the wars before the time of Ezra. The name of Ephraim is also omitted and Joseph is substituted in its place. Ephraim and Dan were the most idolatrous of the twelve tribes and so they lost their right to rule in the Millennium. Judges.17 and 18. Hosea. 4v17. How essential it is for parents to set a godly example. The holding of the four winds by the four angels whose work it is to hurt the earth, sea and trees, shows the perfect order which events on the last day will take place, between the dead being raised at the seventh trumpet, and the destruction of the wicked, there is the marshalling and sealing of the resurrected saints, who are to rule in the

Millennium. This will not take the Almighty and His angelic hosts very long to accomplish, they could do it in a matter of minutes, certainly well within the half hour of the silence of the seventh seal spoken of in Rev.8v1. Jer.49v36. Dan.7v2. 11v4.

John sees an innumerable multitude of Christians who have come through the great tribulation with a triumphant faith, they are worshipping before the throne in Heaven, and giving God all the glory for their victory. The people who say that there will be no Christians in the great tribulation must "take away" this part of the Revelation. Rev.22v19. To hear many people speak you would not think that God was able to look after His children in the great tribulation, but where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. In Rev.7v14. "great tribulation," should read, "the tribulation, the great one," "tes thlipseos tes megales." It is an emphatic phrase which calls attention to the adjective "great," rather than the noun "tribulation," the same construction occurs in the references to " the city, the great one," "tes poleos tes megales," in Rev.11v8. 14v8. 16v19. 17v18. 18v10,16,18,19,21. This "great tribulation," is not the "much tribulation" spoken of in Acts.14v22., which all Christians can expect, it is the terrible time of world-wide distress which Jesus warned us about in Mt.24v15-21.. Dan.12v1. Jer.30v7. Mk.13v14,19,24.

It is essential to remember that the great tribulation is not the result of God pouring out His wrath on the wicked. The Bible makes it quite clear that it is the direct result of the restraining hand of God being taken off the powers of darkness, and the consequent evil activities of Satan and Antichrist. Mt.24v15,21. 2Thes.2v7-12. Rev.12v7-12. The judgements of God are poured out on the earth, but they only fall on the wicked, God's people will be preserved from them as they have always been. Rev.9v4. Numb.11v1-3,33. 16v49. Ezek.9v4-6. Rev.16v2,10. In Rev.7v9-17. God reveals the victory over evil that an innumerable number Christians will experience who are in the great tribulation. This vision will inspire them to be steadfast in those evil days, they know that if they are faithful, they will be waving palms before the throne in glory. It is a wonderful comfort to know that the grace of God, and the blood of Christ, can give every Christian on earth who desires it, complete victory over the world, the flesh, the Devil, and the great tribulation. Rev.7v10,14. Those who suffer with Him are glorified with Him, and God wipes every tear from their eyes, their precious Saviour shepherds ("poimanei," the future active indicative of "pomaino," to shepherd"), and leads and guides them for ever. Rev.7v17. Rom.8v17,18. 2Cor.4v17,18.

4. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS. Rev.8 and 9. and 11v15-19.

The seven trumpets are stated in Rev.8v2-6. to be the direct response of God to the prayers of His people on earth. From these verses we see the close link between the angels of God, and the Church of God and its prayers. Heb.1v14. Our heavenly Father and the heavenly hosts take very definite action on the behalf of the Church during the great tribulation, the world cannot do what it likes to the children of God and get away with it. The trumpets are judgements on the world for their evil treatment of God's saints, the wicked know this but do not repent. Rev.8v13. 9v20,21. Ex.9v13-35. The seven trumpets do not come out of, or follow on, the seven seals, for the second coming of Christ occurs and the end of the age occurs at the sixth and seventh seals and the seventh trumpet. The fifth and sixth trumpets themselves take over 18 months to run their course, so the trumpets must start several years before the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the sixth and seventh seals on the last day. This stepping back in time and viewing the events of the last few years of this age from various aspects, occurs several times in Revelation. The ministry of the two witnesses is shown to run at the same time as the seven trumpets by the account of the ministry of the two witnesses being placed between the sixth and seven trumpet.

When these trumpets are blown God intervenes in the affairs of men in the great tribulation in answer to the prayers of the saints. The first four are distinguished from the latter three by the fact that the first four deal with nature as it effects man, and the latter three with man himself, and they are particularly terrible and are called "woes." There is no reason why we should not interpret the effects of these trumpets literally, for the plagues of Egypt came true as Moses had promised and these plagues will too. Like the Egyptian plagues, the first four of the trumpet plagues and judgements will effect a limited area in the Middle East around Palestine, for, "the earth" can mean "the land," that is, the land of Palestine.

The First Trumpet. Rev.8v7.

At this trumpet hail, fire and blood rain from Heaven and destroy all green grass and the third part of the trees. This can be taken literally, for what God has done before, He can do again. Ex.9v17-35. This will result in the loss of both fuel and food.

The Second Trumpet. Rev.8v8,9.

This does not say that it was a mountain, but "as it were a great mountain burning with fire," that is, something resembling one for size and burning with fiery heat, it could be a great meteorite, or a guided missile. The water turning to blood has happened before. Exod.7v19,20. Ps.46v2. Whatever this great fiery object is, will deprive a great many people of fish and destroy a large number of ships, and will seriously effect life in the area where it falls. The sea here probably means the Mediterranean, and it will probably fall on the Eastern end; "the earth can mean, "the land," that is, the land of Palestine.

The Third Trumpet. Rev.8v10,11.

In the previous trumpet, the waters of the sea were polluted, at this trumpet a third of the waters on land are affected. The great star like a blazing torch could be a meteorite, or even a missile of some kind. It is called

Wormwood because of its bitter effect on the water, which unlike the normal wormwood, is said to be poisonous. The Old Testament refers to wormwood in seven places Deut.29v18. Prov.5v4. Jer.9v15. 23v15. Lam.3v15,19. Amos.5v7.

The Fourth Trumpet. Rev.8v12,13.

A third of the heavenly luminaries are darkened in the sense that they do not shine for a third part of the day. This is not the darkening of the sun on the last day, which occurs about 2 years later. Mt.24v29. Rev.6v12,13. Acts.2v19,20.

The Fifth trumpet. Rev.9v1-12.

This trumpet lasts for 5 months. Rev.9v5,10. The star falling with great speed and force from heaven to earth, is obviously the angel of Rev.9v2,11., "the angel of the bottomless pit," called "Abaddon," and "Apollyon," both of which mean destruction. "Fallen," is "peptokota," the perfect active participle of "pipto," to fall, so the angel is already down. "Pipto" is probably used to show the speed and force of the angel's descent. "Given," is "edothe," the aorist passive indicative of "didomi," Rienecker states that this is the theological or divine passive and indicates that God is the one who gives the key. This refutes the theory, put forward by some, that this could be Satan, who was cast out of Heaven 2 years before by the archangel Michael and his angels, Satan is not imprisoned in the Abyss until the end of the Tribulation. Rev.12v7-14. 20v1-3. This cannot be a wicked angel, for the key of the Abyss belongs to Jesus, and He would certainly not entrust it to an evil angel. Rev.1v18. There is very little difference between falling, alighting and descending, and the angel of Rev.9v1., could descend like the angel of Rev.20v1.. "The Abyss," is a part of Hades where unbelievers and wicked angels are imprisoned. Lk.8v31. Mt.8v29. See Rev.9v1,2,11. 11v7. 17v8. 20v1,3. Jesus went into the abyss to pay the penalty of our sins. Rom.10v7. Eph.4v9.

The angel sets free an enormous number of evil spirits from the Abyss to try and torment those who do not have the seal ("sphragida") of God on their foreheads. Rev.9v4. They are likened to a plague of locusts and scorpions, because of their number and the suffering they cause. Locusts are dreaded as much as an earthquake, or the eruption of a volcano, in the lands they menace. God will release evil spirits who have been confined in the abyss, to inflict the wicked who are persecuting the Church in the great tribulation.

Those who have chosen evil will taste its bitter fruit, a suffering as great as that of the bite of a scorpion. God limits the attack of these evil angels on the wicked, to a period of 5 months. Those who have chosen to follow Satan into evil, will find out how wicked and cruel evil spirits can be.

The Sixth Trumpet. Rev.9v13-21.

This trumpet lasts for 13 months, and during this time appalling bloodshed and destruction is caused by a great army of 200,000,000. Rev.9v15,16. This is an earthly army, not an angelic one, and it is composed of the kings of the East who make their way to fight in the Middle East in the last months of the great tribulation. This is also referred to in the sixth Vial, which states that these armies are gathered for destruction at Armageddon. Rev.16v12-14. 9v14. The slow progress of this army to the Middle East indicates that great battles take place on the way to the Middle East. A third part of mankind are said to be killed by this army, some of these deaths could be through war and pillage in the lands which this army conquers, as it goes to the Middle East. There is a perfect description of the killing agents now used in modern warfare, heads that roar like lions, obviously speaks of guns on tanks, or armoured gun carriers; smoke clearly refers to the use of poison gas, or nerve gas; and brimstone, obviously refers to exploding shells, napalm, or fire storm weapons. Rev.9v17-21. What an horrific picture! It bodes ill for all the nations through which this army passes. One is greatly concerned for Christian communities in South Korea and elsewhere, who will be faced up with this army. There is an urgent need for Christian leaders in these countries to seek for power judgement gifts, like those of the two witnesses, in order to protect the Christians in their care.

Most of the details about the seven trumpets can be taken literally, however, it is impossible at this time to exactly apply some of the details. However, if we are alive when the trumpets sound, we will recognise the fulfilment of them, and we will realise that what is happening is under the direct control of God and brought to pass in His will. So while the worldling will be full of fear at the events that are happening, instructed Christians will have peace in their hearts. Lk.21v25-27. The tragedy is that even the calamities of these days will not make men who love evil repent. How terrible is the hardening power of sin. Rev.9v20,21. There is a real connection between idolatry and immorality, the idolater really worships demons. Deut.32v17. 1Cor.10v20. Is.44v9-20.

SORCERY AND WITCHCRAFT. "Pharmakeia."

In Rev.9v21., the A.V., T.R., and Mcde, read, "of their sorceries," "ek ton pharmakeion auton." "Pharmakeion," is the genitive plural of the noun "pharmakeia." Codex A reads "pharmakion." The manuscripts Mab, p47, Aleph, C, Hodges and Farstad, and the Critical Texts; read, "ek ton pharmakon auton," "of their drugs," and probably refers to the practice of drugs being used in sorcery, magic and enchantment. "Pharmakon" means "drug," and "pharmakeia," the use of drugs. Plato uses "pharmakeia" in a good sense to speak of medical treatment, but advises that drugs should not be used in diseases that were not serious, or they could complicate matters. "Pharmakeia," was also used to describe the misuse of drugs in murder by poisoning. The word "pharmakeia" only occurs in Gal.5v20. Rev.9v21. and Rev.18v23.. The adjective "pharmakos," is used as a noun to describe a person who dealt in drugs, a sorcerer, enchanter, and magician, who used drugs and

potions, to make spells, charms and enchantments, it speaks of a person "devoted to magical arts." "Pharmakeus," "sorcerers," only occurs in Rev.21v8.; and "pharmakos," "sorcerers," only in Rev.22v15.. "Mageia," "sorceries," only occurs in Acts.8v11. and "mageuo," "sorcery," only in Acts.8v9.. "Magos," is translated as "wise men" in Mt.2v1,7,16., and "sorcerer" in Acts.13v6,8..

In the time of Paul, sorcery and witchcraft were very similar to their modern equivalents; images of people were made and destroyed, and curses were put upon people by invoking the powers of darkness. In Paul's time, divination, astrology and the use of the occult powers forbidden in Deut.18v10-22., were rife, and a common practice. People were full of fear and used amulets and charms in an effort to protect themselves from witchcraft, sorcery, magical spells and the evil eye. That magical practices were rife in Paul's time, can be seen from the large number of books on magic that were burnt in the revival at Ephesus, the value of these books approached one hundred thousand pounds at today's valuation. Acts.19v19. "Pharmakeia" is used in the Septuagint of the Egyptian sorcerers Jannes and Jambres, who opposed Moses. Ex.7v11,12,22. 8v18. 2Tim.3v8. They had very real evil power, and even turned sticks into snakes by the power of Satan. The manifestation of this kind of evil power was one of the chief obstacles to the spread of the Gospel in the early Church, and this is why miracles were so essential, they were needed to confirm the truth of the Gospel. Philip and Paul compelled the Gentiles to believe in Jesus, by doing greater miracles than the sorcerers and occultists. Acts.8v4-13. 13v6-12. 19v11-20. Rom.15v18-21.

When Balaam tried to curse Israel by sorcery, God would not allow it, and made him bless them; so Balaam corrupted the Israelites by using beautiful women to seduce them to immorality and idolatry. He died under divine judgement. Num.23v23. Josh.13v22. Jude.v11. Rev.2v14. Witchcraft and sorcery are repeatedly condemned and forbidden in the Scriptures, and God warns that eternal punishment awaits those who do not repent of their occult practices. Exod.22v18. Lev.19v31. 20v6,27. Deut.18v10-22. Is.2v6. 47v9,12. 57v3. Jer.27v9. Dan.2v2,27. Mal.3v5. Rev.9v21. 21v8. 22v15. Micah.5v12.

Paul puts witchcraft and sorcery in the works of the flesh; because they both arise from the desire to possess, and manifest, spiritual power while still indulging in the sins of the flesh. People reject God, and go into idolatry, witchcraft and sorcery, so that they can experience spiritual power and still indulge in the desires of the flesh, free from the constraint of righteousness and God, and so God gives them up to their lusts, and the reprobate mind that they desire. Rom.1v18-32. N.B. v24,26,28. However, God's love and protecting mercy is around mankind, in spite of their depravity, and their rejection of Him. Jesus said that God is good and kind even to the unthankful and evil. Luke.6v35,36. Mt.5v45. The Seraphim ceaselessly praise and worship God for His continual caring dedicated holiness, and protecting love for His creation. Is.6v1-5. Rev.4v8-11. Paul told the idol worshippers at Lystra how kind and good God had been to them. Acts.14v16,17. 17v30. Paul says God restrains the powers of darkness, and protects mankind from their most evil plans and malice. 2Thes.2v7. Because of God's restraint on the powers of darkness, only a small fraction of worldly people were possessed by evil spirits in Paul's day, even though they were so addicted to occultism, in the form of charms and magic. This fact of God's protecting mercy also explains why witchdoctors do not have to be exorcised when they hear the Gospel and become Christians. W.F.P. Burton, said that none of the many witch-doctors he had seen converted needed exorcism when they became Christians, when they had faith in Jesus and His atoning blood, the power of God automatically set them free from the power of Satan. Col.1v12-14. Titus.3v5.

The Seventh Trumpet. Rev.11v15-19.

At this trumpet, "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." Rev.11v15. Zech.14v9. Dan.7v13,14. Mt.25v14-30. Lk.19v11-27. Is.24v21-23. Rev.10v5-7. The saints of the Old Testament and New Testament are raised from the dead. Rev.11v18. Ezek.37v1-28. Hosea.13v14. Dan.12v1-3. Is.24v21. 25v7-9. 26v19-21. 1Thes.4v13,14. 1Cor.15v23,24,51-53. Lk.14v14. Jn.5v28,29. When this trumpet sounds, the New Testament saints are caught up to meet Jesus, 1 Thes.4v16,17. Mt.24v31., and they are judged and rewarded. Rev.11v18. 1Cor.3v12-15. 2Cor.5v9-11. The wicked are destroyed at this trumpet. The words, "And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come," are taken from Psalm two, and it speaks of God's judgement on the last act of rebellion against God by man before the Millennial kingdom is set up. God judges the wicked who have brought an holocaust upon the world and made it unfit to live in. God destroys those who "destroy the earth." A tremendous picture of this wrath is revealed in the Scriptures. Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Rev.6v12-17. 11v19. 19v11-20. Compare Gen.6v11.. These seven trumpets herald in the kingdom of God, and as the events they introduce appear, we shall expectantly wait for the sounding of the seventh trumpet which ushers in the kingdom of God.

The elders burst out in a song of thanksgiving to God for taking up His power and reigning, they rejoice that Antichrist's reign of sin and death is over. We read in Rev.15v5-8., that no one could enter into the Temple of God in Heaven until the seven vials were poured out; in Rev.11v19., we read that the Temple is opened again, so the seven last plagues have been poured out. It seems that God intended the earthly temple to be a pattern of the heavenly one. Heb.8v5. 9v23. The ark of the covenant is seen in the Temple and it shows the faithfulness of God to His covenant with Israel and His Church. The promises made both to Israel and the Church of a kingdom will be fulfilled at the seventh trumpet. Rev.10v7. Heb.9v4. 10v1. 12v26-29. Certain natural and supernatural happenings that occur at the seventh trumpet, are mentioned elsewhere in Revelation. "Lightnings." Rev.4v5. 8v5. 16v18. "Voices." Rev.4v5. 10v3.,4. 16v18. Thunderings." Rev.4v5. 8v5.7v10. 10v3,4. 14v2. 16v18. 19v6. "Earthquake." Rev.6v12,14. 16v18-20. Zech.14v4,5. Acts.1v10-12. "Great hail." Rev.16v21.

5. THE ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK. Rev.10v1-11.

God, in His divine wisdom, has inserted three events between the sixth and seventh trumpet; the angel and the little book; the measuring and treading down of the Temple area ; and the account of the two witnesses. The last two events cover a period of 3½ years and happen in Palestine, and the placing of these two events here almost certainly shows that the trumpets cover this same period of 3½ years.

The account of the angel and the little book encourages the righteous, that at the seventh trumpet their sufferings and trials will be over; the wrath of the Lamb will fall on the wicked. Judgement will be delayed no longer, for the phrase in Rev.10v6., "that there shall be time no longer," "hoti chronos ouketi estai," means, "that there shall be delay no longer." At the seventh trumpet God's kingdom will come and the wicked will be judged. Though wickedness appears to reign for a while, its end will be sure. God will perform His Word, and bring in, and establish, His eternal kingdom.

A mighty angel confirms the promise of Christ's coming at the seventh trumpet with an oath. This gives a strong consolation to those who will have to endure the time of trouble at the end of this age. Heb.6v16-19. Heaven is full of mighty angels, who are ready to do the will of God and come to our aid. Heb.1v14. Dan.7v9,10. Rev.5v11. Heb.12v22. We are not told the contents of this little book, but it has obviously something to do with the close of this age and the "mystery of God," "to musterion tou theou," "God's plan," which the angel mentions in Rev.10v7.. There must also be a close connection between the little book and the seven thunders, the details of which John also had to keep secret. We see in Rev.10v7., why there has been a delay in the coming of Christ, the secret plan of God has had to be fulfilled before Jesus can return. This plan of God also involves the manifestation of Satan's secret plans, that is, "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thes.2v7.

The following is a synopsis of C. L. Parker's excellent commentary on these two mysteries.

"There is something which is called 'The mystery of God', which is only ended when the Lord returns at the seventh trumpet. Rev.10v7. Eph.3v9,10. 3v9-11. Rom.16v25,26. There is also a reference to 'the mystery of iniquity' which was already working in Paul's day, but was hindered from completion by God until He was ready to allow it. The word 'mystery' does not mean mysterious, but simply a secret hidden from the outsider but revealed to the initiated, e.g. the secret teaching of Freemasons, which is only known to them. Thus both God and Satan have plans which are hidden from the man in the street, but are revealed to their own children. The Christian, of course, knows the truth, but the ordinary Spiritist is deceived by his master. Only a few know the deep things of Satan. Lk.10v24. 1Pet.1v10-12. Jn.15v14,15. Rev.1v1. 2v24. 2Thes.2v7.

The Mystery of God.

The world does not credit God with any plan at all. To them it all seems a meaningless jumble without any particular purpose. Indeed, the world conceives of God as a fool who can't see His own kingdom. As a matter of fact, however, the intention of God is to put both Heaven and Earth under the rule of His Son Jesus and His bride (i.e. the Church), and to fulfil upon the earth the promise made to Abraham and his seed, Israel, that they should inherit the earth. The inhabited earth to come is not again to be put under angels, but under Christ and His brethren who overcame. Heb.2v5-13. Rom.8v12-39. Lk.19v11-27. Rev.21v7. There must therefore be begotten, educated and tested, a sufficiently large number of overcoming Sons to take the place of the present world rulers, i.e. Satan's angels, now in the first heaven but later to be cast out upon the earth, and finally into Hell. Dan.10v13-21. Rev.12v7-9. Mt.25v41. 1Cor.9v24-27. 12v31. Eph.6v12. 2Tim.4v8. Jam.1v12. 1Pet.5v1-4.

Now this depends not upon God but upon His children. If the Church was faithful, then the time would have been shortened, but unfortunately there have been centuries where the Gospel has hardly ever been preached at all, so hardly any overcomers have arisen as kings and priests. Therefore, the length of this period, though known to God, was not revealed to His sons lest they should be tempted to grow slack and say, 'the time is not yet,' or forget that the length of the interval depended on their exertions, and that they would hasten or retard the day of Christ or lose a crown through carelessness. 2Pet.3v12. Rev.3v11. When, however, the Lord knows that the requisite numbers of overcomers is to hand, then He will stand aside and allow Satan to proceed with His plan. 2Thes.2v6-12.

The Mystery of Satan. 2Thes.2v7. Rev.2v24.

Satan and his angels are already doomed to Hell for the ages of ages (because of their impenitence and wickedness) and therefore have no hope of success, or of establishing any successful kingdom upon earth. However, being filled with a murderous hatred of God and man, they desire to damage them as much as possible before their own final ruin. Therefore, during the last seven years of this age they will stage a kind of mock kingdom of Heaven upon earth, a Devilish parody of God's Millennial kingdom, even using God's city and Temple for this purpose. God will allow Satan to do this fearful thing for the following reasons amongst others.

a. To show mankind the madness of preferring Satan to Jesus, and thus bring them to repentance and a willingness to accept Jesus as Lord. This folly has wrecked the human race since Eden, but this fearful experience will bring to an end to Satan's power of deception during the Millennium, his mask will be torn off and he will be seen for what he is, the enemy of man. Gen.2 all. Acts.3v14. Rev.13v7,10,15. Jn.8v44.

b. To show the Jews the madness of rejecting their Messiah, and so bring them to a willingness to accept Jesus

as Lord.

c. To break the pride of the Gentiles by giving them an opportunity one by one, and finally all combined, to govern the world according to their own ideas so that any hope of happiness apart from God may be finally shattered by their own failure. This will make them willing to accept God's plan of learning about Him from the despised Jews. Zech.8v23. Following Antichrist will result in the complete collapse of society and bring the earth to the brink of destruction, from which Christ will deliver them at the last moment, so that the few remaining Jews and Gentiles will enter into the Millennium broken and shocked by the judgement of God. Zech.12. Is.13v9-16. As were Noah and his family when they saw the ruin caused by the flood and obliged, and at any rate happy, to submit to the iron rule of Christ and His Brethren. Ps.2 all. Rev.12v5. 2v27. 19v15.

Thus God will use this last plan of Satan to break the pride of man, and when this is accomplished will imprison Him until He has again need of him to test the inhabitants of the Millennial earth. The human race as a whole will have had an experience similar to that of the prodigal son, and will return to God only after the terrible experience of trusting the Devil, having learned to obey God by the things they have suffered. It is of first importance to remember that against God Satan has absolutely no power. No evil being, demon or man can do anything other than what God permits. 2Chron.18v18-22. Job.1v12. Mt.8v31. Ps.76v10. Satan is wholly a tool in the hands of God to punish the wicked, to correct the righteous, 1Tim.1v20. 1Cor.5v5., to bring glory to the Sons of God, Eph.6v10-20. Job.1 and 2. James.1v12., to test the true character of everyone. Rev.20v7,10. Mt.4v1. Against us Satan only has the power that is given to him by God. Job.1 all. Against God he is helpless. Rev.20v1-3. God alone knows the length of this period of waiting, Mt.24v36. Mk.13v32. Acts.1v7., but God's children will know when the last seven years, and the Great Tribulation begins. Mt.24v15-22. Dan.9v27. 2Thes.2v1-12." **End of C. L. Parker's synopsis.**

God restrains Satan until the last 3½ years of this age, the time known as, "The Great Tribulation," when "the mystery of iniquity" will work. Even those days are shortened by God to protect mankind from Satan's plan to destroy mankind. Mt.24v21,22. 2Thes.2v7. Rev.12v12. Dan.8v24. 12v1-7. This explosion of evil and destruction is allowed, in order to show what Satan and his angels, and the effects of evil are like; and also show the justice and necessity of their eternal judgement, and confinement in everlasting chains of darkness, after the destruction of their bodies in the lake of fire. 2Pet.2v4,17. Jude.v13. Mt.25v41,46. Rev.19v20. 20v10. Every mouth will be stopped by the awesome justice of God. Rom.3v19. The horrific carnage on earth produced by this awful manifestation of evil, produces a stunned and shocked silence in all the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom. Rev.8v1. The happiness of the eternal "ages of ages" in the kingdom of God; depends on everyone in that kingdom, not only loving righteousness, but also hating evil with all their being. This manifestation of evil produces an eternal hatred of evil in the children of God; and permanently banishes evil from the kingdom of God.

John is told to eat the little book and he finds it as sweet as honey in his mouth, but it makes his stomach bitter. This can be interpreted in two ways. **1.** When God uses you to proclaim His truth, it gives you great joy, but if God gives you a message of judgement, lamentation and woe, it can give you great sorrow of heart. **2.** God's Word is very precious and sweet, but it can be very costly, and bring great persecution from the world, the Devil, religious hypocrites, and carnal Christians within the Church. Prophets usually suffer for their message, and John certainly suffered for the truth. Ps.19v10. 119v72,111, 157,161. Prov.23v23. Jer.15v16. Ezek.3v1-3. Rev.1v9. 6v9. 22v8,9. Mt.5v11,12. 23v34-39.

6. THE CONFLICT IN JERUSALEM BETWEEN GOD'S TWO WITNESSES AND ANTICHRIST.

1. The "violent treading down" of the holy of holies and Temple area.

In Rev11v1., "Temple," "naos," should be translated as "Sanctuary," for it is speaking of the innermost and most holy part of the Temple. Paul uses "naos" in 2Thes.2v4., when he states that the Sanctuary becomes the centre for the worship of Antichrist and Satan. In Mt.24v15., Jesus used a less specific word for the Sanctuary, when He said that the abomination of desolation would be, "estos en topo hagio," "standing in holy place." The fact that this Sanctuary is trodden under foot by the Gentiles proves that this is referring to the present age, for the Sanctuary of the millennial Temple is never trodden down by the Gentiles. Rev.20v9. The last temple had an outer court in the open air where the heathen worshipped the God of Israel, this was, "the house of prayer" for them, and they could go no further, here it is delivered over to the Gentiles, for them to profane. Lk.19v46. Mk.11v16,17. Eph.2v11-18. Acts.21v27-29. Lk.21v24. "Leave out," is "ekbale exothen," literally "cast outside," the strong word "ekballo," may convey the thought, "cast out as profane." In Rev.11v1., "altar," "thusiasterion," is the altar where sacrifices and burnt offerings are made; it is used in Rev.6v9. 8v3., of the heavenly altar.

Jerusalem has been trampled under foot by Gentiles since Christ's day, and here we read that it will experience a further 3½ years of Gentile domination before Jesus returns. The word "tread," is "patesousin," the future active of "pateo," which speaks of a contemptuous and destructive treading under foot, as in Lk.21v24.. In Heb.10v29., "katapateo" describes an even more violent and contemptuous trampling under foot of the blood of Christ by apostates. Mt.5v13,7v6. Lk.8v5. Woe to Jerusalem when Antichrist rules there, for he will be as evil as Hitler and Stalin, and will produce even more carnage and destruction.

2. God empowers two prophets to Israel with the ultimate in prophetic power.

a. The strategic timing of the start of the prophetic ministry of the Two Witnesses.

The Two Witnesses appear to start their ministries a few days before Antichrist's image is set up in the Temple, and they warn of the terrible events that are about to overtake Israel and the world. In spite of innumerable attempts to kill them, their ministries continue for 1,260 days, until their death, a few days before the return of Jesus.

The conflict in Jerusalem between God's Two Witnesses and Satan's Antichrist and False Prophet, will be similar to the conflict that took place between Moses and Aaron, and Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's sorcerers. 2Tim.3v8,9. Ex.7v11,12,22. 8v7,18,19. Prophesying against this kind of determined opposition by evil occultists, and the powers of darkness, demands great power and great spiritual gifts. God has in time past spoken to the Israelites by the prophets, and He will speak to them again in the great tribulation, through His two mighty Christian prophets, the Two Witnesses. Where it has been possible, God has usually sent His prophets in two's and three's, so that the truth and reliability of their prophecies could be confirmed out of the mouths of several trustworthy witnesses. 1Cor.14v29. Deut.19v15. Eccles.4v9-12. 2Kings.2v1,3. Isaiah, Hosea and Micah confirmed God's Word through each other, before the captivity; Haggai and Zechariah did the same, after the captivity.

b. God will give the ultimate in prophetic power and judgement gifts to His Two Witnesses.

God describes the Two Witnesses as two olive trees, to show that they are full of heavenly oil and that He pours His life and power through them. Rev.11v4. Zech.4 all. Mal.4v5. God likens them to two lamp stands, that shine brightly by their continuous manifestation of His power gifts. These Two Witnesses, like Elijah of old, stand in the presence of God in spirit, and operate in the fullness of His power for 1260 days. 1Kings.17v1. God commissions them to be prophets to Israel and the world. Their great ministries and godly lives stand out in sharp contrast to the evil lives of Antichrist and the False Prophet, who manifest Satan's power. They prophesy in sackcloth, the clothing of deepest mourning, to express their great sorrow over the gross evil around them, and by God's gifts bring judgement on this evil. Those who God sends to pronounce great woes, must have the same sorrow of heart that He has, over the sin that makes those judgements unavoidable and necessary. Mt.23v37-39. Lk.19v41-44.

The Two Witnesses will manifest God's power gifts in judgement, fire will devour those who try to hurt or kill them. Like Elijah, they will stop the falling on Israel for the 1260 days of their ministry. Like Moses, they will turn water to blood, and smite the earth with every plague. However, God gives them authority to manifest judgement gifts, **"as oft as they will,"** a striking new level of authority, for even Moses did not dispense plagues as he willed, he followed out God's orders. No one has manifested judgement gifts at their own will like these two prophets, but the circumstances of that time will demand this great power. However, even as Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts in the face of God's power and judgements, so do Antichrist and his followers, and they refuse to repent of their evil deeds.

3. God allows the Two Witnesses to be killed to manifest a greater miracle.

When the Two Witnesses have finished their testimony, God allows the Beast to kill them. Rev.11v7. This is the first of many references in Revelation where Antichrist is called "the Beast," the Greek, "to therion," speaks of a fierce wild animal. Antichrist is the last and worst ruler of a Satan dominated world system, which has always been ugly and beastly. Mt.4v8,9. Lk.4v5-7. Jn.14v30. 18v36. Rev.11v15. 2Cor.4v4. In Rev.11v7. The Beast is said to arise out of the bottomless pit, or abyss, ("abussos," it occurs in Lk.8v31. Rom.10v7. Rev.9v1,2,11. 11v7. 17v8. 20v1,3). This indicates that Antichrist will be raised from the dead, for to ascend out of the abyss, a person must have been dead, for it is God's prison for the unconverted and evil spirits. Dan.11v29,30. Rev.13v3,12. 17v8. This is the place to which unbelievers go to when they die, and it is the place to which our Lord went on His death, to purchase our redemption. Mt.12v39,40. Rom.10v7. Eph.4v8-10. Heb.2v14. 5v7. Is.53v5,6,10-12.

It appears that God will allow Satan to openly resurrect Antichrist from the dead in a devilish parody of Christ's resurrection. It is after this resurrection that Antichrist comes to the fullness of his evil power. Satan has, of course, no control over the dead in Hades, Christ has the keys of Hades. Rev.1v18. Satan needs God's permission to raise Antichrist from the dead, and it is this resurrection of Antichrist that causes many to follow him. God performs a greater sign when He raises the dead bodies of His Two Witnesses to life before the eyes of the whole watching world, after their mangled corpses have lain in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. For these 3½ days, "they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations," will rejoice over their death, elated that they can now continue in sin without the rebuke and judgement of these two mighty prophets. They deceive themselves into thinking, that because these two men of God are dead, that their God is dead also, and that they will escape the judgement of God, that these two prophets had warned them about.

After killing the Two Witnesses, Antichrist's followers feel that they have won the final victory and have nothing to fear. How well this agrees with 1Thes.5v2,3., "the people will cry peace and safety," but "sudden destruction will come upon them." Judg.16v23-30. Jer.6v14. God raises His Two Witnesses from the dead and openly translates them to Heaven, and puts a stop to the godless revelling and rejoicing of the wicked. This is not the first resurrection and rapture, that occurs soon afterwards as Rev.11v14-18., states, at the seventh trumpet. Their resurrection is a personal resurrection, like that of Lazarus, or the daughter of Jairus, with the difference that it is done before the eyes of the whole world. The world's television cameras record the Two Witnesses being resurrected from the dead and taken to Heaven in triumph, a tremendous sign and warning to all of

God's power and glory. Jn.11v41-46. Lk.8v51-56. Mt.27v50-54. Acts.14v19,20.

4. The Two Witnesses are killed in Jerusalem, which God calls Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon.

The bodies of the Two Witnesses lie in the streets of Jerusalem, "the great city---where the Lord was crucified." Rev.11v8. The phrase "the city, the great one," "tes poleos tes megales," which is used in reference to "Babylon" in Rev.14v8. 16v19. 17v18. 18v10,16,18,19,21., is here applied to the city of Jerusalem. In Rev.17 and 18, God calls Jerusalem Babylon," and in Rev.11v8., says that Jerusalem would be better named as "Sodom" and "Egypt," for its abominable wickedness and rebellion against God. This wickedness will bring about its destruction. One commentator writes the following: "Those who, like Alford, have decided that "the great city" is not Jerusalem but its spiritual antagonist, Rome or Babylon, find great difficulty in dealing with this plain statement:----The historical allusion is too definite to be thus explained away (i.e. as Rome or Babylon); it loses its whole point if it does not identify the place where the witnesses lose their lives with that where their Lord Himself was crucified, let those beware who feel that they know better than the Word of God."

The great earthquake of Rev.11v13., takes place earlier than the even greater earthquake of Rev.11v19., which shakes the whole world, and occurs when the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives. Rev.6v12,14. 16v18-20. Zech.14v4,5. In the smaller earthquake a tenth of the city falls, and 7,000 men are slain, this brings some of the population to a state of fear and repentance. It certainly does not bring Antichrist and his armies to repentance, they fight Jesus at His return. Rev.19v19. It seems that Antichrist burns and sacks the city, because the resurrection of the Two Witnesses and the earthquake turn many to the Lord. Rev.17v16. The armies of Antichrist are around the stricken city when Jesus returns, they are the vultures surrounding the carcass of Jerusalem that our Lord spoke about in Mt.24v28. and Lk.17v37.. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the Father and Son take over the rule of a shattered and shocked world, all the redeemed creation rejoice that the Lord has come to bring righteousness and peace to the world, and claim that which is rightfully His own. Is.32v1,2,17,18. The earth and the heavens ring with triumphant Hallelujahs. Rev.19v1-6. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen.

5. The Textual evidence and context prove that, "Who is to come," in Rev. 11v17. should be omitted.

A. In Rev.11v17., "ho erchomenos," "Who is to come," in the A.V. and T. R., is a serious textual error.

Most texts omit it. Hodges and Farstad, Mabe, the Critical Texts, p47, Aleph, A, C, P. some Old Latin, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Coptic Sahidic; the Armenian; Cyprian, Primasius; Andrew bav, c, p; Ps-Ambrose and Arethas, etc.

B. The context of Rev.11v17. proves that "ho erchomenos," should be omitted."

a. Rev.11v15., says, "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ."

The Father and Christ reign. In Rev.11v15., Mabcd, p47, Aleph, A, C, Hodges and Farstad, and the Critical Texts, read, "is become," "egeneto," the third person singular aorist indicative. All readings confirm that when the seventh trumpet sounds, Christ's return becomes a present fact and reality, and is no longer a future prophetic promise.

b. Rev.11v17., states, "thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned."

All manuscripts have "thou has taken," "eilephes," the perfect active indicative of "lambano," the perfect emphasises the fact that God has taken the power (dunamin) and rules permanently. This is also shown by the words "hast reigned," "ebasileusas," the aorist active indicative of "basileuo," "didst begin to reign." Robertson says that this combination of the perfect and aorist tenses also occurs without confusion in Rev.3v3. 5v7. and 8v5., as well as here. When the seventh trumpet sounds, our Lord is no longer "the coming one," for He has arrived, and is "the present One," who rules the world.

c. Rev.11v18.. states that the nations were angry and God's wrath came.

"Were angry" is "orgisthesan," the third person plural aorist passive indicative of "orgizo," "to make angry," passive "to be angry." "Thy wrath came," "elthan he orge sou," "elthan," is the aorist active indicative of "erchomai," "to come." The "orge" wrath of God has already come. The anger of the nations, and the anger and judgements of God on those nations, are both looked upon as past events immediately after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. See Ps.2v1-12.. Jesus comes "to destroy those destroying and corrupting the earth." "Diaphtheiro," can mean either "to destroy, or to corrupt," The preposition in the compound is perfective, and signifies "to utterly destroy;" God will utterly destroy those who corrupt and destroy the earth.

d. Rev.11v18.. informs us that at the seventh trumpet the holy dead are raised and rewarded.

The resurrection of the saints is definitely stated to be at the start of the Millennium by many other Scriptures. Is.25v6-9. Mt.24v29-31. 1Thes.4v13-17. 1Cor.15v50-53. Rev.20v4-6. John.6v39,40,44,54. 11v24. The word for "time," in "time of the dead," is "kairos," which speaks of an epochal time, as in, "the time of the Gentiles," in Lk.21v24.; "the fullness of times," Eph.1v10. with Heb.9v10.; the time of judgement on demons, Mt.8v29.; the time of extension of ministry, Mt.11v25., etc. The dead are raised after the great tribulation," at the last day," at the start of the kingdom of God, and this is when the Church is caught up to meet the Lord. This is the day when Jesus comes to "destroy them which destroy the earth." John.6v39,40,44,54. 11v23-25. Rev.11v18.

7. THE ESCAPE OF THE WOMAN INTO THE WILDERNESS. Rev.12v1-17.**1. The woman is not Mary or the manchild Jesus.**

Some say that the woman is Mary, and the manchild is Jesus, however, Rev.4v1., definitely informs us that the things that followed were in the future and not in the past. Also the woman is persecuted by Satan, when he and his evil angels are cast down to the earth; at present they are in the heavenly places, and will remain there until they are cast out of the heavenlies to the earth by the archangel Michael and his angels at the start of the last 3½ years of this age. Eph.6v12. Dan.12v1,2,6,7. Rev.12v7-12. Satan tries to kill the woman by means of the Beast, the Antichrist, and God miraculously transports, protects and feeds her during the last 3½ years of this age. Rev.12v4,6,9,12-14. 13v5. We read in Rev.12v5., that the manchild is to rule the nations with a rod of iron; and since this is a quote from Ps.2v9., some have thought that the manchild must be Jesus. However, we read in Rev.2v26,27., that the church at Thyatira was also told that if they overcame they would rule the nations with a rod of iron. The rod of iron descends on the wicked at Christ's coming, and those among the nations who are allowed into the Millennium on probation, who turn to evil and try to harm people. The righteous among these nations have a life of perfect peace and happiness. Is.32v1,17,18. The rod of iron ensures that everlasting righteousness and peace are brought in, and that evil never breaks out again and ruins the happiness of God's creation. Ps.2v1-12. Dan.9v24.

2. The woman is not Orthodox Jewry.

Some say that the woman is a company of Orthodox Jews. We know some Jews do flee for safety when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and they see the shadows of a great war and severe persecution threatening to engulf them. However, the woman of Rev.12. is not the group of Israelites who Jesus delivers from Antichrist when He returns. Is.30v19-22. 32v15. 35v1-10. 66v7-9. The Jews who would not accept Jesus as their Messiah when He was on earth, became the children of the Devil. Jn.8v39-47. The synagogue that rejected Jesus as their Messiah became the synagogue of Satan. Rev.2v9. 3v9. Acts.14v1,2. 17v5,13. 18v4-6. 19v8,9. 21v27-31. 22v22. 23v12. 24v1. 28v17-31. Christ said that the people who love the truth would listen to His voice. Jn.18v37. 1Jn.2v22,23. The Orthodox Israelite who truly loves God will usually accept Christ when he hears the Gospel. However, many godly Jews may be as slow to lay aside their Jewish traditions, as the apostles and leaders of the early Church. It took a vision of Christ to detach Paul from his cherished traditions and his hatred of Christians. The Orthodox Israelites who flee for safety are perhaps among the sheep of Mt.25v31-46., whose good treatment of the sons of God is looked upon as treatment of the Son of God, some of them may accompany the Christians who flee from Antichrist.

3. The Woman is a section of the Church specially created and empowered by God for the last days.

The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the great tribulation. It is a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the great tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to the mystery of iniquity, and it is one of many such groups, who operate in other parts of the world. This woman is certainly not speaking of Orthodox Jews; though this group, or a group like it, could well be speaking of the Jewish Christian Church, for the following reasons.

a. Jesus warns Christians to get out, and keep out, of Israel at the start of the great tribulation.

Jesus warns us that Christians in Judea are to flee into the wilderness, when Antichrist sets up the abomination of desolation, the divinely aided transportation of this woman, seems to be an obvious fulfilment of that prophetic warning. Mt.24v15-20. Our Lord was teaching the leaders of His Church in Mt.24., and His directions were for them and not the orthodox Jew. Anyway, it is a fact that no traditional Jew, who rejected Christ, would accept or heed His warnings and prophecies.

b. The picture of this woman is far too magnificent for a group of unbelieving Israelites.

Here we see part of the Church filled with the power and glory of God. The symbols used are very striking and significant. The moon of Mosaic dispensation shone with the light of the Gospel, as the moon shines with the light of the sun. The woman is not shining with the light of the moon of Judaism, she is clothed with the light of the Gospel sun. Jewish worship was a shadow of things to come. Many of the Old Testament types, shadows and prophecies have been fulfilled in the birth, life, death, resurrection and intercessory ministry of Christ. These revelations of Christ, and other prophetic and moral truths in the Old Testament Scriptures, constitute the moon under the feet of the woman, for the Church is founded upon the truths revealed to the Old Testament prophets, as well as the truth given to New Testament apostles. Eph.3v5. Col.2v17. Heb.8v1-13. 10v1-16.

c. The twelve stars are not the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is very unlikely that the twelve stars are the twelve tribes of Israel, for most of the sons of Jacob were rather wicked, and anything but shining lights. The Scriptures inform us that Christians are the only ones who do not follow Antichrist in the countries that are under his control. Rev.13v8. Antichrist will corrupt the Israelites who are not saved. Dan.11v32-35. We see from Revelation seventeen, that most of the Israelites do accept Antichrist and lean upon him.

The twelve stars are more likely to be the twelve apostles of Christ, as a star usually portrays an individual not a group of people. Rev.1v20. 2v1. 12v4. 21v12-14. Mt.19v28. Paul tells us in Gal.3v28., that in this age of grace, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ." Through the blood of Jesus the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is abolished, we are fellow citizens of the household of God. Eph.2v11-22.

d. The woman is surely giving birth to her own kind.

We know that the manchild which is born to the woman is a group of Christians, for the martyred manchild is said to have overcome Satan and Antichrist through the blood of the Lamb. Rev.12v5,11,12. We are also told in Rev.12v17., that the seed of the woman keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

4. The Woman is not the whole Church of Christ.

The vast majority of the Church is now in Heaven and so is absolutely safe from being persecuted by Satan and the powers of darkness, in fact the Church will judge these evil angels. 1Cor.6v1-3. Jude.v14,15. We see from Rev.12v17., which speaks of the "seed of the woman," that the woman represents a limited number of Christians on earth, who flee into the wilderness for safety from the murderous wrath of Satan and Antichrist.. Christ's warning in Mt.24v15-21. Mk.13v14-20. and Lk.21v20-24., is to the Christians in Judea, and not to the whole Church, this is an obvious fulfilment of that warning. The woman is fed by God for 3½ years in the wilderness, this has obviously a local, and not a universal fulfilment. Rev.12v6,14-16. The woman flees from Antichrist at the start of the great tribulation, and at this time his authority is limited to the Middle East and some countries North and East of this area. Antichrist certainly does not possess world-wide power. Indeed, he never has world dominion even when he wins His final military victory in the Middle East, a few days before the end of the great tribulation.

The wilderness referred to in Rev.12, could be a wilderness area in the region of Edom, Moab and Ammon, which, according to Dan.11v41., never falls into the hands of Antichrist. When he does send an army to capture the woman, God opens up the ground and swallows his army up, they suffer same fate as the sons of Korah. Rev.12v15,16.. Numb.16v28-35. Antichrist appears to send out another army, just before Christ returns, in an attempt to destroy the saints in Edom. We read in Is.63v1-6., and 34v1-8., that Jesus personally destroys this army. Though Christians are persecuted and hated by all nations at this time, it is only when Antichrist puts his image in the Temple that life becomes impossible for them in Palestine. Christ's warning in Mt.24v9-21., for Christians to flee from Judea, had a partial fulfilment in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus. However, this warning is really directed at Christians in Judea during the last 3½ years of this age. The warning in Lk.21v20-24., for Christians to flee from Judea, when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, had a definite fulfilment in A.D. 70, for v24 speaks of the dispersion of the Jews among the nations, and a long period of trampling under foot of Jerusalem by Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. As the context of Lk.21v20-24., has many prophecies concerning Christ's second coming, the warning to flee from Judea, and not to enter into Judea, when armies surround Jerusalem, must have a dual fulfilment, and also apply to the events of the great tribulation. Since Rev.11v1,2., was written after Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Titus, so another sanctuary has to be built and desecrated by Antichrist. We can only correctly interpret these prophecies when we accept that Christ's return will take place **after** the great tribulation. Mt.25v15-31.

5. The woman in travail and her man child. Micah.4v10.

This does not seem to be the soul travail that we can have in prayer for sinners to be saved, even though Christians who know the truth will be making great efforts to win people to Jesus, and warn them of the approaching calamities under Antichrist. This travail is more likely to be that spoken of by Jesus in Mt.24v8., "all these things are the beginning of travail, THEN shall they deliver you up into tribulation, and shall kill you." Though at this time travail will, in some measure, be experienced by the universal Church, persecution will be particularly lethal for the Church in Judea. Jesus emphasises the necessity of enduring to the end. Mt.24v8-13.

In Rev.12v13., "persecuted," is "edioxen," the aorist active indicative of "dioko," to hunt, to pursue, to chase, it speaks of hostile pursuit as in Mt.5v10-12. and 10v23..

N.B. The man child is a group of Christians who are martyred for their faith.

We read in Rev.12v11., that, "they loved not their lives unto death." Jesus said that the Church in Israel will experience travail, suffering and death. Mt.24v8,9. Those who are faithful to death will rule with Christ. Rev.2v26,27. 3v21. 20v4-6. The martyred man child is in sharp contrast to the Christians who allow the abounding iniquity of the last days to cool off their "agape" love for God. Mt.24v12,13. The man child overcomes through the blood of Jesus, their word of testimony, and an utter disregard of love for their own life, out of love for God. Rev.12v10-12. They overcome, not by their own power, but by relying on God's grace and power. Personal love for God is the secret of victory, and its absence is the cause of defeat. 1Jn.2v12-14.

6. The Great Red Dragon.

The red dragon is said to be Satan in Rev.12v9., this indicates Satan's malevolent and ferocious disposition, and his desire to cause suffering, death and destruction. The seven heads are seven kingdoms under the control of Satan, he has used six of them in the past to oppress, persecute and dominate the Israelites. The previous six heads were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Rome. the sixth head was oppressing Israel in John's time. The seventh head, the kingdom of Antichrist, is still to come, and the ten horns are ten kings under Antichrist. The tail of the dragon casts the third part of the stars of heaven to the earth, these are without doubt the angels that fell with Satan.

The Ancient Serpent. Jesus said Satan was a liar and murderer from the beginning. Jn.8v44. His wickedness goes back to the angelic ages; He has always been the enemy of man, and as in Eden, he still tries to corrupt and destroy mankind.

The Devil. "Diabolos," "Slanderer," Satan is the slanderer who tries to take away a persons character. 1Tim.3v11. 2Tim.3v3. Tit.2v3. Jn.6v70. In Rev.12v10., Satan is called, "the accuser of the brethren," "ho katorgor," is one who brings a legal charge against another, it is a legal term and is used in Jn.8v10. Acts.23v30,35. 24v7,8. and 25v16,18.. In Rev.12v10., "accused," is "kategoron," the present active participle of "kategoroo," to bring a legal accusation;" the present participle again shows the evil persistence, continual action, and habitual character of Satan's accusations. Satan, the father of lies and falsehood, accuses Christ's brethren day and night before their heavenly Father. Note the amazing malice and hate of Satan and the wonderful patience of God. The Devil, the greatest lawbreaker of all, claims the right to appear before God in Heaven, on the grounds of the Law of God, to make a legal accusation against the children of God. Envy will see a spot in a bright sky and dwell on it, failing to see the beauty and brightness in a life that love delights to dwell on. When a disciple gives the Devil grounds for accusation, the whole of Heaven knows about it, and when he sees, or thinks he sees, a weakness in one of Christ's brethren, he demands an opportunity to sift them, just as he did in the case of Peter. Lk.22v31,32. 1Pet 5v8,9.

Satan. "Satanas," this means adversary, opponent and enemy. Jesus applied it to Satan, when Peter tried to persuade Him not to go to the cross. Mt.16v21-23. Mk.8v33. Adversary is also used in legal matters. Lk.12v58. 18v3. 1Pet.5v8. Mt.5v25. Our enemy Satan can come like a roaring lion to devour us, and a fight to the death may be necessary. 1Pet.5v6-11.

The Great Deceiver. In Rev.12v9., "Satan, who deceiveth the whole world," "deceiveth," is "planon," the present active participle of "planao," to lead astray, to deceive; the present participle shows the continual evil persistence, and habitual character of Satan's attempts to deceive. Jn.8v44. Truth will protect us from his attempts to deceive; "It is written," gave Jesus victory over the deceiver, and it will give us victory too, if we love God's Word as the Saviour did. Mt.4v1-11. Eph.6v14,17.

It is a terrible tragedy that this once beautiful, wise, and great angel has had his character and disposition destroyed by evil until he can only find pleasure in iniquity and causing suffering. Sin is no respecter of persons, it destroys the personalities of angels as well as the souls of men. Is.14v12-19. Ezek.28v11-19. Lk.10v17-19. Lk.11v17-26. Jn.12v31-33. 16v8-11. Rev.20v1-3,10. Heaven is sick at heart over the misery that Satan and his angels inflict on God's Creation. The good angels are continually having the most distressing and painful conflicts with the powers of darkness when they come to minister to the children of God on earth. Heb.1v13,14. Dan.10v12,13,19-21. The whole of Heaven will rejoice with great joy when Michael and his angels cast Satan and his angels out of the heavenly places. Rev.12v12. The cleansing of the heavenlies will be followed 3½ years later by the cleansing of the earth. Rev.11v15-19. Michael means, "Who is like God," and shows his deep love for God and his real humility of mind, there is a complete absence of the self-exaltation and pride that brought about the fall of Satan, who said "I will be like the Most High." Is.14v13-15. There is a vast difference between the union that Michael had with his angels, and that which Satan has with his angels. Michael and his angels are banded together by the sweetest and most tender love for one another and God, whereas Satan and his angels are banded together only by a common hatred of good and God. There exists in Satan's ranks the most dreadful hatred, variance and strife, and one angel rules another only by a greater ferocity and greater spiritual strength; it is a kingdom of darkness, thanks be to God who has delivered us from the power and end of these evil angels, and translated us into the kingdom of love and light. Col.1v12,13.

7. The rest of the seed of the woman.

God gives the woman wings to escape, which could well be the kind of supernatural transport that Elijah and Philip enjoyed. The "they" of Rev.12v6., who feed the woman, are more likely to be angels than men. When God frustrates the attempt of Satan to kill these saints who flee into the wilderness, Satan tries to kill and persecute the rest of the woman's seed who are elsewhere. When Antichrist places his image in the Temple, it will distress Orthodox Jews even more than Christians, and as they see the warning that the Two Witnesses have given them about Antichrist come true, some will doubtless become Christians and suffer martyrdom as a result. However, the majority of the Jews will be completely deceived by the show of power that Antichrist puts on to substantiate his claim that he is God, and they will accept their false Messiah. 2Thes.2v1-12. Jn.15v19. 5v43. Doubtless even some of these Jews will later have their eyes opened by the ministry of the Two Witnesses and will become Christians as a result, and the plagues and judgements of God, will cause many to realise that Jehovah is God. It is these converts, and other Christians in the kingdoms of Antichrist, that Antichrist tries to trace and kill.

Our Lord warns us in Mt.24v15-31. and Rev.12v1-17., that it will not be safe for any Christian to remain in the kingdom of Antichrist after the setting up of the image in the Temple. Jesus said that, if it is possible, His disciples are to flee and escape from those who persecute them, and so avoid martyrdom. Mt.10v23. To sum up then, the woman is a group of Christians, possibly, or probably, those in Judea, who God transports into a place of safety, for 3½ years. The manchild is a group of Christians in Palestine who do not manage to escape when Antichrist breaks the covenant and puts his image in the Temple. The rest of the seed of the woman are other Christians who are scattered throughout the areas under the control of Antichrist. The vision of this glorious woman gives us a revelation of God's wonderful fullness of provision for His Church in the last days, let us take God at His Word and prepare for those days, for spiritual survival will depend on obtaining and living in that fullness. Let us earnestly God for His maximum fullness, and not rest content with man's minimum empty tradition and form.

8. ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET. Rev.13v1-18.

In Rev.11, we see God's Two Witnesses, and their conflict with the Beast. In Rev.13, God gives us another look at Antichrist, and his right hand man, the False Prophet. They are the means by which the dragon makes his attack on the woman of Rev.12, and the rest of the Christians within his reach. In Rev.13, we see two beasts, Antichrist and the False Prophet; they are both evil monsters for they are described by the word "thorion," which describes a wild animal, a beast, a monster.

THE FIRST BEAST, THE ANTICHRIST.

There is a definite connection between this vision and the one in Daniel seven, for the beast of Rev.13 has the characteristics of all four of the beasts of Daniel's vision. Notice that all the beasts here named are destroyers of life, leopards, bears, and lions are all killers. This is a reference to the kingdoms that Satan has used to oppress and conquer the Israelites in the past. The seventh head with ten horns is the kingdom of the final Antichrist.

The power of the Beast.

"The dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority." Dan.8v24. Jn.12v31. 14v30. 16v11. 1Jn.5v9. This power lasts for 42 months in Rev.13v5.; this is the same period of time that is mentioned elsewhere as 1260 days, and "times, time, and half a time." The wickedness of Antichrist and Satan is the cause of this 42 months of great tribulation.

God says that all the earth will worship Antichrist except true Christians. Some think that the "proskuneo," here translated as "worship," should rather be translated "do homage," however, we read in 2Thes.2v4., that Antichrist claims that he is God, and demands worship. In Rev.13v8., Antichrist is worshipped as a person, "auton," "him," is a masculine pronoun. In politics and entertainment, worldlings do homage to and worship their idols, without being under their control or political domination. This could be the sense of Rev.13v7,8., where it states that Antichrist is given "authority ("exousia") over every tribe, and people and tongue and nation." We know that Antichrist is fighting with other nations of the world until the last few days of the great tribulation, and even when he defeats these nations, he does not have time to be world ruler before Jesus returns. However, Antichrist's influence and power will reach into every nation before he wins the war, even as communism did in its height of power. Antichrist will have followers in every country, though not every country will follow him, many countries will fight him until the last few days of the great tribulation, when he defeats their armies in the Middle East. Antichrist will have his followers and worshippers in every nation in the world, but in many countries they will be a minority.

Those in the countries under the control of Antichrist will either do homage to Antichrist or die. Rev.13v15. Christ was offered the kingdoms of the world by Satan, but the only way He could have received them, was by worshipping Satan and by following a career as evil as that of Antichrist, this was completely unacceptable to Him. No matter how promising Satan's temptations may seem, they all lead to evil, death and destruction. Satan's plan is to rule the earth by political force, and to have the worship of men because of their fear of death, in this evil plan God has restrained him. 2Thes.2v6-8. Satan's kingdom is based on subservience through force and fear, God's kingdom is based on the rule of love. There will be a genuine affection, fervent love, serene trust, sincere respect, and a beautiful care and concern between all the members of God's kingdom. Pure and perfect love will rule in the kingdom of God, and so happiness will be perfect and complete.

The miracles of the Beast.

We read that one of the heads of the Beast, from the context the seventh head, the Antichrist, is "wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed," this causes all the world to marvel at the Beast. In Rev.13v3,12,14., states that Antichrist's wound of death" will be healed. It appears that Satan copies the death and resurrection of Christ, and raises Antichrist from the dead, this miracle makes the whole world wonder after the Beast. Fire is brought down from heaven by the False Prophet by the power and at the desire of Antichrist, and many more great wonders are done by Antichrist. No wonder that the Lord Jesus warned us that the manifestations of evil power will be so great that the elect children of God will almost be deceived. The miracles that Antichrist will do will be the very things that Elijah and other men of God did to prove that God was with them. God desires His Church to prepare for these evil days and manifest His power, for if false prophets do more wonders than the Church of God, the world will never take the Church or the Gospel message seriously. The anti-Pentecostal attitude of many Christian leaders today, is leading much of the Church into sure spiritual defeat in the days ahead.

The Image of the Beast.

A statue, or some kind of image, is made of Antichrist, and the False Prophet is given power to bring this image to life. This image, probably made of a precious metal, is set up in the Temple sanctuary at Jerusalem, and is called the abomination of desolation. Mt.24v15. Dan.9v27. 11v31. 12v11. 2Thes.2v3,4. This idol is made to live and speak and all who will not worship it are killed. This is another lying wonder that Antichrist does to prove that he is God. 2Thes.2v3,4,8,9. This worship of Antichrist involves the worship of Satan, this desire for worship brought about Satan's sin and fall. Rev.13v15. Lk.4v7. Is.14v12-19.

The blasphemy of the Beast.

The attitude of Antichrist to God is appalling, He continually, mocks, derides and blasphemes God, and all that He stands for, he insists that all his subjects should ridicule, criticise, and utter blasphemous insults against God and Christianity. Here we see a dreadful preview of the final attitude of all who do not want God. The last judgement will give us a startling revelation of the hatred that the wicked have for God, goodness, love and truth. There will be the most appalling outburst of anger, hatred and blasphemy against the great, good, and beautiful God of love. The wicked bewail their fate, but they are bitterly angry and blaspheme God for it. Dan.8v11,12. 7v25. 9v27. 11v31,36. Jer.13v23. 17v1. N.B. Rev.2v21. 9v20,21. 16v9-11,21. It is a dreadful fact, that people can totally reject God and virtue, and like the evil angels, be gripped by an everlasting love of evil.

The Beast, the Antichrist, blasphemes God and authority is given to him to persecute the children of God and kill them. Rev.13v5-7. This is why the woman flees into the wilderness from the malice of Satan and Antichrist. Persecution is inevitable from a world that hates God, however, it can be a blessing to us, and can drive us into deeper experiences with God. Let us be careful not to receive the grace of God in vain in these trials. Jn.15v18 to 16v3. Rom.8v35-39. Heb.12v15. 2Cor.6v1.

The mark of the Beast.

Those who live in countries dominated by Antichrist will not be able to buy food or conduct business unless they have the mark of the Beast upon their right hand or forehead, they will either worship Antichrist and receive his mark or suffer starvation, imprisonment and death. Rev.13v15-17. Strict economic and political control is already a fact in almost every country of the world, and government permission or supervision effects much our lives. We thank God for the freedom we have in our country, and this freedom should not be sacrificed by careless Christian living, we should continually pray for this state of affairs to continue. 1Tim.2v1-8. This economic control by Antichrist gives light on the sheep of Mt.25v31-46., those who help Christians in the great tribulation, and risk their life or reputation to do so, are allowed into the Millennial Kingdom.

The number of the Beast.

We are told that the person who is wise and understanding is able to count the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man. Some say that this is the number of man, 666 being the height of human power, which is contrasted with 777, the overwhelming perfection of God. However, the writer believes, with many others, that the name of Antichrist will add up to 666. The way of telling a man by his number is made possible by the fact that both the Hebrew and Greek languages use the letters of the alphabet for numerals, in fact, good authorities inform us that for a long time these were the only numerals in use. People have found an amazing number of names that add up to 666; Nero, the Pope, Mohammed, Napoleon, and Luther are but a few of them. The Protestant Church has applied it to the Roman Catholic Church, and by careful juggling of words the Roman Catholic Church has applied it to the Protestant Church and its leaders. The Lord Jesus has told us that Antichrist's name will add up to 666 in order to give additional proof that he is the man of sin. Unless a person fulfils such prophecies as Dan.9v27., 2Thes.2v3-12., Mt.24v15-21., and no one has yet done so, it is useless speculation to apply this number test to a person. God gives this number to show that He knows the name and most minute details about this man before he is even born, and so we can be encouraged to believe that the good things that God has promised will also come to pass. It is interesting to note that some tell us that the name of Jesus in the Greek language has the numerical value of 888.

THE FALSE PROPHET, THE SECOND EVIL BEAST. Rev.13v11-18.

We see from Rev.13v11., that the false prophet has two horns like a lamb, perhaps this means that he has a mild and innocent appearance, however, his speech betrays him, he speaks like a dragon. He has the same

disposition as his master Satan, and the Antichrist; he is venomous, fiery, cruel, hateful and a devourer of all that is good. He exercises all the power of the first Beast, and does great wonders and miracles in order to deceive people. The reason why God allows some people to be deceived in this manner is given in 2Thes.2v11,12., it is to separate the wicked from the righteous, only those who want to be wicked will finally be deceived by Antichrist. The Two Witnesses and other spirit-filled Christians will expose Antichrist and reveal the source of his power. Nevertheless we are warned by the Lord Jesus that we must watch and pray and take heed to our spiritual life in these days, or we will grow spiritually cold and backslide. It will take real patience, grace, faith and spiritual stamina to come through these times with an overcoming faith. Mt.24v4,5,12,41-51. Lk.18v1-6.

There are several textual variations and problems of exposition in Rev.13v10..

Some texts of Rev.13v10. "If anyone by a sword will kill, etc." vary greatly in content and meaning.

Hodges and Farstad read, "If anyone by a sword must he be killed." This lacks meaning and qualification. The Critical Texts and Codex A read, "If anyone by a sword kills, he with a sword be killed." The manuscripts C, P, read, "If anyone by a sword will kill, he must by a sword be killed." The A.V., T.R., Mce read, "If anyone by a sword will kill, he must by a sword be killed." The future active shows this verse is speaking of the persecutor, and not the persecuted, which would be indicated by the future passive. It means that the slayer is slain. These manuscripts are more likely to apply to a persecutor than to the persecuted. The following interpretations of these variations are possible.

a. God's Judgement on Antichrist for Causing Captivity and Carnage.

Antichrist invades countries and brings vast numbers of people into captivity under his tyrannical domination. The Septuagint uses "aichmalosia," in this sense of leading into captivity in Numb.21v1. 2Chron.28v5. Is.20v4. Ezek.11v25. and Hab.1v9.. The A.V., T.R., and Mb, state that Rev.13v10. speaks of persecutors and their end; and assures us that God's judgement will fall on Antichrist for the captivity and carnage he causes. This chapter shows the effect of the Beast on all mankind, not just upon followers of Jesus. Other manuscripts of Rev.13v10., can be interpreted to speak of the judgement of God on Antichrist for his wickedness. God warns all tyrants who engage in captivity and carnage; that they will not escape His judgement.

b. Antichrist's Tyrannical Domination of His Own Followers.

The abstract term "aichmalosia," "captivity," speaks in a very expressive manner of the way that Antichrist gathers his followers into captivity. It is a striking fact that Stalin imprisoned and killed many millions of the members of his own party and supporters, as well as those who opposed him; here God tells us that Antichrist will imitate him. Those who the beast gathers together as his followers, are gathered into captivity, and tyrannical domination. They will be promised freedom, but will become the captives of sin and Satan. Antichrist will come in as a peace-maker, and will be the most plausible and evil man the world has ever known. Many will fall under the charms and "lying wonders" of "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," and will be destroyed by him, including many Jews. 2Thes.2v3-12. Dan.8v24,25. 11v23-28. 12v7. Many people out of all the nations of the world gather together to follow Antichrist, but they are gathered to captivity, death and eternal destruction.

c. The Captivity and Murder of Christians by Antichrist.

Some expositors have interpreted some texts of Rev.13v10. to say Christians must accept captivity and death and not resist Antichrist. However, this cannot be true, for the Two Witnesses do resist captivity, and kill many of Antichrist's soldiers with God's power gifts, so this Scripture can hardly be contradicting their experience. Jesus commends the steadfast endurance, "hupomone," and faith of the saints who are murdered by Antichrist in this darkest hour of the world. God's saints stand out in sharp contrast to the fear, distress and anxiety, that is the reaction of the worldlings in this time of devastation. Lk.21v21-26.

The Scriptures warn us that Antichrist and his followers will carry into captivity, and murder many of God's children in the countries under his control. Jesus promises us that these murderers will be slain by the sword proceeding from His mouth, and will suffer the captivity and imprisonment of Hell. 2Thes.2v8. Rev.19v15. Zech.14v12. Compare Jer.15v2. Jesus promised us, nearly 2,000 years before these events, that He would surely avenge His own elect. Rev.6v9-11. 16v4-7. 18v5-8,20,24. 19v2. Lk.18v1-8. Even now God judges evil people and evil angels, and confines them in chains of darkness in Hades, and they, with great fear and terror, dread the coming of the great day of judgement of God Almighty. 1Tim.5v24,25. Heb.10v27.

Some Textual Evidence of Rev.13v10. "He that leads into captivity," lack sense and qualifying statements.

Hodges and Farstad, 051, and Mac (about 130 manuscripts) read, "Ei tis echei aichmalosian hupagei." "If anyone goes captivity has. "The manuscripts Md, part Me, p47, Aleph, C, P, 046, read, "Ei tis eis aichmalosian hupagei;" "If anyone goes into captivity." It is very difficult to make any sense of these readings, for they lack any qualifying statement. The Critical Texts, A, read, "Ei tis eis aichmalosian eis aichmalosian hupagei;" "If anyone into captivity, into captivity he goes." This does make some sense, and is capable of being interpreted as speaking of either the persecutors or the persecuted. The A.V. and T.R., read, "If anyone gathers into captivity, into captivity he goes," "Ei tis aichmalosian sunagei eis aichmalosian hupagei." Some say that "sunagei," "gathers," is a gloss by Elzevir, but part of the Me manuscripts have this reading, and it clarifies the thought of this verse, and probably gives its true meaning, that Antichrist will pay for his evil deeds. The Mb manuscripts read, "Ei tis eis aichmalosian apagei eis aichmalosian hupagei." If anyone leads into captivity, into

captivity he goes." This makes sense, and states that Antichrist will pay for his evil deeds. The following thoughts are suggested by the textual evidence.

a. The contrast between Satan's evil captivity, and Christ's freedom and deliverance from captivity.

We are informed that in Rev.13v10., the abstract noun "aichmalosia," 161, is used for "captivity," it is only used here and in Eph.4v8., where Paul quotes Ps.68v18., and writes about Jesus, that, "He led captivity captive," "echmaloteusen 162 aichmalosian," 161. "Echmaloteusen," 162, is the aorist active indicative of the verb "aichmaloteuo," 161, "to lead captive," (from "aichmalotos" 164, a captive at spear point in war, from "aichme," spear). So in Eph.4v8., Paul uses "aichmalotos" 164, with the abstract noun "aichmalosia," "captivity," 161. Paul reveals that the immediate result of Christ's atonement and His glorious resurrection and victory over death; was His setting free of a multitude of Old Testament saints, who were held captive in Hades, and on His ascension Jesus gave spiritual gifts and ministries to His Church. Heb.2v14,15. Eph.4v8-11.

When Israel sinned they suffered captivities in Assyria and Babylon. When the Jews rejected their Messiah, Jesus, they again suffered at the hands of a cruel Devil. In Lk.21v24., Jesus prophesied about the Jewish-Roman war of A.D. 66-70, He said the Jews, "shall be led captive at spear point, ("aichmalotisthesontai," the future passive of "aichmalotizo," 163) to all nations." This actually happened to the Jews, and is the only place where it is used to speak of literal spears in the New Testament.

b. We have to resist Satan and bring every thought into captivity to Christ. 2Cor.10v5. James.4v7. 1Pet.5v9.

The concrete noun "aichmalotos" is not used in Rev.13v10.; it only occurs in Lk.4v18., where Jesus states that He has come to set free those who are held captive by Satan at spear point. In 2Cor.10v5., we see the fortresses which Satan imprisons mankind with, being torn down, and his lies being brought captive to Jesus by the truth and spiritual gifts that God gives to His Church. In 2Cor.10v5., "captivity," is "aichmalotizontes," the present **active** participle of "aichmalotizo," 163, from "aichmalotos," 164, a captive in war. We must not be passive when Satan attacks us, **but must actively and steadfastly resist him, and take captive Satan's lies and attacks upon our mind, and bring them at spear point "to the obedience of Christ."** In 1Pet.1v5. Peter states, we "are guarded by God's power," "are guarded," is phrouroumenous" the present (continuous process) passive participle of "phroureo" 5432, to garrison, from "phrouros," sentinel, it is a military term. 2Cor.11v32. In Phil.4v7 it is used of God's love. God can inform us of, and delivers us from, Satan's underhand plots, trickery, and schemes. 2Cor.2v11.

We read in **James.4v7.**, "Be subject therefore unto God; and resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Be subject," is "hupotagete," the aorist passive imperative of "hupotasso," 5293, a military term meaning, to set in array under. **We can always victoriously resist Satan, and make him flee from us, when we draw near to God, and submit, humble and range ourselves under Him.** In 1Pet.5v5., Peter uses "hupotagete," to tell young Christians to be subject to the elder, "presbuterois" 4245). "Resist," in James.4v7., and "withstand" in 1Pet.5v9., are both "antistete," the aorist active imperative of "anthistemi" 436, "to take a stand against." We are to imitate Jesus and steadfastly resist and take a stand against Satan in our daily lives, and do our utmost to set people free from sickness and Satan's oppression. Acts.10v38. 2Tim.1v6-8. Satan roams about like a roaring lion seeking to devour and destroy us, but when we cast all our care on God, and resist the Devil, he flees from us. Mary's son James, grew up with Jesus at Nazareth, but he did not feel that it was right to say Jesus was his brother, he said Jesus was, "the Lord Jesus Christ." Mk.6v1-6. James 1v1. Jude, the brother of James, clearly felt the same. Jude.v1. The recollection of Christ's beautiful life at Nazareth filled James with awe. Jesus was his perfect holy Lord, who amid great rejection and opposition, had completely controlled His tongue, and lived a life of perfect "agape" love at Nazareth. James.3v2. When, after his initial unbelief, James trusted in Jesus, his memories of the holy life and active faith of Jesus at Nazareth, filled James with awe, and birthed in him a prayerful holy life, and a positive active faith in Jesus. Mk.3v21. Jn.7v5. 1Cor.15v7. Jn.6v50-58. This is demonstrated by the imperatives that James uses. **Robertson** writes, "Note the ten aorist imperatives in James.4v7-10., "hupotagete" 5293; "antistete. 436; "engisate," 1448; "katharisate" 2511; "hagnisate" 48; "talaiporesate" 5003; "penthesate" 3996;; "klausate" 2799; "metatrapeto" 5726; "tapeinothete" 5013."

c. We have to resist the unlawful demands of the flesh and not allow them to bring us into captivity.

In Rom.7v23., Paul tells us how the flesh had brought him into captivity before he met Jesus. "But I see a different law at work in my body, **warring against** " ["antistrateuomenon," 497, to carry on a campaign against] the law which my mind ("noos" 3563) approves of, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is at work in my body." "Bringing me into captivity," is "aichmalotizonta" 163, the present active participle of "aichmalotizo," literally, "making me prisoner of war." It is the very verb that Jesus used in Lk.21v24., to describe of the final ruin, dispersion, and captivity of the Jews. In Rom.7v14,23., Paul said that his "inward self" acknowledged that God's Law was holy, righteous, spiritual ("pneumatikos" 4152), and good, (1Tim.1v8.) but confessed, that he was "carnal ("sarkinos" 4560), and sold under sin," and in captivity to the demands of the body. "Sold," is "pepramenos," the perfect passive participle of "piprasko," 4097, the perfect shows a state of completion and ownership by sin. In Rom.7v7-25., Paul is considering his experience and all human kind before Jesus saves and delivers us. Paul is certainly not saying that the body is sinful in itself, he is stating that the desires of the body are a battlefield, where the conflict between sinful base desire, and a righteous godly mind are fought out. Paul confesses, that before he met Jesus, he had, like everyone else, become a prisoner to the law of sin which was at work in his body. Some say that this was Paul's experience

after he became a Christian. This teaching is totally untrue and erroneous. Paul states that Jesus is the perfect deliverer and complete answer to his heart rendering cry for help, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" In Rom.7v24,25., Paul rejoices that Jesus delivers him this wretched captivity to the sinful demands of the body.

In Rom.7v7-23., Paul describes someone who is dominated by the flesh, and who is the captive of Satan and the slave of sin. Who, in their right mind, can apply this appalling iniquity to the holy soul of the apostle Paul? This totally contradicts Paul's statement in Rom.8v2., "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made free from the law of sin and death." The forgiveness and grace of God in Jesus, and God's law of the Spirit and life in Jesus, totally eradicates guilt, and breaks the power of cancelled sin. God removes the pollution of sin from our souls, and writes His laws in our minds and hearts. Heb.8v10. Jesus came not only to forgive us our sins, but to save us from them. Mt.1v21-23. It is ridiculous to suggest that Paul could say that he was "carnal, sold under sin, and brought into captivity to the law of sin and death"; and then, rejoices, a few verses later, that, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." In Rom. 7 Paul speaks about his, and everyone's experience of the domination and captivity of sin before Jesus saved them., whereas, in Rom.8v2, Paul describes the experience of the grace, forgiveness, restoration, and victory over sin that is ours in Jesus.

Paul warns about the sexual sins of the reprobate teachers of the last days in 2Tim.3v1,5-10., who have "a form of godliness without the power." "Form" is "morphosin" 3446, (as in Rom.2v20.) the pencilled outline of truth without the inner reality, "morphe" 3446. These apostate teachers seduce and take captive ("aichmalotizontes," the present active participle of "aichmalotizo" 163), silly women, (the diminutive "gunaikaria" 1133, literally, "little women"). Paul rebuked this carnality, he was certainly not captivated by, and sold to the sins of the flesh, he had victory in Jesus.

Barnes writes about the Authorised Version "cannot do" in Gal5v17., "The expression "cannot do" is stronger by far than the original, and it is doubted whether the original will bear this interpretation. ----The Vulgate and the Syriac give a literal translation of the Greek, "So that you do not what you would." This is undoubtedly the true rendering; and, in the original, there is no declaration about the possibility or the impossibility, the ability or the inability to do these things." End of quote.

A. T. Robertson translates, "that ye cannot do," in Gal.5v17., as, "That ye may not do," hina" 2443, "me" 3361, "poiete" 4160. "poiete," the present active subjunctive of "poieo" 4160, "That ye may not keep on doing." End of quote.

Vincent also says that the "cannot do," of the A.V. in Gal.5v17. is "a mistake, growing out of the misinterpretation of "hina" 2443. Rather, each works "to the end that ye may not do," etc." End of quote.

In Gal.5v15-26., Paul warns us, that even in Christians will experience a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, but he assures us, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Gal.5v16. Paul, through "the law of the Spirit and life in Christ," had crucified the bad desires of the body, and tells us to do the same, he states "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal.5v24. Rom.8v2. **Crucifixion of the flesh is a painful necessity, and fasting as well as well as prolonged communion with God in prayer, are necessary to nail the flesh to the cross.**

In 1Cor.9v27. Paul tells us, But I discipline and buffet my body and make it my slave, ("doulagogo" 1396), lest after preaching ("kerusso" 2784) to others, I myself should be disqualified. "Rejected," is "adokimos" 96, an adjective, "dokimos" 1384, which with the negative "a," means literally, not standing the test. rejected, and so reprobate. See also Rom.1v28. 2Cor.13v5-7. 2Tim.3v8. Titus.1v16. Heb.6v8. It is from "dokimazo," 1381, a rigorous test of metals etc. and of prophecies. 1Thes.5v21. "Buffet," is "hupopiazoo," The present active indicative of "hupopiazoo" 5299, "to strike under the eye; to give one a black eye, to beat black and blue. Only here and Lk.18v5., where, "she weary me," is "hupopiazoo me" 5299, the present active subjunctive of "hupopiazoo" 5299, it appears that the judge is afraid that the widow may come and assault him, literally, "beat him under the eye." Jesus could really tell a story! The boxing gloves of Paul's day, the "cestus," were made of about five bands of ox-hide covered with metal or nails, and weighted with lead and iron. Paul was determined to discipline and master his body. Paul considers his body an antagonist with which he must wage war. Paul made the body the slave of his soul, and did not allow his soul to be the slave of the body, which is the state of all the unsaved. We too can put to death the bad desires of the body by prayer and fasting, self-denial, abstinence, and absorbing and demanding physical work.

The Law of the Spirit in Christ, can bring total deliverance from captivity to the flesh. 1Cor.13.

When the Holy Spirit directs our lives, we may not and cannot do what the flesh would desire and wish to do. This includes not only sexual sins, it also includes the whole area of all the works of the flesh mentioned in Gal.5v19-21. The fruit of the Spirit are God's perfect cure for the works of the flesh, they are very positive attributes of character, which are manifested in a very practical love for people. We read in Micah.6v8., "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" James saw the practical care of Jesus for needy people at Nazareth, and so he wrote in James.1v27., "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Is.58v6-11. The Church at Jerusalem

demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit by a remarkable unity and love, and a practical care for the widows and poor.

The Law of the Spirit in Christ, can bring glorious freedom, and total deliverance from captivity to the flesh. Rom.8v1-4,19-21. In 1Cor.6v9,10., Paul gives a list of appalling sins of the flesh and then states, in 1Cor.6v11., **"And such were some of you. But you are washed ("apelousasthe," is not the passive, but the first aorist middle indicative of "apolouo" 628), but you are sanctified ("hegiasthete" 37), but you are justified ("edikaiothete" 1344), in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."** Rev.1v5. (A.V. "lousanti" 3068, the aorist active participle of "louo.") Acts.20v28. Heb.9v14. 1Jn.1v7. No matter how depraved a person is, the blood of Christ, and the exceeding grace of God can cleanse, justify, renew, and sanctify them.

John Newton was a shameless, dissolute, immoral and depraved slave trader, whose life was so bad that even worldly people were disgusted by it. Jesus met with this shameless sinner and transformed him into a godly Christian, and beloved minister of the Church, He became a friend of John Wesley. John Newton wrote the following beautiful and outstanding hymns.

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saves a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.
2. How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, And drives away his fear. Hymn 176. Ancient and Modern.
3. Come, my soul, thy suit prepare, Jesus loves to answer prayer,
He Himself has bid thee pray, Therefore will not say thee nay. Hymn 527. Ancient and Modern.
4. Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God;
He whose word cannot be broken Formed thee for His own abode.
On the rock of ages founded, What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded, Thou may'st smile at all thy foes. Hymn 545. Ancient and Modern.
5. May the grace of Christ our Saviour, And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour, Rest upon us from above. Hymn 551. Ancient and Modern.
6. Approach my soul the mercy seat, Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet, For none can perish there. Hymn 626. Ancient and Modern.
- 7, Great shepherd of Thy people, hear, Thy presence now display;
As Thou hast given a place for prayer, so give us hearts to pray. Hymn 690. Ancient and Modern.

9. THE 144,000 CHRISTIANS, THE ANGELIC MESSENGERS, THE TWO HARVESTS. Rev.14.

In Rev.14. we see events that occur on the last day of this age. In Rev.14v1-5., we see those who have the Saviour's mark, who sharply contrast with those in Rev.13, who had Antichrist's mark. In Rev.14v6-20., three angels preach to the whole world in the hours of the great tribulation, something that has never occurred before. Two harvests follow, the gathering of the 144,000 and the harvesting of the Church for glory, and the harvesting of the wicked for destruction when Jesus returns.

Who are the 144,000?

This number is not symbolic, for God tells us when He means a great multitude. Rev.7v9. 20v8. This number of 144,000 is no more symbolic than the 7,000 who are slain in the earthquake of Rev.11v13. The 144,000 are obviously a select body, for only a few Christians have reached the standard of purity of these godly saints, for God says that even in the searching light and purity of Heaven, no fault can be found in them. "No guile or falsehood is in their mouths," they say what they mean, and no idle and deceitful words pass their lips, they are conformed to the image of Christ. Rev.21v5. 3v7. They are "first fruits," and this means first fruits in excellence rather than first fruits in time. James.1v18. Only the prime fruits and the best of the harvest was good enough to be offered to God. Since the rest of the Church is resurrected at the same time as the first fruits, it cannot mean that they are resurrected before the rest of the Christians. 1Cor.15v51-53. It can hardly refer to them being first fruits in comparison with the harvest 1,000 years later, when the rest of the dead are raised, for the whole Christian Church would be the first fruits compared with that resurrection. To take the word first fruit strictly in a time sense is quite wrong, for God is merely showing the nature of the fruit by this term. The first fruits are the best of the harvest.

The 144,000 are described as being like pure men and pure virgin women.

This does not mean that they remain unmarried, for the Scripture states that marriage is honourable and does not defile. 1Tim.4v1-3. 1Cor.7v38. 9v5. Heb.13v4. By the grace of God these Christians have attained a beautiful purity of soul and spirit, and they stand before God free from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. 2Cor.7v1. The blood of Jesus has cleansed them from all sin, and enabled them to walk in victory over sin. Lev.21v16-24. Tit.2v14. Eph.1v4. Phil.2v14-16. Jude.v24. They walk in love to God and man and no fault is found in them. They are dove-like and lamb-like in their souls, and they will rule the world with Jesus, "and

follow the Lamb wherever He goes," Rev.17v14. Lk.19v17. 1Pet.2v21,22. These Christians share the rule of the Millennial kingdom with the Old Testament overcomers of Rev.7v1-8. We see from Rev.19v7-9. and Eph.5v25-27., that many Christians besides these will also be given white garments for their righteous lives, and receive a "well done." However, Rev.14v1-5., shows us that there are only a limited number of positions available for Millennial rulers.

It states in Rev.14v1., that the 144,000 have the name of Christ's Father written in their foreheads; this is the promise given to the overcomer in Rev.3v12.. How wonderful to have the seal of God on you to signify that you have passed with first class honours, and that you will be forever in closest fellowship with Jesus and the Father. Only those who have passed the most difficult trials and temptations and proved their ability to love and care for people like Jesus, will rule with Him. It is a striking fact that God desires Christians to love one another with the same love that He loves the Church. Jn.17v23. 15v9. 13v34.

How wonderful this day will be, when Jesus comes to reign!

No adjectives are adequate to describe the glory of this occasion, the blinding glory, the tremendous thunderings of majestic harmonies, the rapturous joy of the redeemed billions of God's children, and the indescribable love, peace, harmony, and joyful expectant faith of God's kingdom. Hallelujah! May this glorious day come soon. On this wonderful day the 144,000 have a song that only they can sing. There can be no doubt that in this song, they sing of the great grace that had redeemed them, and that it was this grace that had made them victorious, and appointed them to be rulers with Christ. With all other saints they will cast their crowns before Him through whose grace alone they had managed to win the victory.

Which Mount Zion is referred to here?

The Scriptures tell us that there is a heavenly Mount Zion as well as an earthly one, which is a part of the heavenly Jerusalem. Heb.12v22-25. However, Rev.14v1., could be the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ reigning from the Jerusalem which is rebuilt at the start of the Millennium. Ps.2v6. Joel.2v32. Micah.4v7. Is.24v23. Zech.14v1-21. When Jesus returns, Antichrist's armies have devastated Jerusalem and are gathered around it like a crowd of vultures around a corpse. Mt.24v27,28. Lk.17v36,37. 21v20-27. Rev.17v16-18. 18v1 to 19v21. When the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives, the greatest earthquake the world has ever known will take place, the landscape of Israel and all the world is greatly altered, all the land is "turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon." Zech.14v5,10. Rev.6v12. 11v19. 16v18-21. This earthquake splits Jerusalem into three parts, and covers some of it with the waters of the great new river of Ezek.47v1-12. We read that the end of the old city will be with a flood. Ps.48v46. Dan.9v26. Zech.14v4,5,8-10. The new city will be built upon the new mountain that is formed to the north of the present site. Ps.48v2. The vision of Rev.14v1-5. is at the start of the Millennial kingdom, and here again we see how wonderfully God has written this book and connected one vision with another. After seeing the mark and evil rule of the Beast, we see those who have the mark of God upon them, who righteously rule the world with Jesus. The loving rule of these godly and guileless souls sharply contrasts with the rule of the often two-faced, crafty and evil politicians and rulers of this present evil world. We thank God for godly exceptions like Joseph and Daniel. "Guile," "dolos," occurs, in Mt.26v4. Mk.7v22. 14v1. Jn.1v47. Acts.13v10. Rom.1v29. 2Cor.12v16. 1Pet.2v1,22. 3v10. Rev.14v5.

The Message of the First Angel. Rev.14v6,7.

The first angel proclaims "an everlasting gospel unto them that dwell on the earth,---and he said with a great voice, 'Fear God, and give Him glory; for the hour of His judgement is come: and worship Him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'" It is not "to euaggelion aionion," "the everlasting good news," but "euaggelion aionion," "everlasting good news," or it can be translated, "gospel of the ages." An angel tells the world that the kingdom of God is about to commence with its untold ages of bliss, and the angel tells the conditions of entering into the glorious kingdom, wholehearted repentance and turning to God. The angels warns of judgement on the unrepentant and blessing for the repentant. The angel's message will truly be wonderful good news for a world that has suffered destruction, death and misery through Antichrist's evil activities. God warns that He will use the very creation He has made, to judge the wicked. Lk.21v25. However, before God judges the wicked He gives space for repentance. 2Pet.3v7-9. The longsuffering of God is absolutely wonderful, He has striven with both angels and men, for untold thousands of years, but judgement is the only possible end for the wilfully impenitent, who despise "the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering." Gen.6v3-5. Rom.2v1-11.

The Message of the Second Angel. Rev.14v8. Is.21v9. Jer.50v2. 51v8.

This angel announces that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The angel tells of God's judgement upon the impure and wicked city that had defiled every nation under heaven with its Satan and Antichrist worship. There is a tremendous rise in the study of the occult, this contact with, and worship of the powers of darkness, is an abomination to God and is expressly forbidden by Him, for it defiles and perverts the soul. Lev.19v31. 20v6,27. Deut.18v19,20. 2Kings.21v6. Exod.22v18. with 1Sam.28v6,7. and 1Chron.10v13,14. Acts.16v16-18. 19v19. Is.8v19,20. 1Cor.10v20,21. 1Tim.4v1. 1Jn.4v1-5. 2Thes.2v9-12. with Rev.12v12. 13v13,14.

The angel announces the fall of Jerusalem; and we have to decide which fall it is, for there are three falls of Jerusalem in the last few days of the great tribulation. The first fall occurs when Antichrist destroys a great part of Jerusalem a few days before the Lord returns. Rev.17v16. 18v1-4. Mt.24v28. Lk.21v20-24. The second fall

of Jerusalem occurs at the great earthquake, which occurs when the two witnesses are resurrected and caught up to Heaven. Rev.11v11-14. The third fall occurs when the feet of the Lord Jesus touch the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem is devastated by the tremendous earthquake which then occurs, and the flood that follows it. The fall that the second angel announces must then be either the first or second fall we have just mentioned, because the third angel, warns everyone against continuing to follow Antichrist on pain of eternal damnation, this warning would be pointless if the Lord Jesus had returned and destroyed Antichrist and his armies, whose destruction occurs immediately before the third fall of Jerusalem.

God states in Rev.14v13., that at this time Christians are still dying for their faith, this shows that Jesus has not returned and the resurrection and rapture of the Church have not yet taken place. Indeed, Rev.14v13., states that Christians will still face death for Christ's sake for a little while yet. The harvests of the earth follow the messages of these angels, it is after these angelic announcements that the Church is resurrected and raptured, and the wrath of the Lamb is poured out. Rev.14v10. Rev.16v19. 18v21. 19v2. This reference to the fall of Babylon gives us the approximate time when the angels give their messages. We know that this sacking of Jerusalem occurs about four days or so, before the end of the great tribulation, when the Two Witnesses are killed, up to this time Jerusalem has been the throne of the Beast. Rev.16v10. Thus we see that when the Two Witnesses are killed God continues to speak through angelic ministry.

The Message of the Third Angel. Rev. 14v9-13.

This third angel tries to turn people to the way of righteousness by arming men against the fear of the Beast by warning them of the greater fear of Hell. This angel warns that if anyone worships and follows Antichrist from this time forward, they will be doomed to eternal punishment. At this stage of events, people will see the awful desolation and destruction about them, and the dreadful wickedness of Antichrist. They will also see God as He is, and His wonderful plans, through the ministry of these mighty angels, so at this time, anyone who turns their back on God will have made up their minds in full light to sin for ever, and so are unreconcilable, and when Jesus returns, they will defiantly fight Him, and blaspheme Him to His face. Rev.16v21. 19v19. Ps.2v1-5. When people see the misery that their sin has caused and say, "I love evil, and I am still going to be evil, and I hate God and righteousness," God cannot show mercy. It would be wicked to be merciful and forgive those who are unrepentant and love evil, and have determined to sin for ever. Jn.9v41. 15v22-25.

We need to realise that there is no contradiction between the hymn-writers words, "For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind; And the heart of the eternal, is most wonderfully kind," and the words in Rev.14v10,11., where the angel states that those who continue to follow Antichrist will be confined in Hell. The angel states that the followers of Antichrist, "shall be tried ("basanizo") with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; v11. And the smoke of their trial ("basanismos") ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." In Rev.14v10., "he shall be tormented in fire," is "basanisthesetai en puri;" which Young, in his "Concise Critical Comments, says literally means he shall be "tried in fire," which shows that the thought of being tested or tried can definitely apply here.

"Basanisthesetai," is the third person singular future passive indicative of "basanizo," it is used here in Rev.14v10., of the test and examination by Christ and the holy angels of the souls of the wicked in Hell. The justice of Heaven is based on love, mercy, and righteousness, it would be impossible for people in Heaven to be happy if there was anyone in Hell who was genuinely repentant and desired and loved righteousness, so everyone has to see the unrepentant love of evil in the wicked in Hell, and so know beyond any shadow of doubt that justice has been done. Rev.14v10. 20v10. Mt.8v29. Mk.5v7. Lk.8v28.

The verb "basanizo," to test or try, from "basanos," a touchstone; is used of any severe trial that produces distress, such as the physical trial and distress caused by disease, Mt.8v6. (4v24.); or trial caused by severe persecution, as is represented by the birth pangs of the woman of Rev.12v2.; or the severe spiritual trial and mental anguish and distress that Lot experienced through living in Sodom. 2Pet.2v8. It can speak of a boat being tried or tossed by the waves. Mt.14v24. Mk.6v48. It is also used of the trials and suffering inflicted on the wicked on earth through the judgements of God. Rev.9v5. 11v10.

In Rev.14v11., the A.V. "the smoke of their torment," "torment," is the noun "basanismos" it only occurs in Rev.9v5. 14v11. 18v7,10,15.; most translators follow the A.V. and render it as "torment," however, Robert Young, in his "Concise Critical Comments," always renders it as "trial," which is its literal meaning.

The noun "basanos," literally, a touchstone, test, trial; it occurs three times in the New Testament, in Mt.4v24. it speaks of persons suffering trial through sickness, etc., but in Lk.16v23,28., it speaks of the severe trial of the wicked selfish man who was suffering confinement in Hades. In one of His parables our Lord spoke of a debtor in prison of whom everything possible was to be exacted, He said they were put in charge of the keeper of the prison, the jailor, the "basanistees," it only occurs in Mt.18v34.. Jesus is the jailor, "basanistees," of Hades and has its keys. Rev.1v18. God has His prison where He confines the wicked, the lake of fire which destroys both angelic and human bodies, and protects the rest of society from their evil ways.

God warns everybody that all who follow Antichrist and Satan, will end in the lake of fire, however, He is certainly not saying that people will be gradually roasted alive for ever. The lake of fire will destroy the body in a twinkling of an eye, and physical suffering will be out of the question. Rev.20v14,15. 21v8. Nor do Christ and His holy angels descend to the cruel levels of the Roman Inquisitors, who enjoyed putting their victims through

the most dreadful tortures in the name of God. The sufferings of the wicked in Hell are not physical, for the lake of fire has devoured the bodies of angels and men, it is the distress of mind that is the result of being confined in the lake of fire with no hope of coming out and putting their evil desires into practice. The pain in the soul of the wicked is one of their own choosing, it is the suffering which they inflict upon themselves through loving evil and hating righteousness, the torment of a mind that is devoid of the truth and is twisted and deranged by the evil that it loves. Even the prospect of isolation and confinement in the lake of fire will fail to bring the wicked to repentance, they are stubbornly determined to eternally love evil. Rev.21v8. As the Lamb and the holy angels test and scrutinise the souls of the wicked, they find no trace of repentance, or any grounds for their release, they are proved unreconcilable.

The dreadful end of the wicked is compared with the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord. The angel says they "rest from their labours," "kopon," and that "their works, "erga," do follow them" into the heavenly kingdom. The angel says that these Christians who die for their Lord are blessed. This is the second of 7 beatitudes in the book of Revelation. Rev.1v3. 14v13. 16v15. 19v9. 10v6. 22v7,14. Jesus warns us that many Christians will die for the faith through dreadful persecution, and that we will need patient endurance to win through, when Antichrist is at the height of his power and fury. Rev.6v9-11. 13v10. Mt.10v22. 24v13,44-51. 25v35-40. "Patience," is the noun "hupomone," which speaks of triumphant fortitude and courageous steadfastness rather than the long patience of "makrothumia." It is worth noting that the Greek word translated "labour," can have the meaning of trouble, vexation, pain and suffering as well as the meaning of labour and toil. Mk.14v6. Lk.11v7. 18v5. Glory and blessing awaits those who are prepared to labour and suffer for Christ.

No rest day or night.

It is important to realise that "day or night" here is in the genitive case form, the same as when Paul said in 1Thes.2v9. that worked "day and night, and in 1Thes.3v10.,that he prayed "day and night." The genitive case informs us that Paul sometimes worked both day and night, and sometimes prayed both day and night, but he did neither continuously without a break. Paul's instruction in 1Tim.5v5. for godly widows to pray "day and night," is also in the genitive case. In Revelation John uses the genitival "day and night," to describe the Living Creatures praise of God in Rev.4v8.; the accusations of Satan of the children of God in Rev.12v10.; and the torment of Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet in Rev.20v10.. Guillebaud concludes on page 24 of "Righteous Judge," that the genitival construction of this phrase suggests there will be "no break or intermission in the sufferings of the followers of the Beast, while it continues; but in themselves they do not say that it will continue for ever." End of quote. The genitival construction also occurs in Mk.5v5. Lk.18v7. Acts.9v24. and 2Thes.3v8..

"Day and night" continual action is expressed in Greek by the accusative case, as when in Mk.4v27., Jesus says a seed springs and grows up in both day and night.; the continuous fasting and prayers of Anna in Lk.2v37.; and of Paul's continual tearful warnings to the Ephesians in Acts.20v31.; and of Paul's prayers for Timothy in 2Tim.1v3.. Some of these may be a case of hyperbole, that is, an obvious exaggeration designed to produce a vivid and compelling impression, but they vividly show the almost continuous nature of prayer and concern for others by these great Christians.

The impenitence of the wicked causes all the righteous, not only to realise that the wicked must go to Hell, but to rejoice that earth and Heaven will be freed from their evil influence forever. Rev.19v1-6. They realise that this is the only way which Heaven and earth can be free from sin and sorrow, and that if the wicked were set free, happiness would be impossible. God's prison, Gehenna, will ensure that God's kingdom will be free from sin and sorrow, God has chosen to put the wicked in Hell because life with the wicked would be a continual misery. If the wicked were put in a kingdom of their own it would be utterly destroyed in a very short space of time, and the suffering that they would cause to one another would be worse than the isolation of Hell. Thus we see that social life, or community life of any kind, becomes impossible to the wicked, it is only mutual love and faith that makes community life a blessing.

It is a terrible fact that evil can so destroy a person's character that even God cannot do anything to change it. The third angels warning proclamation in Rev.14v9-11., is among the most terrifying words in the Bible, no wonder that God says, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Phil.2v12. The reaction of the wicked before the throne of God and in Hell will reveal to all the determined impenitence of the sinner and his hatred of righteousness. There will be a fearful looking for of judgement. Heb.10v26-30. The wicked will wail over their confinement in Hell, but they will gnash their teeth in bitter anger and blaspheme God to His face. Rev.19v19. 16v9,11,21. Ps.2v1-3. Mt.8v12. 13v42,50. 22v13. 24v51. 25v30. Lk.13v28.

See the Appendix, "The Issues of Death and Judgement," for further studies on the subject of eternal punishment..

There are several other important things that we must note about Rev.14v9-11.

a. This Scripture is not speaking of the heathen who have never had the Gospel preached to them.

It is referring to people who have seen the ultimate in prophetic ministry through the Two Witnesses, and the ministry of mighty angelic beings, and have rejected the truth in spite of all of this. It is extremely unreasonable and thoughtless to say that because a person has never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel they will go to Hell forever, and will never have the opportunity of salvation, even though they are crying for

mercy and repentant when they stand before God. If this were true it would be impossible for anyone in Heaven to be happy, for they would realise that there were millions in Hell who had no need to be there. The only thing that will make Hell bearable is that all God's people know that it is absolutely unavoidable and that all those who are confined in Hell are determinedly unrepentant and totally evil, malicious, pernicious and injurious in their intentions. For God to put people into Hell who are repentant, would be equally as diabolical as the murder of millions of innocent people by Hitler and Stalin. Our God of love cannot, and will not do this. See Rev.20 and Appendix.

b. It is speaking of people who are irrevocably hardened after full light.

When people wilfully continue in sin after God has confirmed His truth by mighty miracles, their hearts can become so hardened that it is impossible for them to repent. Jer.13v23. 17v1. Heb.6v4-6. 10v26-31. 3v6-19. Antichrist and his followers, like Satan and the powers of darkness, come within the category of the irrevocably hardened unrepentant unreconcilables.

c. Someone may ask, "Why does God not immediately annihilate the wicked at death?"

One answer could be that if the wicked were annihilated at death many who will be saved would say, "Let us drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." There could be many in Heaven because of the fear of Hell, who, if they had thought that only instant annihilation lay at the end of a wicked life, would not have tried to fight the fight of faith and love. Nowhere in the Bible is annihilation of the soul at death taught; the False Prophet and the Beast are still in the lake of fire 1,000 years after they are put there. Rev.19v3,20. 20v10. 21v8. The words, "for ever and ever," literally, "unto the ages of the ages," which speak of God's judgement of the wicked in Rev.14v11. 19v3. 20v10., are the translation of the same Greek phrase that describes the life, glory, sovereignty, and worship God and Jesus. Rev.1v6,18. 4v9,10. 5v13. 7v12. 10v6. 11v15. Ps.45v6. with Heb.1v8. It is used in the epistles to ascribe glory, honour, praise and dominion to God. Gal.1v5. Phil.4v20. 1Tim.1v17. 2Tim.4v8. Heb.13v21. 1Pet.4v11. 5v11. In these contexts it cannot mean anything other than unlimited duration.

N.B. There cannot be much doubt that Hell endures as long as the throne of God. However, there has been considerable theological controversy between the Western Traditional view point, that God will sustain the soul of the wicked for ever in Hell, and the Conditional Immortality viewpoint that God will after a period of time allow those in Hell to cease to exist. Both viewpoints have been believed by good and godly Christians. See my study, "The Issues of Death and Judgement."

The First Reaper, Christ. Rev.14v14-16.

In Rev.14v14-20., under the emblems of an harvest and a vintage, we are shown two aspects of the coming of Christ, the saints are resurrected and raptured, and the wicked are destroyed. Some have felt that the first reaper on the cloud cannot be Christ because he is told to reap by an angel coming out of the heavenly temple, they feel that Christ should not need an angel to tell Him of the Father's will. When Christ was on earth He was addressed by a voice from heaven, and He said that this was not for His sake, but for His disciples sakes. Jn.11v42. 12v27-30. Is not this command of the angels for our sake, and the sake of the angels, or even in this symbolic picture for the sake of added instruction and information? It tells us that there is the exact right moment for the harvest of the earth to be reaped, and that as soon as the right moment arrives the harvest will be reaped. God's reaping is based on perfect wisdom.

There is much in this picture that confirms that Christ is the reaper. Christ is spoken of as being on a cloud and having on His head a crown of Gold, the king is coming back to claim His kingdom and reign, He is coming in the clouds of heaven as promised. Mt.24v30. 26v64. Rev.1v7. Dan.7v13,14. Acts.1v9-11. These clouds could be clouds of heavenly glory. Ex.13v21,22. 1Kings.8v10. Ezek.9v3. 10v4,18,19. 11v23. 1v4. Jesus is given the crown because of His selfless devotion to His creation. Phil.2v5-11. Rev.3v21. The phrase "a son of man" is used in Rev.1v13., to speak of the exalted Christ, and it obviously refers to Him in Rev.14v14..

Christ Jesus is the reaper in the sense that He sends forth the angels to reap the harvest. Mt.13v40,41,49,50. 24v30,31. Christ is waiting the command of the Father to reap, but when it is given, He will divide the light from the darkness, and the silver, gold and precious stones from the wood, hay and stubble. Heb.4v12,13. Rev.2v12. Mal.3v1-4. 1Cor.3v11-15. The Lord Jesus will gather His saints from the world.

The Second Reaper, an Angel. Rev.14v17-20.

This is dealing with the wrath of God on the wicked, and it is described as the wrath of the Lamb elsewhere. Rev.6v16,17. The angels not only gather the saints, they are also the means by which Jesus judges the wicked. Mt.13v30,39,40,41,49,50. Rev.19v11-21. The angel with the sickle is probably in charge of the angels that destroy the wicked, even as the archangel Michael will lead the angels against Satan and his angels and cast them out of the heavenlies. Rev.12v7-9.

We read in Rev.14v18., that "another angel came out from the altar," and that this angel has "power," "exousian," "over fire." We know that Jesus will burn up the wicked with unquenchable fire, and will with flaming fire take vengeance ("ekdikesis") on them that do not know not God, and that do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lk.3v17,18. 2Thes.1v7-9. This is the great winepress of the wrath of God. Rev.14v19. 19v15. Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Those who fight Jesus when He returns need no trial, they are destroyed, the others who are wicked but do not fight Christ at His coming are executed after trial. Mt.13v41-43, 47-50.

25v31-46. The wrath of God is as real as His love, and springs from His love. The only way that God can establish a happy kingdom is by executing the wicked, if the wicked were allowed to live in God's kingdom, happiness would be impossible. Joel.3v11-17. Ps.75v8. Is.51v17-23. Jer.25v15-29. 49v12,13.

John Wesley writes that when a person spoke of "the city," Rev.14v20., the people who John wrote to would immediately understand that this was Jerusalem. This is the same city as "the city, the great one," referred to in Rev.11v8. and 14v8.; under the evil rule of Antichrist, Jerusalem will be spiritually as unclean and evil as ancient Babylon.

N.B. "Blood flowed out of the winepress, as high as the horses bridles, for 200 miles around.

We read in Joel.3v12. and Rev.16v16., that the major slaughter of the armies of Antichrist will take place at Armageddon, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, but in Rev.14v20., we see that God destroys the armies of Antichrist all over Palestine. There is tremendous bloodshed on the day of the Lord, when Christ destroys the armies of Antichrist that attempt to kill Him. In Rev.14v20., we read that human blood and probably bodies is said to reach to the horses bridles for 200 miles, this is the whole length of Palestine, where most of the armies of Antichrist will be gathered when Jesus returns. Is.13v6-13. It appears from Ezek.39v1-4., that all of the armies Antichrist in Israel are destroyed by Jesus, when He returns, and this would include the bodies of the army of 200,00,000 that comes to the aid of the Antichrist from the kings of the East, and would explain the language of Rev.14v20., of a flood of blood. Rev.9v16. 16v13-16. The judgements of God greatly depopulate the world when Jesus returns, and make man rarer than the fine gold of Ophir. Is.13v9-13. 42v13-17. We read in Is.63v1-6., that when Jesus returns His garments will be stained with the blood of the evil people who have killed the children of God.

This slaughter of the wicked at Christ's coming is not to be confused with the great battle which occurs a few days before, when Antichrist defeats the armies of the West in the Middle East, this occurs at about the same time that the Two Witnesses are killed. The number of dead bodies in Israel is so great that it takes seven months to bury the last of the dead after Christ's return. Ezek.39v11-16. God could instantly remove all these bodies, if He so desired, but He allows men to bury them, in order to bring home to all the surviving inhabitants of the world, the folly and end of evil, and the righteousness, justice and power of God. This will produce a healthy fear of sin and God, and will demonstrate the truth of Is.26v9., "when Thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

The judgements of God on the wicked at our Lord's second coming will bring to pass the prophetic promises of Dan.9v24.; God has, "determined --- to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Jesus made atonement for sin at His first coming through His sacrificial love, He will establish world-wide righteousness at His second coming through stern justice. God's judgement on Ananias and Sapphira had a beneficial effect on the Church at Jerusalem, and made them walk in the fear of God, and even those who were outside the Church were greatly influenced by this divine judgement. Acts.5v1-13. The memory of the awesome judgements of God on the day of the Lord, and the certainty of a rod of iron falling on the head of those who try to practice evil in the Millennium, will ensure the tranquillity, peace and happiness of the Millennium. Ps.2v1-12. N.B. v12. Rev.19v15. See. Rev.2v26,27. 12v5.

10. THE SEVEN VIALS OF GOD'S WRATH. Rev.15 and 16.

a. The sign of the Vials is a special wonder.

In Rev.15v1., John records that he saw another great sign, "seemion," a sign, wonder, token, it is used 7 times in Revelation. Rev.12v1,3. 13v13,14. 15v1. 16v14. 19v20. This sign was very striking for John describes it as, "great and marvellous," "mega kai thaumaston," and John does not describe any other wonder with both of these adjectives. "Thaumaston," is something amazing that causes wonder, it is a verbal adjective derived from "thamazo," to wonder. God reveals to John the seven angels with the seven last plagues, "plege." "Plege" originally denoted a blow, stroke, stripe or wound, but it came to be used of calamities and misfortunes in general; it occurs 14 times in Revelation out of the 20 times that it occurs in the New Testament. Lk.10v30. 12v48. Acts.16v23,33. 2Cor.6v5. 11v23. Rev.9v20. 11v6. 13v3,12,14. 15v1,6,8. 16v9,21. 18v4,8. 21v9. 22v18. The seven plagues are described as, "the last," they finish, complete, and bring to a conclusion the active judgements of God in the great tribulation; "finished," is "etelesthe," the aorist passive indicative of "teleo," to bring to a conclusion, to complete.

b. The vision of the murdered martyrs who had been victorious over Antichrist.

John saw the Christians who had "come victorious (the present active participle of "nikao," to gain a victory, to be victor, to overcome), out of the conflict with the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," standing on the glassy sea and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They were rejoicing at the power and grace of God that had given them the victory. The song of the Lamb could be the song of redeeming grace mentioned in Rev.5v9-12., and the song of Moses is probably the song which Moses and the Israelites sang in Exod.15v1-21., which Miriam took up and sang with the women of Israel, of the glorious triumph of the Israelites over Pharaoh. These Christians had chosen death rather than deny Christ and serve and follow Antichrist, they had not been preserved in body from Antichrist's wrath, but they had been victorious and preserved in soul from the defiling and damning influence of the Beast. The "good report" and victory of faith of those who are faithful to death, is every bit as great as the victory of the woman of Rev.12.,

who is delivered by God's Almighty power. See Heb.11v32-40. Dying for the faith is usually much more trying on our faith, than believing God for deliverance. In the early Church the day when Christians were martyred, it was often called the day of their victory. Christian victory does not consist in avoiding trouble, but, if necessary, being willing to be faithful even unto death. Rev.7v9-17.

c. The saints attribute their victory to God's amazing dedicated grace and love.

These victorious saints sing a song of exultant praise before God and give Him the glory for their victory. The world had wondered at the beast, but these saints are lost in wonder, love and praise at the "great and marvellous works" of the "Lord God Almighty." Rev.4v8. Amos.4v13. They rejoice that God's ways are "just and true," "dikaiai kai alethinai," and in Rev.16v7., and a voice out of the altar states that the judgements of God are "true and righteous," "alethinai kai dikaiai." Rev.6v9.-11. Deut.32v4. They realise that all creation should fear and worship Him, and that His perfect justice will judge the wickedness of the nations, and all the world will come and bow down before Him and worship Him.

These saints acknowledge that only God is truly holy, "for Thou only are holy." The Greek word for holy is "hosios" and it occurs in the New Testament in Acts.2v27. 13v34,35. 1Tim.2v8. Titus.1v8. Heb.7v26. Rev.15v4. 16v5., and it conveys the idea of perfect purity, it is used differently than "hagios," which has the fundamental meaning of separated and devoted. "Hagios" is used to speak of the Holy Spirit, the holy angels, the holy city, holy prophets, the holy child Jesus, and saints. The Greek word "hagnos" which is from the same root as "hagios," is often used to speak of physical purity in the New Testament. 2Cor.7v11. 11v2. Phil.4v8. 1Tim.5v22. Titus.2v5. James.3v17. 1Pet.3v2. 1Jn.3v3. The Greek word "hieros," which has the meaning of sacred, only occurs in 1Cor.9v13. and 2Tim.3v15.. God is pure and completely dedicated to us, let us be pure and completely dedicated to Him. 1Pet.1v15,16. God is just, holy and true in His character, ways and judgements, and all of Heaven acknowledges this, and worships Him for it. Rev.3v7. 6v10. 15v3. 16v7. 19v2,11.

d. God's "strange act" of judgement becomes a fact because of men's wickedness. Is.28v21.

John tells us that, "The Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power." A majestic and awe-inspiring sight. The glory of God was openly manifested in the Tabernacle and the Temple, and many of the prophets had personal visions of the glory of God. This glory usually protected the people of God, but, as in the case of the sons of Korah, it could also be manifested in judgement. Exod.14v18-20. 33v9-11. 40v34-38. Lev.10v1,2. Numb.3v1-14. 16v19. 1King.8v10,11. Is.6v1-6. Ezek.1v4,26-28. 10v1-5,15-19. 44v1-4. We read in Rev.15v8., that no one can enter into the Temple in Heaven until the plagues are finished, which shows that they cannot be stopped. The wicked could individually escape these plagues by repentance, but we read that they do not repent, but blaspheme God to His face. Rev.16v9,11,21.

God is the just judge of the whole earth and of all nations, and He is always righteous in His judgements, and here, as in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, His righteous judgements fall on the people of the nations that follow Antichrist. Gen.18v25. God is stated to be, "The King of the nations," in Rev.15v3., in Mabcede, A, Hodges and Farstad, and the Critical Texts. See Jer.10v7. 1Tim.1v17. God is the King before whom even the wicked of every nation will be forced to bow the knee, and confess that He is Lord, even when they refuse to repent of their sins. Is.45v21-25. Rom.14v10-12. Phil.2v5-11.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE VIALS. Rev.16.

The Greek word for Vial, "phiale," means a broad, flat saucer or bowl, which is broader at the top than at the bottom. Several things show that these 7 plagues are poured out during a period of weeks or months at the end of the great tribulation.

a. These seven plagues are said to be the seven last plagues.

These do not appear to be the plagues that the two witnesses have power to inflict, for these seven plagues are determined in number and time by God, whereas the plagues of the two witnesses occur as often as they desire. The fact that these plagues are spoken of as the last plagues shows that there have been others before them. These seven last plagues are far more widespread and severe than the plagues of the two witnesses, they are God's direct judgements on the wicked.

b. These seven plagues only cover a short period of time at the end of the great tribulation.

This is proved by the fact that during the pouring out of these plagues, no one is able to enter into the Temple, "naos," in Heaven, and it is still open well toward the end of the great tribulation; it is certainly not closed throughout the great tribulation. This is the real Temple of which the earthly Tabernacle and Temple was a shadow, and from which judgement also came, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu. Lev.9v24. 10v1,2. During these plagues God will again issue forth out of the sanctuary in judgements, which get more and more severe. However, we know that during this period, whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts.2v17-21.

c. The large number of martyrs in Heaven proves it is towards the end of the great tribulation.

In Rev.6v9-11., well into the great tribulation, the martyred saints ask God to avenge their blood, and cry for judgement on their evil murderers. In Rev.15v2-4., the martyred saints state that the time for God's vials of judgement on those who kill His saints has come. God's final execution of the wicked occurs at the 7th Vial, and 7th trumpet, on the last day. Rev.16v5,6.

d. The movement of the armies mentioned in the sixth Vial will take a few weeks.

The sixth vial shows us that the vials must be poured out at least several weeks before the great tribulation ends, the troops mentioned here may already be marshalled and near Euphrates at this time. In Rev.9v13-21., the Euphrates is also mentioned, and the army is said to number 200,000,000, and its murderous activities are said to last for 13 months. From these facts we can ascertain that the Vials are poured out during the last weeks or months of the great tribulation. These seven plagues will be the most severe and widespread plagues that man has ever known, but even these greatest of God's plagues fail to bring the vast majority of the wicked to repentance. Rev.16v9,11,21. Beyond doubt these vials are to be taken literally, many of them are like the judgements that came upon Egypt, and what God has done before to one nation, He can do in a greater measure to many nations. The five plagues of Egypt and the first four trumpet judgements did not directly affect man, but here evil men are directly and severely attacked from the first Vial.

The First Vial. Rev.16v2.

The mark of the Beast will be a visible mark in the forehead, like some Indian religions have on their foreheads. This first Vial is poured out upon, those who follow and serve Antichrist. They had followed Antichrist to escape his wrath, now they experience the seven great plagues in which the wrath of God reaches its climax. The "noisome and grievous sore," "helkos kakon kai poneron," is looked upon by the translators as a severe and painful malignant ulcer or sore. This seems to be even more severe than the sixth Egyptian plague of boils, but the followers of Antichrist do not repent. Exod.9v8-12. The curse spoken of in Deut.28v27,35., comes upon the followers of Antichrist.

The Second Vial. Rev.16v3.

The sea is "turned into a fluid like the blood of a corpse," Phillips, that is, an evil smelling, putrid, and contaminated fluid. This cannot mean that all the seas of the world were affected in this way, otherwise all life would cease in the world in a matter of days. It is probably speaking of a sea that would affect Antichrist and his followers, like the sea of Galilee, or Red sea, it kills all the living things in the sea. It cannot be the Dead sea, which as its name suggests, already has no life in it..

The Third Vial. Rev.16v4-7.

At the fourth Vial the rivers and fountains of waters are turned to blood, like the sea in the second Vial. So in these two Vials we have an effect similar to the first Egyptian plague. Exod.7v17-25. This deprives Antichrist and his armies of food in the form of fish, and causes a severe shortage of drinking water. We are not told if this water is poisonous, as the bitter water was under the third trumpet. The Egyptians either had to drink blood or suffer extreme thirst, and the followers of Antichrist will be in a similar difficult situation, they will have to transport water for a considerable distance if they desire to drink.

Two angels proclaim that God is righteous in His judgements, and that the wicked deserve the plagues they are receiving because of their evil treatment and murder of God's children. All the inhabitants of God's kingdom are totally satisfied that God's judgements are just., this is one of the great themes of Revelation. Rev.4v11. 5v12,13,14. 6v10. 7v9,10. 11v17. 15v2-4. 19v1-6. Judgement and anger is God's "strange act ," Is.28v21., and foreign to the beautiful, kind and indescribably lovely character of the God of love, but His judgements are just, necessary, and unavoidable, and spring out of His great love for His creation.

The Fourth Vial. Rev.16v8,9.

Antichrist's followers are blistered and burnt with great heat from the sun, literally, "scorched a great scorching," a previously unknown plague. These first three plagues fail to bring them to repentance, they blaspheme God to His face, they are irrevocably hardened and unreconcilable, even God cannot bring them to repentance; their attitude to God will be exactly the same on judgement day. Men's hatred of God is very real, continual sin brings a person to the place where they can't repent. These evil people could escape these plagues by repentance, for Rev.16v9., tells us that God has power over these plagues, they only fall on the wicked, the people of God are safe from them. The faithful Israelites were safe from the wrath of God on the wicked in Egypt, the wilderness and Canaan. Rev.9v4. 11v3-6. Numb.11v1-3,33,34. 16v1-3,28-35,49. Ezek.9v3-6.

The Fifth Vial. Rev.16v10,11.

A darkness falls on the throne of the Beast, like that which covered Egypt in the ninth Egyptian plague. Ex.10v21-29. Antichrist's false claim that he is God, is destroyed step by step, he cannot protect his followers, and the centre of his administration, which seems to be the Temple at Jerusalem, is in darkness. The effects of the first and fourth Vial are still in operation according to Rev.16v10.. We have the picture of the wicked sitting in darkness gnawing their tongues for pain; they know these plagues are from God, but instead of using their tongues to cry for mercy, they use them to blaspheme God to His face. They are irrevocably hardened in sin and rebellion against God.

The Sixth Vial. Rev.16v12-16.**a. The drying up of the river Euphrates for the armies of the kings of the East.**

The drying up of the river Euphrates allows the armies of Antichrist to be gathered from the East to Armageddon for destruction at the great last day. Antichrist gathers His armies in order to win the battle with the nations who oppose him. It seems that God dries up the Euphrates to make it easier for these armies to be

gathered to Armageddon for destruction. In Rev.9v13-21., we see that the sixth Trumpet is also linked with the river Euphrates, and the movement of a vast army of 200 million, but the sixth Trumpet starts 13 months before the end of the great tribulation, and this is many months earlier than any of the Vials, never mind the sixth Vial. It is obvious, therefore, that this army has spent much of those 13 months subduing the armies and nations in its path, and that it does not arrive in Palestine until around the sixth vial. Is.11v15,16. 10v20-22. Satan persuades these armies to come to fight for Antichrist by means of three false prophets, who do mighty signs and lying wonders through the power of three unclean spirits. Rev.16v13,14. 2Thes.2v7-12. The Two Witnesses do wonders that lead people to the true and living God, Satan does lying wonders to deceive and destroy mankind. There is no time in Church history when God's wonders are more needed than today, and in the final days of this age.

b. Here, almost at the end of the great tribulation, our Lord warns Christians to be watchful.

The argument that the Church is already raptured by this time, is refuted by Rev.16v15., which tells us that even as late as this, at the very end of the great tribulation, the Church is still on earth, and still waiting for the coming of Christ. Jesus warns that he will come as a thief, and tells us to watch and be prepared, this warning would be pointless and incorrect if He had already returned. In 1Thes.5v2-4., Paul tells us that though the day of the Lord will come upon the world as a thief, we are not in darkness that it will overtake us as a thief. It will only come upon the backslidden Christian, and the sinner as a thief, the world will not be expecting His return. Some think that this keeping of garments is a reference to the inspection of the temple guard by the captain of the guard, anyone who was found asleep on duty was beaten, or had their garments set on fire. The coming as a thief, certainly does not refer to a secret rapture, for Peter tells us that when the Lord comes, "as a thief," the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and its works will be burnt up, this is certainly not a secret rapture. 2Pet.3v10. Lk.12v39. For "garments," see Rom.13v11-14. 1Cor.3v15. 2Cor.7v1. Eph.4v20-24. 6v10-20. Col.3v8-14. James.1v27. 1Pet.1v13. 1Jn.2v28. Jude.v23. Rev.3v3-5. 7v14. 19v7,8.

c. Armageddon. Rev.16v16.

"Armageddon," is derived from "Har," "valley," and means the valley of Megiddo." There have been many battles upon the plain of Esdraelon before Megiddo, and probably all the conquerors of Palestine have fought on this plain. Josh.12v21. Judges.4 to 8. 1Sam.31. 2Chron.35v20-27. Zech.12v11. Joel.3v2. When Jesus lived at Nazareth He was only a few miles from this plain, how He must have meditated as He looked upon this plain, and thought of the things that had happened in the past and would happen in the future. This is where Deborah gained a decisive victory over Sisera. Judges.5v19. Antichrist's armies defeat the armies of the West in a great battle at Armageddon a few days before our Lord's return. Armageddon is also the place where Antichrist's armies are destroyed by Jesus at His return. Ezek.39v2-4,11-16. Rev.16v14-16. 19v17-21.

The Seventh Vial. Rev.16v17-21.

a. This vial occurs at the same time as the sixth and seventh seal and the seventh trumpet.

All these occur on the last day, the great day of God's wrath, and they all stress judgement, for it is the day of vengeance of our God. Is.61v2. In the seventh Vial some of the details of the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet are expanded, and there are several new pieces of information. The words "It is done," can be translated, "It is all accomplished," which is the same thought as the words of the angel of Rev.10v6,7., that at the seventh Trumpet, "there will be no more delay," the kingdom of God has been set up, and the prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus, and the establishing of His kingdom are fulfilled. We read again of "voices," Rev.11v19.4v5. 10v3,4.; and "thunders," Rev.4v5. 8v5. 11v19. 14v2. 7v10. 19v6.; and "lightnings." Rev.4v5. 8v5. 11v19. There must be great storms and tremendous winds to keep hailstones in the air which are a talent in weight, i.e. from 45 to 130 pounds in weight, it is no wonder that God says that this plague is exceeding great. Rev.11v19.

b. There is mention again of the greatest earthquake that the world has ever known. Rev.16v18-20.

This earthquake shakes and moves every mountain and island in the world, and greatly changes world geography; it is mentioned several times in Revelation and elsewhere. Rev.6v12-14. 11v19. Zech.14v4,5. Is.24v17-21. Haggai.2v6,7. This earthquake occurs when the feet of the Lord Jesus touch the Mount of Olives, and the city of Jerusalem is divided into three parts, this is the final fall of Jerusalem, which spiritually is as evil as ancient Babylon, under Antichrist. Zech.14v4. Rev.16v19. This last great earthquake divides the city up and buries the old city beneath the waters of the new river that flows both to the former and hinder sea. Dan.9v26. "The end is determined by a flood." Zech.14v8,9. Ezek.47v1-12. The new city is built upon the new mountain that is north of the site of the present city. Ps.48v1-3.

Carnal reasoning would say that the judgements of the Vials would make the wicked cry for mercy, but only a remnant do, the vast majority turn and revile God to His face. They are fearful, but are certainly not repentant. Rev.6v14-17. James.2v19. Mt.8v28,29. 27v3-5. 28v1-4,11-15. Acts.24v24-26. The case of Judas reveals to us that remorse is quite a different thing from repentance. The Scriptures also reveal the dreadful truth, that obdurate sinners, like Felix, who trembled in fear as Paul preached to him; can be greatly convicted about their sins, and fully realise the fact and truth about the judgement of God, and yet in spite of this, they refuse to repent. These defiant sinners harden their hearts against God, even though they know that they are going to be judged by the living God, for their evil and selfish lives, and experience His justice and righteous anger. Heb.10v30,31. 1Pet.4v18.

11.THE DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM AS A SCARLET WOMAN. Rev.17v1-19v4.**1. Jerusalem is portrayed as a harlot woman sitting upon the Beast. Is.1v21.**

One of the seven angels who had one of the Vials, introduces John to this evil Scarlet Woman; later in Rev.21v9. one of these seven angels introduces John to the New Jerusalem, where the Lamb's bride will live. We have shown in our introduction, that this Scarlet Woman is the city of Jerusalem, and that she has the name of Babylon given to her to show her spiritual condition, even as she had the names of Sodom and Egypt given to her in Rev.11v8., to show other aspects of her wickedness. The seven heads of the Beast are seven nations, or kingdoms, that have conquered and ruled over Jerusalem. We know from Rev.17v10., that in John's time, the sixth head, Rome, ruled over Jerusalem; the seventh kingdom, the kingdom of Antichrist, was in the distant future. The previous five kingdoms that conquered and subjugated the Jews and Jerusalem were; Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria. Though this vision of the Scarlet Woman refers to and covers the time period of these six previous kingdoms, it is particularly dealing with Jerusalem in relation to the final Antichrist.

The Scarlet Woman is said to sit upon many waters, which Rev.17v15., says are, "peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues," which are subjugated, and under the ruthless domination of the Beast with seven heads. Rev.17v3. In the last few days of the great tribulation, these nations attack Jerusalem and burn it with fire. Rev.17v16. Mt.24v28. Lk.17v37. Jesus returns and destroys these armies, and delivers the persecuted Jews and Christians from them. Zech.14v1-4. Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Ps.2v1-12. 2Thes.1v4-10. Rev.19v17-21. In the last seven years of this age the great majority of people in the nations under Antichrist's control, will serve and worship Antichrist. Antichrist's followers in the nations, which fight against Antichrist, will be a rebellious and dangerous minority, and many will forfeit their lives in terrible suicidal acts of terrorism. The spirit of lawlessness will energise these children of disobedience. Eph.2v2. Mt.24v12. 2Thes.2v7-12. Dan.8v24. Gen.6v5. 15v16.

In Mt.24v7., Jesus warns us that ethnic groups will fall upon, attack and kill each other, "nation shall rise against nation, is "ethnos epi ethnos." Ethnic conflicts have taken place down the centuries, but it is much worse today than it has ever been, millions of people are dying in ethnic conflicts. It is no wonder that Jesus warns us in Lk.21v25,26., that there will be "distress ("sunoche" 4928, anguish, only here and 2Cor.2v4.) of nations, with perplexity," and that "men's hearts will fail ("apopsucho" 674, expire, faint, leave off breathing) in them for fear," because of the terrible wars, raging storms, and other natural disasters that are coming on the world. We are now beginning to see a great increase in these natural disasters, wars and terrorist atrocities. Jesus warns us in Mt.24v8., that much worse is to follow, "but all these things are, "the beginning of sorrows." "Sorrows," is "odin" 5604, it is used to speak of travail in childbirth, but also of intolerable anguish, and the pains of death. However, Jesus tells us not to be troubled, for it proves that His return and God's kingdom is at hand. In Mt.24v7., "see that ye be not troubled," "see" is "horate," the imperative of "horao" 3708, to discern and see properly, and "troubled" is "throisthe," 2360, the present passive imperative of "throeo" 2360, to wail, to cry aloud, to scream. When the worldlings scream in terror, and their hearts fail them for fear, because of the terrible events that are taking place in the world, we are to be calm and unafraid, for these events prove that the return of Jesus is near, "even at the doors." Mt.24v33.

Paul, uses the same verb ("throisthai," the present passive infinitive of "throeo" 2360), to tell us not to cry aloud, to scream, or be terrified, or be shaken, ("saleuthenai" the aorist passive infinitive of "saleuo" 4531, a verb meaning, to agitate, to cause to totter, to shake thoroughly), by false teaching, or false prophecies, that Jesus can return at any moment, or that He has already returned. Paul refutes the idea that Christ's return is imminent, and warns us that Jesus cannot return until there has been a "falling away" ("apostasia" 646, only here and Acts.21v21.), from the faith, and Antichrist, "the man of sin ("anomos" 458), "the lawless one," "ho anomos" 459, has been manifested. (Jesus uses a similar terrible phrase, "the son of perdition," of Judas in Jn.17v12.) We are to "keep our heads" and not give way to fanatical and incorrect doctrines about our Lord's return.

The virgin daughter of Jerusalem is described as a harlot, for she has gone after many lovers, and like a harlot has led many into sin, when she should have been leading people to God. Jerusalem is called Babylon, for she has been guilty of all the sins that brought judgement upon Babylon, idolatry, sorcery, murders, thefts, and the murder of the saints of God. Jer.50 and 51. Is.13v1-22. Those who say that the Scarlet Woman cannot represent Jerusalem, because she is called a whore, and not an adulteress, ignore the fact that in Is.1v21., God said that "the faithful city" had become a harlot. Jer.2v20. 3v1,9. In Nahum.3v4., God also said that wicked Nineveh was a harlot, however, Jerusalem's sin was far worse, because they sinned against the light that God had given them. In Ezek.16v15,32,45-49,56., God calls Jerusalem the sister of Sodom to show the people's depravity and sin, a description, which is repeated in Rev.11v8..

2. The gross wickedness of the Beast and the woman is vividly displayed.**a. The woman leads the nations into sin.**

The woman's gorgeous robes cover abominable wickedness. She is clothed in costly robes, and decked with gold, precious stones and pearls, but she is still a harlot, and her golden cup is full of abominations. She is drunk with the blood of the saints, and is inspired by the Beast, who is full of blasphemy, to murder those who worship the true God. Here the city of God has become the city of Satan and Antichrist, a city full of the vilest doctrines and practices. In Jer.51v7., ancient Babylon is said to be a cup in God's hand that made the earth

drunk and mad. Jerusalem becomes the centre of the worship of Satan and Antichrist, and the murderous persecution of the Church, and like ancient Babylon, corrupts many nations with her idolatry.

b. Jerusalem again becomes the murderer of saints and prophets.

Here in Rev.18v24., we read that the blood of prophets has been shed by the harlot city Babylon, the sin that Jesus said was the sin of Jerusalem, which could well be called the slaughter house of the prophets. Mt.23v37-39. Jerusalem has in the past killed many of the Old Testament prophets, and here she is seen murdering Christians at the desire of Antichrist. Rev.13v7,12. 6v9-11. 20v4. Is.1v21. 57v8. Jer.2v20. 3v1-25. 4v30. 11v15. 13v27. Ezek.16v15,16,22,23,32.

3. The prophecy of Dan.9v24-27., and its link with the Scarlet Woman.

In Dan.9v20-27. we read that God's dealings with Jerusalem were to cover seventy times seven years, a period of 490 years. "Week," "shabuwa," literally means "seven," either days, or as here, years. These 490 years divide up in the following way.

a. 49 years from the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, to Jerusalem being built.

The following decrees were given to restore either the Temple or Jerusalem.

1) By Cyrus. In B.C. 538 to 536. Ezra.1v1-3. 5v13-17. 2Chron.36v22,23.

2) By Darius the 1st. Hystapes. Ezra.6v3-8. The Temple was rebuilt from about B.C. 520 to 516.

3) By Artaxerxes Longimanus. In his 7th. year. B.C.467. Ezra.7v7,11-26. (There are about fifty years between Ezra.6 and 7.) It appears from Ezra.9v9., that permission was given to Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem's wall and city.

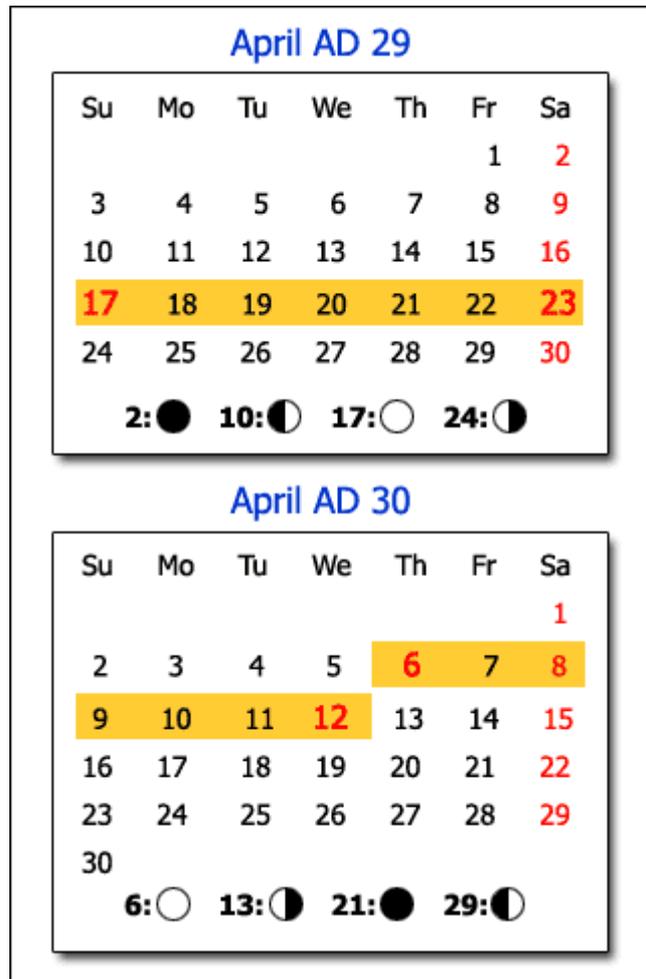
4. By Artaxerxes Longimanus. In his 20th. year. B.C. 454.

It was not until 13 years after Ezra set out for Jerusalem, that the actual rebuilding took place, when Artaxerxes Longimanus in his 20th. year, B.C. 454, commanded Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls. Neh.2v1-8. The wall itself was quickly rebuilt in 52 days, Neh.6v15., but it was doubtless made more secure over the years, for the prophecy of Dan.9v25., suggests that it took 49 years for all the rebuilding of the city and wall to be finished. Usher, after 37 years of study, dates the accession of Artaxerxes as the year 474 B.C., and the date of 454 B.C., for the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem in Neh.2v1-8..

b. 434 years from the completion of the street and wall of Jerusalem to the death of Jesus. Dan.9v24-26.

Christ was "cut off, but not for Himself," His death was "to make reconciliation for iniquity," Christ was to die to bring in the New Covenant and make salvation available for all who would receive Him. Heb.7v22-28. 9v11 to 10v39. 1Jn.2v1,2. 5v9-13. God showed Daniel that the coming of the Messiah was over 500 years away. It was this prophecy of Daniel that made godly Simeon, praying Anna, and many others expect the coming of the Messiah in their day. Lk.2v25-38.

S. P. Tregelles and Usher say that Jesus died in A.D. 29. However, the following Jewish calendars give considerable force to the viewpoint that the Lord Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30. In A.D. 30 the first day of Passover Feast was on Thursday April 6th., Nisan 15th., and the last day of the Passover Feast was on Wednesday April 12th., Nisan 21. Whereas, according to the calendar of A.D. 29, the first day of the Passover Feast was on Saturday April 17th., Nisan 15th., and the last day of the Passover Feast was on Sunday April 23rd., Nisan 21st. The crucifixion was almost certainly in A.D. 30, on Thursday, April 6th., Nisan 15th., not on Friday, for **according to Mt.12v40., Jesus was raised from the dead "after three days and three nights."** See "the third day," "after three days," etc., in Mt.16v4,21. 17v23. 20v19. 27v40,63,64. Mk.8v31. 10v34. Jn.2v19. 19v42. 1Cor.15v4. Eph.4v9,10. Jesus was raised from the dead in the night of the third day. Christ's enemies, sadly, unlike Christ's disciples, remembered well that Jesus promised that He would be raised from the dead on the third day.



So we can see that there was a quite remarkable literal fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy of Dan.9v20-27.; and in Mt.24v15-31. the Lord Jesus tells us that there will be a literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Dan.9v27., and that this will be clearly seen by all. Mt.24v32,33. Paul reminds the Thessalonian Christians of this fact in 2Thes.2v1-5.. The desecration of the holy of holies at Jerusalem by Antichrist will inform us that the second coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom is only 3½ years away. Christ said that the day and hour of His coming was only known by the Father, but He definitely tells us that we shall know the year of His coming by Daniel's prophecy, and that when the signs He gave come to pass, His coming will be "near, even at the doors." Mt.24v33,36. The Jews should have known by the prophecy of Daniel the year that Christ was to die, and as soon as the treaty is signed we shall know the year of Christ's second coming. **Oswald J. Smith** writes about this, "we shall be able to say, "Thank God the hour has struck. Within seven years at the longest Jesus will return to reign."

Jesus tells us that when Antichrist breaks the treaty with the Jews, all Christians in Judea are to flee to the mountains for safety, just as they did in A.D.70., when this prophecy received a partial fulfilment. The Scriptures call the period of 3½ years after the desecration of the Temple "the great tribulation." Daniel, Paul and our Lord state that immediately after this period of great tribulation the Lord will return and set up His kingdom. Rev.7v14. Dan.12v1. Mt.24v21,29-31. Mk.13v19. The great tribulation ends with the destruction of the armies of Antichrist around a devastated Jerusalem. Lk.17v37. Rev.17v16-18. 18v1 to 19v21. 2Thes.2v8.

Jesus said that the overall picture of the conditions in the world just prior to His coming will be as bad as they were in the days of Noah and Lot. Lk.17v26-31. The expulsion of evil angels from the heavenly places into the earth results in a great increase in wickedness, and a wilful ignorance of the promised judgement of God. Gen.6v1-13. 1Pet.3v19,20. Rev.12v7-12. The wicked despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is trying to lead them to repentance and salvation. Rom.2v1-4,9. 2Pet.3v3-9. Jude.v14-16. Many signs are now being fulfilled, they are a great warning to the Church that it is time to put on the armour of God, for no lukewarm Christian will stand in this evil day.

c. The final period of seven years which brings in the end of the age.

Jesus referred to the final seven years of Daniel's prophecy concerning "thy people," the Jews, and "thy holy city," Jerusalem, as the period that would precede His return, and God's kingdom being set up on earth. Immediately after these seven years Jesus will return and "bring in everlasting righteousness and seal up the vision and prophecy." When we consider this verse in connection with Rev.10v7,11. and 11v15,18., we see that the seventh trumpet will sound on the last day of these seven years and God will take over the rule of the earth

and destroy the wicked. Since most of Israel are blind to grace and are broken off, the Church now has the leading part in God's prophetic purposes, until the last seven years of this age, when both the Church and Israel have a part to play in prophecy. Rom.11v7-26.

Only Babylon, and the nations that have ruled over Jerusalem during these 483 years in the past, and the seven years of Antichrist's kingdom in the future, are shown as part of the Beast. Other nations, such as the Turks, are not included in the Beast, even though they have reigned over Jerusalem. We know, from Rev.17v10., that at the time of John, the sixth kingdom was ruling Jerusalem, this was Rome; the seventh kingdom, the kingdom of Antichrist, has yet to come.

N.B. The exact fulfilment of the first part of Dan.9v24-27., assures the fulfilment of the second part.

There was a remarkable fulfilment of the first part of the prophecy of Dan.9v20-27., and in Mt.24v15-33., Jesus tells us that there will be an equally striking fulfilment of the last part of this prophecy. In 2Thes.2v1-12., Paul reminds the Thessalonians that the desecration of the Sanctuary of the Temple at Jerusalem by Antichrist, will inform us that the second coming of Christ, and the Millennial kingdom, is only 3½ years away. Jesus said that no one knew the day or the hour of His coming, but He tells us that we shall know the year of His coming by Daniel's prophecy, and that when the signs that He gave us come to pass, that His coming will be "nigh, even at the door." Mt.24v32-36.

4. The significance and history of the Beast and the woman explained. Rev.17v7-15.

a. It is a divine secret which the wise have revealed to them by God.

It is a mystery, that is, one of God's hidden secrets for His children, but Rev.17v9., tells us that it needs a wise Christian inspired by the Holy Spirit to correctly interpret this Scripture. The phrase, "was, and is not, and yet is," refers to Antichrist as the seventh head of the beast. "It was," in the sense that six kingdoms had ruled in the past; "it is not," in the sense that by then six kingdoms have passed away, and "it is," in the sense that Antichrist's kingdom is reigning in the great tribulation. Until the Antichrist's kingdom comes, the Beast "was and is not"; when his kingdom comes, it is the Beast "that was, and is not, and yet is." Antichrist will start to reign as the evil Beast, after he ascends out of the Abyss. This could refer to Antichrist's resurrection from the dead, for no man can come out of the abyss unless they have previously died and gone there. This resurrection of Antichrist is implied elsewhere, Rev.13v3,12,14., and explains why Antichrist is spoken of as the seventh and eighth head, he is the seventh head before his death, and after his resurrection from the dead, he is the eighth head. Rev.17v10,11. No wonder all the world, except the elect, will wonder at the Beast. Ascending out of the abyss could also refer to the fact that death had taken away all the kings and kingdoms spoken of in the previous six heads, and that like these evil kings and kingdoms, Antichrist himself would "go into perdition." God again reveals to John the certain ultimate triumph of good over evil.

b. The ten kings and the beast.

The ten kings do not succeed each other, they rule the ten kingdoms with Antichrist's delegated authority. The Greek word for "hour" in Rev.17v12., is "hora," it is used in the New Testament to denote a part of the day, especially an hour, but it can mean any limited time or period, and so besides meaning hour or day, it can also mean season, as in 2Cor.7v8. Philemon.v15. and 1Jn,2v18.. The sense of the word here is undoubtedly "season," for the kings reign with Antichrist for several years. Rev.13v5. The word "hora," occurs in the following places in Revelation. Rev.3v3,10. 9v15. 11v13.14v7,15. 17v12. 18v10,17,19. (In Rev.8v1., "hemorion," is made up from "hora" and "hemisu," meaning half, so, "half an hour.") These ten kingdoms are obviously the same kings spoken of in Dan.7v7,8,24., it seems that Antichrist has to fight and overcome three kingdoms before he rules over them all, then all ten of them give him their power, "dunamin," and strength, "exousian." This federation of ten evil kings overcome the armies of the rest of the world, but the Lamb, and His "called, chosen, and faithful" followers, destroy Antichrist, for no one can prevail against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

c. God's amazing overriding providence, foreknowledge and pre-creation love for His children. Rev.17v8.

Here in this gallery of sin and horror, God gives us a glimpse back to the time when only God was, and God was thinking over His creation, and seeing by His foreknowledge the people who would be saved and make His creation worthwhile. Before creation, God wrote down in the book of life, the names of those who He knew would one day enjoy the blessings of His great and loving heart. God knew that Jesus would have to suffer and die, and that dark and evil times, like the reign of the Beast, would come and plunge the world into darkness and evil, but these redeemed saints would make all the suffering worthwhile. Some, quite wrongly, think that those who are written in this book, are dominated by the irresistible will of God and cannot be lost in spite of what they do; the truth is that they have free wills, and are written in this book by God's amazing foreknowledge, He knows who will accept the Gospel, and who will reject it. We greatly rejoice that God blotted out our sins and wrote our names in Heaven, when we repented and accepted Jesus. Lk.10v20. Ps.51v1,9. Is.44V22. Acts.3v19.

We read in Exod.32v32,33.and Rev.3v5., that apostasy can result in a person's name being blotted out of the book of life. God does not force people against their wills, either to be saved, or to be lost; angels and men themselves decide their choice of Heaven and Hell, by their choice of good and evil. Rom.8v28,29,30. 1Pet.1v2. Rev.22v17. 2Pet.3v9. God desires to save all, it is the wickedness of men and angels that frustrates this desire of God. Antichrist is one of the unreconcilables, who God raises to a position of power, to reveal the horror of evil, and the power of God. Rev.17v17. Rom.9v21-24.

d. "They that are with Him are called, chosen and faithful." Rev.17v14. How are we "called" and "chosen?"

1. We are called to be saved. Rom.10v12-15. Rev.22v17. 2Pet.3v9.

2. We are called to do some particular work for God here on earth. If we respond to this call and prepare for it, then God chooses us to do this work for Him, as He did with Barnabus and Paul in Acts.13v1-3.. See Jn.15v16..

3. All who are saved are called to rule with Christ in the world and kingdom which is to come.

Eph.1v18.

However, we will only be chosen to rule with Christ, if we are good and faithful servants, please note, it does not say "successful servants." Many martyrs did not succeed in winning the people that they were sent to, but they were faithful unto death.

"Chosen" in Rev.17v14., is "eklektos," it is often translated as "elect," it occurs in Mt.20v16. 22v14. 24v22,24,31. Mk.13v20,22,27. Lk.18v7. 23v35. Rom.8v33. 16v13. Col.3v12. 1Tim.1v1. 1Pet.1v2. 2v4,6,9. 2Jn.v1,13. Rev.17v14. Jesus states that it is not quantity, but quality of service that counts with Him, and that it is not length of service, but faithfulness in service that will win His "well done." Love is the key to Christ's, "Well done." Only those who love to serve and care for people will rule with Christ. Mt.20v1-28. Lk.19v17. 1Cor.13. all.

THE DESTRUCTION OF "BABYLON," AT THE END OF THE TRIBULATION. Rev.17v16-19v5.

A. THE LAST THREE MAJOR CALAMITIES AND FALLS OF JERUSALEM.

The city of Jerusalem will be the city of Antichrist during the last 3½ years of this age, and he will exercise great power from it. However during the last few days of this age Jerusalem appears to suffer three major falls and calamities.

1. When a revival brought about by the Two Witnesses is put down by Antichrist.

It seems that the ministry of the Two Witnesses is so successful in turning people to God in Jerusalem, that Antichrist has to return there immediately after winning his greatest and last battle at Megiddo, to bring the people in the city back under his control. God finally allows Antichrist to kill the Two Witnesses. In Lk.17v31-37., Jesus warns us that Antichrist will send out his soldiers and secret police to seek out and murder those who have repented and turned to God in Jerusalem and Judea, and the country again briefly falls under Antichrist's evil rule. Jesus brings his evil rule to an end within about three days.

2. After the Two Witnesses are raised from the dead.

The resurrection of the Two Witnesses, and the earthquake that follows it, turns many in the city in repentance to God. Rev.11v11-15. The conversion of many thousands of people due to these remarkable happenings, finally causes Antichrist to sack Jerusalem. Antichrist, Jerusalem's false ally, sends his armies to rend, loot and burn Jerusalem with fire, as a punishment and warning. Rev.17v16,17. 18v2,14. Jesus tells us of this destruction of Jerusalem in Lk.17v37., and says that Jerusalem becomes like a carcass with the vultures of Antichrist's armies around it picking its bones.

If Antichrist had burned the city when he returned to kill the Two Witnesses, a tenth of the city could hardly fall in the earthquake of Rev.11v11-15., as it would have previously been destroyed by gunfire and fire. In Rev.18v4-8., God warns His people to flee from Jerusalem to escape the wrath of Antichrist, and God's judgement on this apostate city.

N.B. God uses Antichrist and his armies to bring judgement on Jerusalem. Rev.17v16,17.

Antichrist fulfils the will of God when he sacks Jerusalem and sets it on fire. Rev.17v16-18. Is.10v5-19. esp. v7. Is.47v7,8. The plagues spoken of in Rev.18v8., of death, mourning, famine and fire, fulfil God's will even though they come through Antichrist. The city that had prided its self upon its power and influence and riches, becomes a desolation, and the hold of unclean spirits and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. The words "hold," and "cage," in Rev.18v2., are translations of the same Greek word, "phulake," and while it does have the meaning of prison, watch-post, or station, it can also mean "haunt." Is.34v11. Jer.50v39. 51v37. Demons seek bodies that they can possess, and carrion seeking birds roam the city.

3. When the feet of the Lord Jesus touch the Mount of Olives and it splits in two.

When our Lord's feet touch the Mount of Olives, a great earthquake takes place and shatters the city, and divides it up into three parts, according to Rev.16v19.. Some of the old city is then covered with the waters of the new river of Ezek.47v1-12.. According to Ps.48v1,2., the new Millennial city of Jerusalem will be built upon the new mountain that is formed to the north of the present site. The prophecy of Dan.9v26., also confirms that the end of the present city of Jerusalem will be with a flood. This is quite impossible at the moment, it takes the colossal earthquake of Zech.14v4-8., which is also mentioned in Rev.16v17-20., and the consequent massive earth movements to make this possible. The Hebrew word for "flood," in Dan.9v26., is "sheteph," and is translated as "flood," in Ps.32v6. Dan.11v22. and Nahum.1v8. This flood is the reason why neither music or voice shall be heard in the streets, and no work will ever take place in her again. So will every person, city, or

nation perish that forgets God.

B. "THE JOY OF GOD'S CHILDREN AT THE DESTRUCTION OF "BABYLON."

From Rev.18v20 to 19v5., we see the joy of all of Heaven's inhabitants at the destruction of this evil city, that has shed the blood of the children of God, but the wicked sorrow over the destruction of this evil and financially profitable city. How vain does the pursuit of sin, pleasure and wealth look in the light of judgement day, how quickly worldly things can perish. It is a dreadful indictment of this city and the wicked people who mourn over her, that the bodies and souls of men are placed last in their list of the things that this city traded in, even animals like sheep and cattle are counted of more value. The wicked look upon their souls as the cheapest and least important commodity. Rev.18v9-19.

All of Heaven's citizens proclaim the justice of God's judgement upon Jerusalem; in Rev.18v6. the word for "reward" is "apodote," which speaks of a just requital and not of revenge. Likewise in Rev.18v20. the word for "avenged" is "ekrinen," which also speaks of justice and not vengeance, the Revised Standard Version translation reads "God has given judgement for you against her." Heaven rejoices that God has exacted just judgement for the blood of his servants from ("ek") her, and praises and worships God for His judgement on the wicked. Rev.19v4. A voice from the throne, summons all God's servants to join in praise to God over these issues of judgement. In Rev.19v1-6., we have four tremendous Alleluias over the judgement of the wicked and Jerusalem, and because "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Rev.5v11. Heb.12v22. All rejoice that the sufferings of God, and the suffering of His people at the hands of the wicked, is finished forever. God's kingdom has been set up on earth. Is.34v10. 42v13-17. 63v1-6. 66v24.

There will be heartfelt rejoicing and thankfulness when Satan and his angels and the rest of the wicked are confined in God's prison. This, is, of course, quite a different kind of rejoicing to that rejoicing which takes place when the sinner repents, for there can be no pleasure over the death and eternal confinement of the wicked in Hell. Lk.15v7. Ezek.18v23,32. They rejoice that the pain and suffering caused by the wicked and their evil acts are forever banished from the creation. We also see in Rev.19v2., that all the redeemed are perfectly satisfied at the "true and righteous" judgements of God. They are "saying," ("legonton," the present active participle of "lego"), "Allelouia," it only occurs in the New Testament in Rev.19v1,3,4,6., it means, "Praise ye the Lord." Fifteen of the Psalms begin or end with "Hallelujah."

A prominent place is given to Jerusalem in Revelation, for Rev.11v1-13. 13v14-16. 14v8,20. 16v10,19. 17v1 to 19v4. show Jerusalem during the great tribulation; Rev.20v7-9. Jerusalem in the Millennium; and Rev.21v9 to 22v7. the New Jerusalem in the eternal kingdom.

12. THE WRATH OF GOD, AND MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. Rev.19v1 to 20v3.

God reigns, the wicked are vanquished, the separation of Christ from His Church on earth is ended, and we see our beloved Lord as He really is. What a wonderful day that will be, when the marriage supper of the Lamb is come, and Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church. Mt.22v2. 25v1. Mk.2v19. Jn.3v29. 2Cor.11v2. Eph.5v25. Rev.19v9. 21v2. 22v17. The exceeding joy of all Heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb is expressed with the words of Rev.19v7., "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad," "chairo kai agallio," the present active subjunctive of "chairo" and "agallio." Both verbs occur together in Mt.5v12.. God is said to be the Bridegroom of Israel in Is.54v6. Hos 2v16. Jesus is the Bridegroom of the Kingdom in the Gospels. Mt.9v15. Mk.2v19,20. Lu.5v34,35. Jn.3v29. The marriage, "gamos," is mentioned in Mt.22v2-14.. The bride is said to have "made herself ready," with her Lord's help, for this great day. 1Jn.3v3. Jude.v21. 2Cor.7v1. Eph.5v25. This bridal dress is said to be "the righteous acts of the saints," but it is a gift from Christ., for "it was given," ("edothe," the aorist passive indicative of "didooi," to give, "edothe," "it was given," occurs about 20 times in Revelation). The garments are said to be, "fine linen, bright and pure." See Rev.15v6. 19v14. In sharp contrast are the filthy garments of the harlot. Rev.17v4. 18v16.

Is the Bride of Christ a select group of Christians?

There are differences of opinion as to what persons will make up of the bride of Christ. Some think that they may be a select group of Christians, like the 144,000 of Rev.14v1-5., while others think the Bride is composed of the choice children of God from all the ages, while still others think that they are the saved of all the ages. I personally think that they are the saved of the present age. God has prepared a heavenly city for some faithful Old Testament saints; for Abraham, and others, were looking for a heavenly city. Heb.11v10-16,39,40. 12v22,23. 13v14. Rev.21v2,9,10. A faithful servant can have rule over a son that causes shame. Prov.17v2. The saved nations who bring their glory and honour into the new Jerusalem are distinguished from those who live in the city. Compare Rev.21v9,10. with 21v26. Who are nations who live outside the city and bring their glory into it? Do these nations consist of the redeemed of the Old Testament and Millennium? We shall have to wait until Jesus returns to find all the answers, but we can certainly say that this enormous city is built to hold untold millions of inhabitants.

Through the grace of God every believer is a member of Christ's Church and therefore a part of the bride of Christ. Rom.7v4. When Jesus is called the bridegroom of the Church, it is another way of saying that He is the Head of the Church. The Church is spoken of as a bride in relation to the age that is to come, and her role in that age, whereas she is looked upon as Christ's body in relation to this present age. All believers, even the carnal Corinthians, are looked upon as a member of the Church, and part of the body of Christ. 1Cor.12v12,13,27. 11v32. Eph.1v22,23. 5v23,24,27. Jn.3v29. Rev.19v9. Mt.22v2-10. We need to realise the

great privilege that is ours in Christ, the Church is looked upon as being of a higher rank than the Old Testament Israel of God, however, they are both complementary and dependent upon one another. Mt.11v11. Heb.11v39,40. We are told very little about the organisation of the eternal kingdom of God so we should not be too dogmatic in our statements about it.

The relationship between the Church and Christ is likened to that between a bride and bridegroom, the most blest relationship that the human mind can conceive of. The glorious fellowship between Christ and His Church is impossible to describe other than by such symbols, it gives the picture of perfect love and perfect union of spirit and purpose, and that the plans, purposes, joys and activities of Christ and His Church will be the same forever.. What a glorious day it will be! Hallelujah! Let us make quite sure that we inherit all the promises that are given to us as Christians, for we can certainly miss the heavenly calling to rule with Christ by sloth and sin, even if we do not miss the marriage feast. Eph.1v11-14. Col.1v21-23. 1Thes.2v12. 1Pet.5v10. Rev.3v5. 14v1-5. 17v14. Heb.6v11,12. 10v35,36. 11v24-27. 2Jn.v8. The bride of Christ makes herself ready, her white garments are the result of the righteous acts that she has done by God's grace. James.2v14-26.

John was so overwhelmed by the glory of the vision and the majesty of the angel, that he fell down to worship him, but the angel forbade it, "See thou do it not," "hora me," a prohibition which is repeated again in Rev.22v9.. See Col.2v18. The angel has no Satanic desire to receive worship and tells John to worship God, as he was only revealing prophetic truth and testifying of Jesus, as a fellow-servant of God with John, and others, who had testified of Jesus. The angel states that the Holy Spirit's prophetic ministry manifests itself in witness to Jesus. This is a true test of a person's source of inspiration. 1Jn.4v1-6. Col.1v7.4v7. Rev.6v11. Heb.1v14. "Fellow-servant," is "sundoulos," "doulos" gives the idea of humble subjection without bondage. Holy angels gratefully acknowledge that they owe all they have and are to God, and are truly humble about their immense abilities. The working together of angelic and earthly servants of God is very apparent in the activities of the early Church, and where the Church is renewed in faith, holiness and love, these visitations have always taken place.

JESUS COMES TO DESTROY EVIL AND REIGN. Rev.19v11 to 20v3. Cf. Is.24v21. 25v7-9.

The invisible spiritual world is permanently opened and made visible to all on earth.

We read in Rev.19v11., that "the heaven opened," "eneoigmenon," the perfect passive participle of "anoigo," to open, the perfect tense indicates that it has opened and continues to stand open, the veil has been permanently removed. This most significant of all openings of Heaven, will reveal to mankind the present unseen realities in the heavenly and spiritual world. This fulfils the prophecy of Mt.24v27-31.. The Scriptures record that the heavens have been opened and visions of God have been granted to individuals, particularly the prophets, and to groups of people, like Moses and the 70 elders of Israel, and the 500 people who saw Jesus after His resurrection. Exod.24v9-18. 1Cor.15v6. Chron.18v18-22. Is.6v1-13. Ezek.1v1-28.

The heavens were opened to Jesus at His baptism, the aorist passive of "anoigo," to open, is used in Mt.3v16. and Lk.3v21., but Mk.1v10., states Jesus saw the heavens "parting asunder," "schizomenous," the present passive participle of "schizo," to split, to divide. Jesus said that Nathanael would experience an opened Heaven like Jacob. Gen.28v12-16. Jn.1v51. John in Revelation. Rev.4v1,2.. 3v7,8. The vision of Jesus is glorious, awe-inspiring and majestic.

Here we see Christ's glorious appearing, an event referred to before in Revelation, but not described in detail. In Rev.1v14. and 2v18., as well as here, Christ's eyes are described "as a flame of fire," His kind but searching eyes search every heart and life, and give to everyone, sinner and saint alike, according to their works. Jesus wears, "many royal kingly crowns," "diademata polla," as King of kings and Lord of lords. The dragon has a diadem on each of his seven heads, Rev.12v3., and Antichrist one on each of his ten horns Rev.13v1., but their kingdoms and crowns are destroyed, Christ's kingdom and crowns will last forever. God rewards the incorruptible integrity and victories of Jesus with a name of special significance, which only He knows. His name, and the names written on the foreheads of the overcomers and the 144,000, contrast greatly with the blasphemous names written on the forehead of the harlot. Rev.2v17. 3v12. 14v1. 17v5.

Our faithful and true, Messiah Warrior, and Judge.

Christ's white horse signifies his purity and love, He comes to purify and cleanse the world of evil. Antichrist's white horse signifies that he makes an outside show of being a peacemaker, and deceitfully and craftily hides the total evil within. Rev.6v1,2. Antichrist brings sin, war, and awful suffering to the world, Jesus brings a reign of righteousness and peace. Jesus is "Faithful and True," "pistos kai alethinos," He fulfils His Word, He is the promised righteous Messiah Warrior Judge of the Old Testament, and "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Is.11v1-10. Rev.1v5.3v7,14. 22v6. Jesus comes with the final and irrevocable act of judgement on Antichrist and his followers, for the suffering they have caused, so He executes them and removes their evil presence from creation. Is.42v13-16. 63v1-6. 2Thes.1v5-11.

We read in Rev.19v14., that "the armies which are in Heaven followed him, upon white horses and clothed in fine linen white and pure." This time they are not under the direction of Michael as in Rev.12v7., but under the command of Jesus. Mt.13v41. 24v29-31. 25v31. 26v53. Rev.5v11,12. Jesus personally executes the armies of Antichrist who turn to fight him, His angelic hosts gather the Christian saints together into His presence at His coming, Mt.24v31.; they also go among the nations of the earth and weed out the wicked from the righteous, and bring them for judgement. Mt.13v36-43,47-50. 25v31-46.

The sword of our Lord's mouth is an awesome weapon.

We read that a sword proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord, in Rev.1v16. 2v12., we read "romphaia distomos oxeia," literally "a sword two-mouthed sharp," here in Rev.19v15., "a sharp sword," is "romphaia oxeia," The sword here is not the "machaira," spoken of in Heb.4v12., it is the "romphaia," the long and heavy broad sword which the Thracians and other nations were armed with, some say the word speaks of a Thracian javelin. The word "romphaia," only occurs in Rev.1v16. 2v12,16. 6v8. 19v15,21. and in Lk.2v35., where Simeon uses it to convey the terrible shock and inner pain that Mary would feel when Jesus became "a sign which was spoken against," and was "despised and rejected," persecuted and crucified. The sword of our Lord's mouth is a terrifying weapon, which will be manifested at His second coming with devastating effect on the wicked. His spoken words of judgement cause the dissolution of the bodies of the armies of Antichrist. Zech.14v12. Rev.19v15,21. "Rule" here is "poimanei," the future active of "poimaino", to shepherd as in Rev.2v27. and 12v5., Jesus shepherds the nations "with a rod of iron," for it needs a rod of iron to bring and keep order in the world at His return, Jesus shepherds His own flock very differently. 1Pe.2v25. & Heb.13v20. use "poimen," shepherd. Rev.7v17., "pomainei," will shepherd.

The great day of the wrath of the Lamb.

This is the day when Jesus destroys the wicked who are destroying the earth. Rev.6v17. 11v18. 14v17-20. 16v17-21. The God of love has gone to the very limits of longsuffering and mercy, but He refuses to allow the world to suffer any more, so the day of vengeance has come, when the unrepentant will receive the wrath that they have treasured up. Is.61v2. Eccles.8v11. Rom.2v4. Rev.2v21. We read that our Lord "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God," The wrath of the Lamb is so much more striking, because it is the wrath of love and justice, it is in no sense due to personal spite. The meek and lowly Saviour is stirred to intense anger at the wicked because of the tremendous suffering that they have caused, so Jesus bursts out in terrible anger and judgement on the wicked. Is.42v13-17. 63v1-6. Ps.2v1-12. 45v1-7. 2Pet.3v9,10. Rev.6v12-17. Jer.25v15-38. Is.24v17-23.

The "thumos" and "orge" anger of God. The Bible often speaks of the anger of God and His punishment of the wicked. In Rev.14v10. 16v19. and 19v5., John uses two Greek words, both of which mean anger, to emphasise the strength of Christ's and the Father's anger on the day of the Lord. The flaming anger of "thumos," and the smouldering lasting anger of "orge," are used to describe the great anger of God the Father and Son on that great last day. "Orge," speaks of God's judicial anger, "thumos" is God's, "great but transient anger," a more passionate, but a more temporary anger, like fire in straw, quickly blazing up, and as quickly extinguished. "Thumos" occurs 18 times in the New Testament, 10 of which are in the Revelation, it is used to describe the wrath of God 8 times, Rom.2v8. Rev.14v10,19. 15v1,7. 16v1,19. 19v15., and it well describes the tremendous outburst of God's wrath on the day of the Lord, at the second coming of Christ. Everywhere else the word "thumos" is used in a bad sense, Lk.4v28. Acts.19v28. 2Cor.12v20. Gal.5v20. Eph.4v31. Col.3v8. Heb.11v27. Rev.12v12. 14v8. 18v3.. The word "orge" describes "the smouldering anger," and "the abiding and settled habit of mind" and attitude that God manifests in dealing with the sinner before the great day of His wrath. The word "orge" occurs in the following places. Mt.3v7. Mk.3v5. Lk.3v7. 21v23. Jn.3v36. Rom.1v18. 2v5,8. 3v5. 4v15. 5v9. 9v22. 12v19. 13v4,5. Eph.2v3. 4v31. 5v6. Col.3v6,8. 1Thes.1v10. 2v16. 5v9. 1Tim.2v8. Heb.3v11. 4v3. James.1v19,20. Rev.6v16,17. 11v18. 14v10. 16v19. 19v15. The verb "orgizomai," is used in, Mt.5v22. 18v34. 22v7. Lk.14v21. 15v28. Eph.4v26. Rev.11v18. 12v17.

In Rev.19v13., we read that Jesus is "clothed with a garment dipped in blood," (the Majority Text reads "bebammenon," the perfect passive participle of "bapto," to dip). In Is.63v1-3., it is stated that the garments of Jesus will be stained with the blood of His enemies; however, Rev.19v13., is almost certainly not speaking of the blood of the wicked, for this blood is on His garments before He destroys Antichrist and his evil followers. Christ's bloodstained garments proclaim to all, that before He judges the wicked, He has done all that He could to save them, even to the shedding of His own precious blood for them. Now He comes to judge the wicked, who had not only rejected His offer of salvation, but had brought terrible suffering to the world. Jesus is "Faithful and True" in all that He does, whether it be redemption, or judgement. Blessed be His name!

Antichrist and his armies are by no means repentant, and turn to fight the Lord.

Antichrist's armies try to fight the Lord, they think that they can destroy the Almighty. Rev.6v15-17. 19v19. Ps.2v1-12. Dan.8v25. It proves if wicked men see God, they will not repent, they see God and fight Him in open defiance and rebellion. Rom.1v18-21,32. An even more amazing rebellion takes place at the end of the Millennium, when, after living in the presence of God for 1,000 years, vast multitudes rebel and attempt to destroy the city of God and its inhabitants. A huge number of people still want to be wicked, even though there has been perfect peace, prosperity, and no problems of any kind. It is a tragic fact, that people can, like Satan, make an irrevocable choice for evil while living in the presence of God. Is.24v23. The Beast and the false prophet still have the same attitude to God and sin, that they had when they were put in the lake of fire 1,000 years before, they have lost their bodies, but they have not lost their desire to sin. Rev.20v10 with 21v8. We see from Mt.25v41,46. and Rev.14v9-11., that those who followed Antichrist go straight to the lake of fire, and not to Hades, and as they have made their decision to sin for ever, clear to all, there is no need of another judgement at the Great White Throne.

God the Word fulfils His promise to judge the wicked and establish His kingdom.

In Jn.1v1,14., Jesus is called, "The Word," "ho logos;" in 1Jn.1v1., He is called "the Word of Life," "ho Logos

tes zoes;" here in Rev.19v13., Jesus is called, "The Word of God," "ho Logos tou theou." The Jews understood this phrase referred to the only true God, and it is as God that Jesus returns to judge. Jn.1v1,18. 14v7-11. Jesus fully and perfectly expresses all that the Father is, all the beauty and glory of His mind, person and character. Jn.14v8,9. Col.2v9.

Jesus is the Lord of hosts, and the angelic hosts obey His commands, they "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do wickedly," they sift the remaining wicked from among the nations after Jesus has destroyed Antichrist's armies and followers. Mt.13v39-43,49,50. Zech.14v12. 2Thes.1v7,8. Rev.19v20,21. We know from 1Thes.4v14., and Judev14,15., that when Jesus returns He brings back the souls of the saints who have died. Jesus returns as King to reign, to receive the kingdom that is rightfully His. He is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords, and this title is written upon His dress that is upon His thigh, as was the usual custom of great personages in Eastern countries. Jesus comes to reign in righteousness and to bring peace. Is.32v1,15-18. The wicked, who have destroyed peace and happiness, are themselves destroyed. Scavenging birds are invited to eat the corpses of Antichrist's armies, to help to clean up the earth after the slaughter. This prophecy of judgement will certainly be fulfilled. Ezek.39v9-22. The angelic armies God sends in judgement, He can send in blessing, if His Church is willing, but He is often frustrated by a stubborn and rebellious people. Rom.10v21.

Satan is seized, chained and put into the abyss by one angel. Lk.8v31. Rom.10v7. Rev.9v1,11.

Satan is not put in the lake of fire yet, for God has still to make further use of his wickedness, and "he must be loosed," ("dei," the Divine necessity), "for a little time." Rev.20v1-3,7-10. God could have put Satan in the Abyss long ago, but He has used Satan to make people choose good or evil more quickly than they would have done without his influence. God has also used Satan to purify His saints, God uses a hired razor to shave his people. Job.1v1 to 2v13. Lk.22v31-34. Is.7v20. 10.v5,6.

Notice the names that God gives to the Evil One in Rev.20v2..

1. He is called, "The Dragon." This to show his destructive and fierce nature, he is the destroyer of mankind and creation.

2. God also calls him, "The Old Serpent." This reveals his longstanding hatred of mankind, he has been the enemy of man since man's creation, and has corrupted the first parents and the rest of their seed.

3. Satan is also spoken of as, "The Devil." He slanders and accuses God to man, and slanders and accuses man to God. Gen.3v1-5. Job.1v9-11. 2v4,5. Rev.12v10. He is the father and originator of all slanderous lies and deceit. Jn.8v44.

4. He is "Satan." The adversary, who opposes both the will of God, and the truth of God; he is the adversary who Christ had to fight, and Christ's brethren have the same conflict with him.

Here we see the kingdom of darkness smashed and broken by the Light of the world, Jesus Christ. When He returns Jesus imprisons Satan and his angels, a thing that they now look forward to with great dread. This judgement of the wicked angels, as well as wicked men, will make it possible for the world to be happy again. Ps.82.v6,7. Is.24v21-23. 25v7. 34v5. Mt.8v29.

B GOD REIGNS OVER ALL.

1. THE MILLENNIUM. Rev.20v4-10.

It is very significant that God spends sixteen chapters, from Rev.4v1 to 20v3., prophetically reviewing in detail the last few years of this age, and then passes over a thousand years in six verses. Rev.20v4-10. The reasons for this are as follows.

1. God gives guidance for dark places, because we are going to be in them. 2Pet.1v19.

God demands that we take note of the prophetic facts that He has revealed in great detail in Rev.4 to 19., for they are essential for our spiritual survival in the last dark years of this age. These facts prove beyond doubt that Christian believers are going to be on this earth during these dark days. God will personally tells us His plans for the Millennium when it starts.

2. The Old Testament speaks a lot about the Millennium, even though the period of 1,000 years is not mentioned. Is.11v1-9. 25v6-8. 65v20-23. Hos.2v18. Zech.9v10. 14v9. Dan.7v13,14. etc. We are told in Rev.20v4-7., that Christ's kingdom will last for 1,000 years, and who dare change and challenge this clear statement from God's Word. Jesus said, during His earthly ministry, that He will set up His Millennial kingdom immediately after Antichrist's evil career. Mt.13v36-43. 24v27-31.

THE REIGNING SAINTS. Rev.20v4-6.

1. The saints reign, rule and judge with their Lord.

The murdered saints had been beheaded, the perfect passive participle of "pelekizo", "to cut off with an axe, from "pelekus" an axe, which was the instrument for execution in republican Rome, until it was replaced by the sword), it only occurs here in the New Testament. These martyrs for the witness of Jesus are previously mentioned in Rev.6v9-11. 11v7,8. 12v11,17. 13v7,15. 14v13. 15v2. 16v5. 18v24. and 19v2,10.. Most of

Christ's apostles died a martyrs death, and He promised them that they would sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Lk.22v28-30. However, one, Judas, lost not only this promise, but his soul as well, all the promises of God have a definite conditional "if" attached to them. God desires to save all mankind, but He cannot save those who will not fulfil His conditions. 2Pet.3v9. Mt.23v37-39. God wanted all the Israelites who left Egypt to enter Canaan, but of those over twenty years of age, only Caleb and Joshua received the promise. Ex.15v13-17. God wants all Christians to rule with Christ, but we can fall short of the grace of God and fail to receive this promise.1Cor.15v2. 2Cor.6v1. Gal.5v18. 2Tim.2v12. Heb.3v6,14,15. 6v9-12. 10v32-36. 12v7,15.

In 1Cor.6v2,3., Paul writes that the saints will judge the world and angels, however, Rev.2v26,27. and 3v21., inform us that it is the overcoming Christian who will have the privilege of reigning with Christ. In Rev.20v4. we see the saints who suffered at the hands of Antichrist are included in the reigning saints, they suffered for Christ and so they reign with Him. 2Tim.2v12. 3v12. Rom.8v17. 1Pet3v14. The grim past seems so trivial and light compared with the glory that it is now revealed in them. 2Cor.4v17. Rom.8v18. 1Pet.4v13. 5v1. Here the false standards and riches of earth are gone for ever, and they that loved them with them. Here we see the true riches that will never end, and see how abundantly faith and faithfulness are rewarded by our heavenly Father. These saints are said to be "blessed and holy," "makarios kai hagios," here "hagios" is added to the usual "makarios". This is the fifth of seven beatitudes in Revelation, Rev.1v3. 14v13. 16v15. 19v9. 20v6. 22v7,14..

2. Are all the saints raised from the dead at the first resurrection?

Some say that Rev.20v6., teaches that only the most holy Christians are going to be raised from the dead at the first resurrection, and that other Christians who have not reached the same standard of holiness will have to wait another 1,000 years for their resurrection. This doctrine is shown to be incorrect by the following facts.

a. All believers, including the Corinthians, are called saints ("holy ones"), because of their faith in, and love for, Jesus. 1Cor.1v2. 2Cor.1v1. Eph.1v1. Phil.1v1. Col.1v2. Old Testament believers are also called saints. The word for holy in Rev.20v6., is "hagios," which signifies being separated from common usage, and being devoted, dedicated and consecrated to God. The fact that a person believes in Jesus separates them from the world to God, and this will, or should, result in a life of increasing devotion to God, and purity of life. All believers are holy in the sense that they love, and are devoted to Jesus.

b. The Scriptures state that all believers will be resurrected on the last day, at the last trumpet.

Jn.6v39,40,44,54. 11v24. 12v28. 1Cor.15v51-53. Paul tells us that we all must appear at the judgement seat of Christ, and so we should labour to make our lives acceptable to Christ, and so receive a reward. 2Cor.5v1-12. In 1Cor.3v10-15., Paul states that it is possible for us to have no real works of any value to offer Christ, and as a result to be saved by the narrowest means, as though we were snatched from the flames. The faith that we have is very precious to God, but we need to add other Christian virtues to our faith, if we are to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. 2Pet.2v4-12. 1Pet.1v3-9. 1Jn.2v28. 2Jn.v8.

c. What is the standing of the people in Mt.22v11-14. 25v24-30. 7v15-23. 24v48-51. and Lk.12v45-48.?

The words "I never knew you," and "cut him in sunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites and unbelievers," demand thoughtful consideration. Without doubt, Mt.7v15-23., is a warning against false prophets, but like other Scriptures it could speak of apostate Christians. See Ezek.18v24.. In Lk.12v36,37,45-48., there are four kinds of people, the watchful Christian, v36,37.; the apostate Christian, v45,46.; the wilfully disobedient Christian, v47.; and the Christian who does not do God's will, but who has limited light, v48. God takes into account the light that a person has received. God makes a definite distinction between Christians who are ignorant, disobedient, or backslidden, and apostate Christians who have denied the faith. Jude.v4.

3. Jesus reigns as King and Messiah from Jerusalem in the Millennium.

Jesus reigns from Jerusalem, and it becomes the centre of the world, and the blessing God wanted it to be. The faithful Old Testament saints enter into their inheritance at the first resurrection, at the start of the Millennium. Ezek.37v11-14. Some of these saints looked for a heavenly city, but in the main, we can say that the Israelites receive an earthly inheritance, and the Church receives a heavenly inheritance. The Old Testament prophets looked forward to the Millennium with great joy and they dwell at great length on the glory of that kingdom. Our present age of grace differs greatly from the Millennial age. In this age God usually postpones judgement on sin until the day of judgement, whereas during the Millennium people who attempt to sin and injure others, will be immediately executed. Christ and His brethren will rule with both great love and a rod of iron, and their fair and stern justice will nip evil in the bud. Ps.2v6-9. Zech.14v16-19. 13v3. Rev.2v26,27. This is kind of rule is absolutely necessary, for many people are allowed into the Millennium, who have not had a Christian experience. They are the sheep of Mt.25v31-45., the members of the Gentile nations who helped Christians in the dark days of the great tribulation, when it was extremely dangerous to do so. Their aid and attitude to "the least of these my brethren," that is, to Christians, is taken as their attitude to Christ, so they are allowed into the Millennial kingdom on probation. Mt.25v40. So many, who have not had a deep change of heart, are allowed into the Millennial kingdom. Some of these people, or some of their children, hate the enforced morality of the Millennium, even though it produces a wonderfully blessed, prosperous and happy earth. These evil people suppress their anger at being made to live righteous lives, because of fear of the consequences, because anyone who practises evil is immediately killed, and so many fear to sin, even though they are wicked at heart. Is.65v20. Zech.13v2,3.

During the Millennium, therefore, many act and look much better than they really are. The sons of God have revealed to them all crimes, even while they are being conceived in the minds of the potential criminals, and so with such a perfect police force no one can escape from being caught in the act of crime. Righteousness is also enforced at a home level, no ill treatment of wives and children will be tolerated. God actively and vigorously defends the innocent against the bully and merciless. God's intervention against wickedness will be an established fact, and so the wicked will be afraid to sin, and will feel compelled to live holy lives for centuries, for they know that if they try to injure anyone they will be executed. Is.65v20. Ps.146v6-10. Longevity of life is restored, and people who are 100 years old are looked upon as children. On judgement day every mouth will be stopped. Rom.3v19. God imprisons any evil angels that would corrupt mankind. Even God cannot force the wicked to be pure, or inspire them to righteousness by giving them a perfect environment, and everything that their heart desires.

4. God uses Satan to expose the hearts of the nations, Satan's final destruction.

At the end of the Millennium God allows Satan to come "out of his prison," the abyss of Rev.20v2,3., in order to expose the evil in people's hearts, and to separate the righteous from the wicked. Satan goes to those who have resented being forced to live outwardly righteous lives, and deceives them into thinking that it is safe to express their wickedness and hatred of God. Centuries of suppressed resentment and anger burst out, and they gather together and encircle "the beloved city" of God, to destroy it and kill its godly inhabitants; then fire from heaven devours these evil people, and they and Satan go into eternal confinement. This is the final conflict with Satan and evil. God allows Satan temporary freedom in order to winnow the wheat from the chaff, after this rebellion he is put into the lake of fire after, as no further use can be made of his wickedness.

Satan does not repent of his evil, or ask for mercy after being imprisoned in the Abyss for 1,000 years; for immediately after his release, he leads a rebellion against God. Confinement in the Abyss, and the prospect of being in Hell for ever, only make the wicked more determined to sin, and fills them with an eternal hatred of God and righteousness. Like all unreconcilables, they refuse to accept the mercy of God through repentance and faith. In Rom.2v9., "Tribulation and anguish," is "thlipsis kai stenochoria," the noun "thlipsis," pressure, is from the verb "thlibo," to crush, press, as a person in a crowd. The noun "stenochoria," is from "stenos," narrow, and "chora," space, so Rom.2v9. means, "pressure and confined space." This text tells us that God limits the actions of the wicked by confining them in Hell, they will no longer be free to corrupt or injure anyone.

God's wisdom is unsearchable, He is going to stop every criticism of Him, by proving by history, that however men and angels are ruled, happiness is impossible unless everybody lives in harmony and love together. Rom.3v19. God will prove by a complete record of the histories of men and angels, that love must be the motivating principle of community life, or happiness becomes impossible. God will prove that He has done His utmost to save all, and that any failure arises out of the unrepentant wickedness of those who are lost. In the Millennium God tries to force men to live righteous lives by His rule with a rod of iron, but it is all to no avail, even His loving and righteous rule fails to win a "number as the sand of the sea."

All the ages, from the creation of the angels to the great white throne, have been what we might call probationary and preparatory ages, for the ages of ages. These ages have been the testing ground for angels and men. God has to make sure that there will be no failures in the eternal kingdom, so, "Nothing that defiles will enter," into that kingdom, only those who love God and righteousness, and hate evil will be allowed in. Rev.21v27. Even as the wicked have made their final and irrevocable choice for sin, those who enter the eternal kingdom of God will have made their final and irrevocable choice for God and righteousness. Communication in the eternal kingdom of God will be on the level of interchange of thought, and so it would be impossible to live happily with people who were all the time thinking how they could kill you. It is impossible for the righteous and wicked to continue to live together permanently, rebellion breaks out in the end, just as it did in Heaven when Satan and his angels rejected and opposed God's way of love. You can only live happily with people who you can unreservedly trust.

5. Gog and Magog.

The use of the words Gog and Magog in Rev.20v8., show that there is some connection with Ezek.38 and 39.. Certainly some of that prophecy cannot refer to the great tribulation, but it appears in some places to have a double fulfilment. Ezek.38v8,11,14. 39v9-15. It is possible that the nations that were involved in the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the great tribulation, and led in the persecution of the people of God, will lead in the rebellion against the beloved Millennial city of Jerusalem. Gog and Magog are mentioned in Gen.10v2. 1Chron.1v5. 5v4. Ezek.38 and 39. It is very doubtful if there is any connection between Rosh and Russia, Meshech and Moscow, Tubal and Tobolsk, and Gomer and Germany. The connection seems to be based on similarity of sound. G.H. Lang makes an interesting examination of this in his "Histories and Prophecies of Daniel," page 201 to 218. We will just quote two sentences. "In Ezekiel's day the tribes named were in and around Armenia and Asia Minor, and there seems no evidence that they became the ancestors of the Russians or Germans. The "uttermost parts of the north," known to the dwellers in the Middle East, were Armenia and the Caucasus."

2. THE SECOND RESURRECTION AND THE LAST JUDGEMENT. Rev.20v11-15.

This resurrection is said to be, "the resurrection of damnation," the word for "damnation" is "krisis," which means a separating, selection, decision or judgement, and it is used to speak of accusation, condemnation,

damnation and judgement. Jn.5v29. There are two things decided at this resurrection and judgement. Can a person be allowed into God's kingdom? And if their name is written in the book of life, and they are saved, what place can they have in God's kingdom? This has been called "The Great Assize," and all the courts of men pale into insignificance in comparison with the majesty of this court. We read that Jesus is now "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb.1v3. 8v1. The Father and Son also rule together as one in the eternal kingdom, it is the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev.22v1,3-5. 3v21. 5v6. 7v17. Jn.5v22. The judgement thrones of Pharaohs, Caesars, Kings and Emperors, are nothing compared with the throne of God, indeed, they will be there to be judged by the Almighty, and with a justice and righteousness infinitely superior to their own.

The people come up for judgement before "A Great White Throne," here "megan," great, is added to the throne mentioned in Rev.4v4. and 20v4., probably to emphasise the absolute purity and justice of this supreme court of Heaven and its judge. This judgement is mentioned in a striking manner in Dan.7v9-14.. See Ps.97v1-6. Rom.14v10-12. 2Co 5v10. The awesome majesty of God is such that we read that the earth and the heaven flee away from His face. Nothing could be more awe-inspiring than the scenes of this great day of judgement, God's justice makes demons tremble in fear. James.2v19.

THE BOOK OF WORKS. Rev.20v12,13. See Job.13v26. 19v23. Ps.56v8. Is.65v6. Dan.7v10. Mal.3v16.

There is a complete record of everyone's life in these books of works. In the Scriptures God has recorded the sins of His saints, even after they have repented of them, but the glorious thing is, they are no longer held against them, because of the blood of Christ. God has got to have an open judgement, so that justice may be seen to be done by all. On this great day the facts will be disclosed to show just what a person is like, for what you do shows what you are like, what you love shows where your treasure is. We are saved by grace, but judged according to our works. Rev.22v12. Every sin, every secret thought, every word and action, good or bad are recorded, and judged accordingly. Mt.12v36,37. Rom.2v16. Lk.12v2. Jn.12v48. God will disclose all His dealings with His creation, the revelation of His amazing grace and untold millions of strivings and pleadings with men and angels. Perfect justice will be done, and seen to be done. Let us prepare for this great day.

God has kept a complete record of the lives of every human being in the books of works. Men are going to be judged and sentenced upon written and video evidence. We are saved by grace, but the final test is the fruit of the tree. Mt.7v16-20. 10v41,42. Jn.15v1-6. "God is no respecter of persons," all men, both saved and unsaved, will be judged according to their works and deeds. Acts.10v34,35. Mt.16v27. Rom.2v1-12. 14v10-12. 1Cor.3v10-16. 2Cor 5v8-11. 1Pet.1v17. Rev 2v23. 22v12. Those who fail the test of lives lived in love are cast into the lake of fire with the Antichrist, the False prophet, and Satan and his angels. 1Jn.3v14,15. 4v7,8. Rev.19v10. 20v10. Death, "the last enemy," and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, they have no more terrors for the inhabitants of God's kingdom, death has been destroyed by God. Rev.21v4. 1Cor.15v26,54-58. Hos.13v14. The second death is identified with the lake of fire. Rev.21v8. 2v11. 20v6.

THE BOOK OF LIFE. Rev.20v12,15.

The book of life, "te biblo tes zoes," has already been mentioned in Rev.3v5. 13v8. 17v8., and Jesus refers to it in Lk.10v20., when He told the 70 evangelists to rejoice because their names were "written in Heaven," and Paul in Heb.12v23., speaks of "the church of the first born enrolled in Heaven." Some say that the book of life contains the names of those who live upon the new earth, whereas the Lamb's book of life contains the names of those who will live in Heaven, however, there does not seem to be any Scriptural evidence for this. It is true that some will have an earthly inheritance while others will have a heavenly inheritance. It is also true that a name can be blotted out of the book of life through sin and apostasy, we need to remember the words of John Bunyan, "there is a way to hell, even from the gates of the eternal city." Lk.10v20. Ezek.18v24. Rev.3v5. 2Pet.2v1,19-21. The following references will be found a help in considering the book of life. Exod.32v32,33. Ps.69v28. 87v6. 139v16. Jer.17v13. Dan.12v1. Lk.10v20. Phil.4v3. Rev.3v5. 13v8. 17v8. 20v12,15. 21v27. 22v19.

HADES AND HELL.

The notes on Rev.1v18. and 14v9-13., show the difference between Hades and Hell, however, we will briefly consider them again. The Greek "Hades," or the Hebrew "Sheol," is the place where both Old Testament sinners and saints went to on their death, and indeed, the sinner still goes there. This is not a enjoyable place, so the Old Testament saints spent all their lives in fear of death. 1Sam.2v9. Ps.31v17. Eccles.12v7. Job.10v21,22. 19v25-27. Lk.16v22,23. Heb.2v15. When Jesus came, the whole position was changed, He brought life and immortality to life through the Gospel, and said that believers in Him would never die, and the gates of Hades would not prevail against the Church. 2Tim.1v10. Jn.11v21-26. Mt.16v18.

Christians lose their body at death, but unlike the Old Testament saints, they keep their spirit. Eccl.12v7. Jn.11v25,26. At death we go into bliss of Heaven, we lose our body, but our souls and spirits, "are present with the Lord," our bodies being later raised at the resurrection. Jn.6v39,40,44,50-54. Lk.23v43. Acts.7v55-60. Phil.1v21-23. 3v20,21. Heb.12v22-24. Rev.6v9-11. 14v13. 16v7. In Eph.4v8., Paul rejoices in one of Christ's greatest victories, the release of the Old Testament saints from Hades after His death and resurrection. See Mt.27v50-54. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades, so He released from captivity those who He had died to save. Rev.1v18. In Eph.4v8., "He led a multitude of captives," Paul is speaking of the triumphal procession of Jesus and his Old Testament saints from Hades to Heaven.

Every sinner that dies goes to Hades, the temporary abode of the dead, to await resurrection and judgement at the Great White Throne. Those who teach that the wicked now go to the lake of fire at death, are quite wrong, no one has as yet gone to Gehenna, the final abode of the wicked. Antichrist and his followers will be the first people who will be cast into the lake of fire, at the return of Jesus. Mt.25v31,41. Rev.14v10,11. 19v20. Those in Gehenna have determined to sin eternally, so their confinement has eternal consequences.

In the first Christian literature outside of the New Testament, from the death of John onwards, we find a prominent place given to the Lord's visit to Hades. Irenaeus of Lyons in France, a disciple of Polycarp the disciple of John, Clement of Alexander, Origen, Tertullian, and Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and others, believed that Christ preached the Gospel to the prisoners in Hades, and those who received His words had remission of sins. Even Augustine accepted and believed this in the earlier part of his ministry. The infidel Celsus was speaking with Origen and ridiculed this widespread belief of the Church, he said, "I suppose Christ, when He failed to persuade the living, went down to Hades to persuade those who live there?" Origen answered him, "Whether it please Celsus or no, we of the Church assert that the soul of our Lord, stripped of its body, did there hold converse with other souls, that were in like manner stripped, that He might there convert those who were capable of instruction, or were otherwise in ways known to Him fit for it." Origen c. Celsum, 2.43.

THE SECOND DEATH. Rev.20v14. 2v11.

The Scriptures call the casting into the lake of fire, "the second death," because the wicked who are raised from the dead at the second resurrection, will die and lose their body for the second time, when they are put in the lake of fire. The first death of a person is the result of Adam's sin, which deprived mankind of the tree of life, the second death is the result of a person's own unrepentant sin. The bodies of the wicked are not gradually roasted and tortured by the flame, they are killed in a twinkling of an eye. This fire must be quite different from an earthly kind of fire, for it was prepared for the Devil and his angels, and it will destroy spiritual bodies as well as human bodies. Mt.25v41. It must be remembered that since people have lost their bodies in Hell, they will not have the physical desire for food and drink, and the other requirements of the body, though they will still desire these experiences and their other evil desires.

The second death does not imply annihilation of the soul.

The second death does not imply extinction of being any more than the first death does. Death is the separation of the soul from the body and spirit. The Greek words "apollumi" and "apoleia," which are translated as destroy, destruction, perdition, perish, waste, and lose, do not necessarily mean that the substance of the thing, or the person, is disintegrated into nothingness, but that they are of no more value for their original design or purpose. It can speak of ruin as well as destruction; and loss, not of being, but of well-being. This is made clear by its use, it is used to speak of broken wineskins, Mt.9v17. Lk.5v37.; the waste of ointment, Mt.26v8. Mk.14v4.; of money, Acts.8v20.; of lost sheep, Lk.15v4,6.; the lost son, Lk.15v24.; perishing food, Jn.6v27.; even of gold, 1Pet.1v7.; and of persons, showing their spiritual ruin and destruction. Mt.7v13. 10v28. Lk.13v3,5. Jn.3v16. 10v28. 17v12. Rom.2v12. 1Cor.15v18. 2Cor.2v15. 4v3. 2Thes.2v3,10. James.4v12.

Putting people in the lake of fire certainly does not immediately annihilate a soul or spirit, for the False Prophet and the Beast are still in the lake of fire 1,000 years after they are first put in. Rev.19v3,20. 20v10. 14v10. The words in Rev.20v10., "they shall be tested ("basanizo") day and night for ever and ever," imply not only existence, but consciousness as well.

Jesus uses "Gehenna" to describe the lake of fire, it is derived from a place in the valley of Hinnom, where rubbish, and the dead bodies of animals and criminals were burned. Christ looks upon Hell as the place where polluted souls and spirits are confined, and their bodies are taken away from them, in order to preserve the happiness of all the redeemed creation. "Gehenna" occurs in Mt.5v22,29,30. 10v28. 18v9. 23v15,33. Lk.12v5. Mk.9v43,45,47. and James.3v6.. See Dan.7v11. God's judgement on the unrepentant wicked is not strange, unreasonable, or mysterious, it is common sense, and common law.

N. B. . The words "for ever and ever," are a translation of a Greek phrase that is also used to speak of the life of Christ and the throne of God. Ps.45v6. with Heb.1v8. So Hell, it seems, endures as long as the throne of God. Traditionalists state that God will sustain the soul of the wicked for ever in Hell, the Conditional Immortality viewpoint states that God will after a period of time allow those in Hell to cease to exist. Both viewpoints have been believed by good and godly Christians.

In Rev.21v3-8., God reveals the awe-inspiring contrast between the characters and end of the righteous, and the characters and end of the wicked. God reveals eight evil attributes of character that send people to Hell.

1. "The fearful." The adjective "deilos," the cowardly, it only occurs in the New Testament here in Rev.21v8., Mt.8v26., and Mk.4v40. Fear destroys faith, and lack of courage in following the truth destroys character, and result in people going to Hell.

2. "Unbelieving." "Apistois," means without faith, untrustworthy. This is in sharp contrast with the supreme victorious faith of Jesus, "the Pioneer, "ton archepon," and Perfecter, "teleiotes," of faith," Heb.12v2. Unbelief is often produced by cowardice.

3. "Abominable." Is "ebdelugmenois," the perfect passive participle of "bdelusso", only here and Rom.2v22.,

in the New Testament. The perfect shows a permanent state of loathsome and foul evil. Rev.21v27. Titus.1v16.

4. "Murderers." "Phoneusin." Mk.7v21. Rom.1v29. Rev.9v21.

5. "Fornicators." "Pornois," this refers to all kinds of immorality, sexual impurity and perversion, a common evil. Worldlings treat the God's warnings against immorality with derision, but it ruins their personality, and sends them to Hell. 1Cor.6v9-11.

6. "Sorcerers." "Pharmakois," in the New Testament. only here and Rev.22v15., it speaks of idolatry and magic, and the use of drugs in occult practices. Rev.9v21.

7. "Idolaters." "Eidololatrais." Idolatry has always had a powerful grip on men's lives. This is because idolatry and other occult practices, have always included gross sensuality and immorality. 1Cor.5v9-11. 10v7. Eph.5v5. Rev.22v15.

8. "All liars." "Pasi tois pseudessin," this is repeated in Rev.22v15. See Rev.2v2. 3v9. 14v5. 21v8,27. 22v15. The cowardly and unbelieving head the list of the lost, these are those who don't want faith because of its consequences. Christians do not have this spirit of fear given to them, 2Tim.1v7., some naturally timid Christians have shown great courage under vicious persecution. Please note, sorcery is included among the soul-damning sins of murder, sexual impurity, idolatry, lying and unbelief. Nothing that defiles will enter and spoil the happiness of Heaven, those who work abomination and make lies will be in Hell, there will be no accursed thing to spoil the happiness of Heaven. Rev.21v8,26,27. 22v3. The Greek for "curse" in Rev.22v3. is "katathema," which means, "accursed thing."

3. THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE AGES OF AGES. Rev.21v1 - 22v21.

1. The superiority, beauty and freshness of the new creation over the old creation.

a. The creation is new and better, and filled with love. "All things new." Rev.21v5.

The word "kainen," "new," which is used in, "a new Heaven and new earth," "the holy city, new Jerusalem," and "all things new," is used in the same sense that it is used to describe the "new covenant," "diathekon kainen," in Heb.8v6,13. 9v15. and 12v24.. "Kainen," speaks of something which is not only new, but also something which is fresh, and better. The first Heaven and the first earth are said to have "passed away," "apelthan," the aorist active indicative of "apechomai," to go away, to pass away, to depart; the remaking of the new Heaven and earth could be either by renovation, or recreation, or by both.

The new Jerusalem becomes in truth the Holy City, a name which the old earthly Jerusalem, often did not deserve. Mt.4v5. 27v53. Gal.4v25,26. The eternal beauty of compassionate love, which is the nature of true holiness, is manifested in full in this holy city of God. The atmosphere of this city is pure and perfect love and fellowship. Anyone that would defile and pollute God's Holy City, and beautiful kingdom, will be excluded from it. Rev.21v22-27. This heavenly Jerusalem is our real home. Heb.2v22-24. It is the abode of the bride of Christ.. Rev.3v12. 21v10. We read in Rev.19v7., that the bride had prepared and made herself ready, and in Rev.21v2., that the city, where the bride will live, had been prepared, "as a bride for her husband." This is the fulfilment of our Lord's words in Jn.14v2., "I go to prepare a place for you." However, this does not just speak of the place where we will live, it speaks even more of how the hearts of the heavenly citizens are being prepared for us.

In Rev.21v5., God the Father addresses, not just John, but the entire kingdoms of the blessed in earth and Heaven, "Behold, I make all things new," "Idou kaina poio panta." In Is.65v17., we read that there is a recreation of the earth and Heaven at Christ's second coming; here 1000 years later, God again recreates the earth and Heaven. Is.66v22. Ps.102v25-27. John is instructed to write ("grapson" as in Rev.1v11. 2v1,8,12,18. 3v1,7,14. 14v13.), for these words are "true and faithful," "alethinoi kai pistoi." Both adjectives are repeated in Rev.22v6. in the reversed order, "faithful and true," "pisto kai alethinoi," and both adjectives are used to describe Jesus in Rev.3v14. and 19v11.. These prophecies are totally reliable and genuine, they are not fantasies. The glory and beauty of the kingdom of the King of love staggers the mind and defies the imagination. In God's wonderful kingdom of love, there will be continual variety, progression, and development, and through God's grace we will for ever enjoy a life of glorious fellowship and service. The glory of God's kingdom in the ages of ages, is at present, quite beyond our comprehension, but if our present veiled experience of God's kingdom is so glorious, what must the experience of that kingdom be like? There is no end to the riches of His grace, the greatness of His mind, and His wonderful plans for us.

b. The sea is no more, it is replaced by beautiful countryside and scenery, and the water of life. Rev.21v1.

Many people are sad when they read that there will be no sea, and some are unwilling to accept this plain statement, and they think that when it says there will be no more sea, that it is referring to the old sea, and that the sea may be changed like the earth and Heaven. However, a spiritual creation does not need a sea. The sea is no more, because the new vegetation is based upon more enduring spiritual elements, and derives its life from the being and life of God. The water and organic based vegetation and life has passed away, because they could no more stand the powers and energies of the kingdom of God, than the body of Moses could when he asked to see the face of God. Ex.33v20. The world will be even more beautiful and colourful with this spiritual material based creation. All will be new, fresh and better. The whole creation changes from a water based

creation to a spiritual substance based creation; the trees and grass etc., are a spiritual creation that live off the presence of God. 1Cor.15v38-54. The changes will be exquisite, and transcendently more beautiful and beneficial than anything either we or even angels experience at present. There is water, but it is the water of life, a river proceeding from the throne, the like of which has never been seen by mankind on earth. Rev.22v1-3. This water of life flows from the being of God, it is as clear as a crystal, and cannot be contaminated by impurities like our present water. It is full of God's love, life and beauty, it is probably not constrained by the forces of gravity, and the invitation is given to all who are thirsty to come and drink of its freely flowing waters. Rev.22v17. This living water is far superior to the present seas and lakes which have been badly polluted by mankind. The present world has its temperature regulated by water within fairly narrow limits, the absence of water shows that the present constraints of temperature on the people and environment, no longer apply to the new creation.

No more tears or crying. In Rev.21v4., at the start of the ages of ages at the end of the Millennium, God repeats again His promise of Rev.7v17., which He made 1,000 years earlier, at the end of the great tribulation, that He will "wipe away all tears from their eyes." Isa.25v7-9. God removes all the causes of tears, death, mourning, crying, wailing, and pain are all gone. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Is.32v17.

In Rev.21v6., "It is done," is better translated, "they have come to pass," "gegonan," the perfect active indicative of "ginomai," to become, to take place, to come to pass. The perfect shows that God's promises and plans have not only been fulfilled and completed, but that their results also continue into the future. God repeats, as in 1v8., "I am the Alpha and the Omega," and adds, "the Beginning and the End," "he arche kai to telos," this whole description is used of Jesus in Rev.22v13.. Jesus is called "he arche," the first cause, in Col.1v18. and Rev.3v14., while here the Father is the First Cause, and the End, as in Rom.11v36. and Eph.4v6. See Is.44v6. 48v12. God is the most generous benevolent Giver. James.1v5,17. He gives the water of Life. Rev.7v17. 22v1,17. see Isa.55v1.. "Freely," "dorean," see Mt.10v8. Jn.4v10. Rom.3v24. Acts.8v20. Rev.22v17.

In Rev.21v7., our Lord adds another promise to those given to overcomers at the close of each of the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3. Those who overcome shall inherit all things and will have the Father as his God and be a son of God. A better promise than that given to Abraham, Gen.17v7., Solomon, 2Sam.7v14., and David.. Ps.89v26,27. Rev.21v3,4.

THE GLORY AND BEAUTY OF THE HOLY CITY, THE NEW JERUSALEM.

Carried away in the spirit. Rev.21v10.

One of the seven angels, who had received one of the seven vials of God's wrath in Rev.15v1., carries John into the wilderness to see the harlot Babylon, and God's judgement on that evil city, in Rev.17v1.. In Rev.21v9,10., one of these seven angels carries John "away in the spirit to a great and high mountain," (Ezek.8v3. 40v2. Comp. Mt.4v8.) and shows him "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God." (The seven angels who pour out the Vials, may not be the seven great angels that stand before God. See Rev.1v4. 5v6. 8v2. and Zech.4v10.) The bride, "numphe," is seen in sharp contrast to the "porne," the "harlot." John is invited to see, "the bride the wife of the Lamb," and sees the New Jerusalem, the place where the bride of Christ will live. The New Jerusalem was briefly mentioned in Rev.21v2., here from Rev.21v9 to 22v5., there is an extended description of the beautiful holy city The description of a bride has twice been used in Rev.19v7. and 21v2., here in Rev.21v9., we read, "the bride the wife of the Lamb," "ten numphen ten gunaika tou arniou," the Church, which has been like a bride in waiting, now comes into a full and perfect relationship with Jesus, her Lord.

The words, "He carried me away in the spirit," "apenegken me en pneumatii," which are used in Rev.17v3., and here in Rev.21v10., are full of significance, and reveal what is possible in the Spirit-filled life. Paul had a similar experience of the glories of Heaven in 2Cor.12v1-4., and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to repeat. On that occasion, Paul said he did not know whether he was in the body, or out of the body, John, however, knew that he was "carried away in the spirit." See also Rev.1v10. and 4v1,2., where John is said to be "in the spirit," which preceded "the spirit of wisdom and revelation," which conveyed these important prophetic revelations. Eph.1v17.

The enormous size of the New Jerusalem.

The wall is said to be "a hundred and forty and four cubits" high; that would be 216 feet high; which is low in comparison with the height of the city. "According to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel," means though the city was measured by an angel, a human measuring standard was employed. The city "lieth foursquare," as in Ezek.48v16,20., however, it is not clear if the 1500 miles (12,000 furlongs) is the combined measurement of each of the four sides and height, or the sum total. If the city was 1,500 miles square it would cover an area twice the size of India. If the city was 300miles square and 300 miles high, 1,500 miles in total, it would still be an enormous city. One thing is sure, it will be large enough for all. John.14v1ff.. Some say that the city is a cube, others think that it is pyramid shaped. The exact words that are used for the measurement of the city, "mekos," length; "hupsos," height; and "platos," width, are applied to Christ's love in Eph.3v18., with "bathos," depth, added.

The glory that pervades our eternal home.

The holy city, our heavenly home, glows with the indescribable dazzling radiance of the glory of God. God's very presence fills and permeates it and all the people within her. The brilliance of the light is likened to the most precious jasper stone, possibly the sparkling brilliance of a diamond, and with the pure clear crystalline brightness of a crystal; John is lost for words to describe the beauty and glory of what he saw. We see our Father's face and serve, "latreousin," and worship Him forever, and our bliss is complete. Rev.22v3,5 The city shines with a radiance like gold, and all kinds of precious stones are visible in its foundations. Eight of these stones are mentioned in the High Priest's breastplate. Ex.28v17-20; 39v10ff.; Eze.28v13; Isa.54v11f.. Swete sums up the colour of the stones as, **blue stones**, sapphire, jacinth, amethyst; **green stones**, jasper, chalcedony, emerald, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase; **red stones**, sardonyx, sardius; **yellow stones**, chrysolite. This description may not be totally correct, but the size, brilliancy, and great variety of these stones will have to be seen to be appreciated.

Twelve angels are at the twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, "gate," is "pulon," from "pule," a large gate. Rev.21v12,13,15,25. 22v14. See Lk.16v20. Acts.14v13.. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the gates, one for each tribe, as in Ezek.48v30-35.. Rev.7v1-8. Twelve pearls, "dodeka margaritai," are the gates of the city. Rev.21v21.

The twelve foundations have the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb written upon them, twelve Israelites. Jesus had spoken of twelve thrones for the apostles. Mt.19v28. We wonder which name replaced that of Judas, was it Matthias, or Paul? The fact that the twelve apostles of the Lamb have their names in the foundation of the new Jerusalem, shows that the Christian Church has a prominent part in the running of God's kingdom. doubtless the faithful of the Old Testament will have their place in this kingdom and heavenly city. Though there does not seem to be the same distinction between earth and Heaven in the ages of ages, for God tabernacles with men on earth, and His heavenly city is transported to earth. This city is without doubt a literal city, and it is of the most tremendous proportions. Some think that this capital city of God's creation will be shaped like a pyramid, the Chinese beggar boys of Yunnan Fu saw it as three cities one on top of another, combined into one city. The thing that we need to note is that nothing that defiles shall enter it. Christian this is your home. Jn.14v1-6.

The Almighty Father and the Lamb are the Sanctuary and light of the new Jerusalem. Rev.21v22-25.

John did not see a temple sanctuary, "naon," in the new Jerusalem, for God our Father and Jesus our Lamb are the Temple Sanctuary, and the whole city is filled with their Shekinah Glory and eternal presence, "For the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple Sanctuary thereof." In 2Cor.6v16., Paul tells us that at the present we are the sanctuary of God, but in that eternal kingdom, God the Father and the Lamb become our Sanctuary. We will then live, and move, and have our being in them in the fullest and truest sense. Acts.17v28. The atmosphere of Heaven will be filled with God and love, Finney said at his baptism in the Spirit that wave after wave of liquid love went over and over him, Heaven will be even better than his remarkable baptism in the Holy Spirit. Heaven's inhabitants will be bathed and satiated with the love of God. In Rev.21v3., God states that His tabernacle, "skene," is with men, and He will dwell with them. "Dwell," is "skenosoi," the future active indicative of "skenoos," to tent, to dwell, to reside. God repeats His promise given in Rev.7v15., and in the Old Testament in Ezek.37.v27. Zech.2v10. 8v8., to eternally dwell with redeemed mankind. In Jn.1v14., "tabernacled" is "eskenosen," the aorist of "skenoos," speak of the incarnation of Jesus. When Jesus tabernacled amongst us, He hid the deity and glory of His being from all but His closest friends. Here in Rev.21v3., God the Father reveals the full glory of His being to us. Mt.1v23. ("Skene," is used in Rev.13v6. 15v6., of the heavenly tabernacle of which the earthly tabernacle was a copy. Heb.8v2. 9v11.)

There shall be no night there. Rev.21v25. 22v5.

In both Rev.21v25. and 22v5., God tells us that there will be no night in the new Jerusalem, or need of sun or moon to light it, for the city is filled with the effulgent Shekinah glory of God and the Lamb, to such an extent that it puts to shame the light of the sun. Is.24v23. Rev.21v11." Those who enter the city not only come under the shadow of the Almighty, they walk, live and move in God's very presence and glory, a glory infinitely beyond the presence of God at the burning bush,. Those who live in and enter this city, will surely feel even more than Moses, that they need to take the shoes from off their feet, because they are standing on ground made holy with the divine presence. The choirs of angels and redeemed saints fill Heaven with beautiful melodies and glorious majestic joyful praise. This city is filled with God, and His love and joy. God created us so that He could share with us all the treasures of His being, knowledge, wisdom and love, and rejoice in them for ever.

The river of the water of life. Rev.22v1,2,17.

"A river of water of life," "hudor zoes," water of life, see Rev.7v17. 21v6. 22v17. and Jn.4v14.. The Garden of Eden had a river, but it cannot be compared with the beauty and glory of this river. Gen.2v10. We read in Ezek.47v1-12. and Zech.14v8,9., of a river flowing from the sanctuary in Jerusalem during the Millennium, but that appears to be ordinary water, not the spiritual water of life referred to here in Revelation. See Joel.3v18. This water is said to be as "bright and sparkling as crystal," it shimmers and sparkles with Divine life. These living waters proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Jesus is said to share the Father's throne in Rev.3v21. 22v3, and Heb.1v3.. In Jer.2v13. God uses the metaphor of a fountain of life. Ps.36v9.

The tree of life. Rev.22v2.

There are obviously many trees of life, for they are on both sides of the river of life. "The tree of life," "xulon

zoes," is spoken of in Gen.2v9,24., and Rev.2v7. and 22v14.. It bears, "twelve manner of fruits," which are for "the healing of the nations;" the tree of life keeps the body of those who eat it in perfect health, and seems just as beneficial for spiritual bodies as human bodies. Adam's sin deprived us of the tree of life and so brought sickness and death into the world. Rom.5v12. In Rev.22v2., the word for "healing" is "therapeuo." There will be no more pain and sickness, as the leaves of this tree will keep everybody at the peak of perfection. It is only given to the Trinity to have life in themselves, everybody else will have to derive their life from God. Jn.5v26. We read in Rev.22v14., that it is those who wash their robes, who are blessed and have the right to the tree of life. "Plunontes," is the present active participle of "pluno,". Rev.7v14.

There shall be no more curse. Rev.22v3.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." Gal.3v13. There is no curse resting on believers in Jesus, Christ's blood has redeemed us, from the curse of the Law and every curse. Numb.23v23. In Rev.22v3., God says that when the ages of ages starts, the curse is finally and permanently lifted from creation. The noun "katathema," here translated "curse," is not found anywhere else in the New Testament, however Peter uses the verbs "katanathematizo," in Mt.26v74., to utter curses against; and "anathematizo," in Mk.14v71., to curse, when he invoked curses upon himself when he denied Jesus. The usual noun for curse, "anathema," occurs in 1Cor.16v22. Gal.1v8. and Rom.9v3..

They shall serve Him: and they shall see His face,- they shall reign for ever and ever. Rev.22v4,5.

God's children serve God with unhindered service, "shall do him service," is the future active of "latreuo," which gives the continuous linear idea, "shall keep on serving." In Rev.7v15., the present active indicative of "latreuo," is used to describe the service and worship of God in Heaven. " We read in Rev.22v4., "They shall see his face," "opsontai to prosopon autou," the humanity of Moses meant that this vision of God could not be given to him, because it would have caused his death. Exod.33v18-23. Jesus promised us that the pure in heart would see God face to face. Mt.5v8. Jn.17v24. 1Cor.13v12. See Heb.12v14. and Ps.17v15.. The face of God our Father is revealed in the face of Jesus. Jn.14v7-11. 2Cor.4v6. By beholding His glory we have been transfigured into His likeness. 2Cor.3v18. Rom.8v28-30. 1Jn.3v2,3.

They shall reign," "basileusousin," the future active of "basileuo," this is referring to reigning in the eternal kingdom, not just the millennial reign of Rev.20v4-6.. See Rev.1v6. 2v26,27. 3v21. 5v10. Lk.22v30. The Divine Name is written on the foreheads of the overcomers as promised before. Rev.3v12. 7v3. 14v1. 22v4.

Nothing that defiles shall enter. Rev.21v27. 22v15.

We again read of those who will be excluded from the city and kingdom of God. A strong double negative, "ou me," states that the gates of the heavenly city "shall in no wise be shut," and that the nations bring their honour and glory into it. However, in Rev.21v27., the same strong double negative, "ou me," states that nothing that is unclean and defiles will enter the heavenly city. "Anything unclean," is "pan koinon," and "koinon," "unclean," is used to describe something defiled or profane, as in Mk.7v2. and Act.10v14., not just what is common. Tit 1v4. "And he that. maketh an abomination and a lie." "poion bdelugma kai pseudos;" "Bdelugma," speaks of something which is detestable and morally unclean. **See Rev.21v8.** "Abominable," "ebdelugmenois," the perfect passive participle of "bdelusso", only occurs here and Rom.2v22., in the New Testament. It describes those who are defiled with evil. Titus.1v16. We also read in Rev.21v27., that those who make a lie, "poion pseudos," are excluded from this city and kingdom; this is again repeated in Rev. 22v15., where "every one loving and doing a lie." "pas philon kai poion pseudos," is said to be outside of the city and kingdom. We read in Rev.21v8., that "all liars," "pasin tois pseudos," will be in the lake of fire and brimstone.

In Rev.22v15., God says the dogs, "hoi kunes," are outside of the holy city, and God's kingdom. This speaks of impure sense-dominated people, not literal dogs, but people like the untamed and vicious scavenging dogs of the Oriental world, who live off the filth of the world. Rev.21v27. 2Kings.8v13. Ps.22v16,20. Mt.7v6. Phil.3v2. When our Lord spoke to the Syrophenician woman in Mt.15v26,27. and Mk.7v27,28., he used "kunarion," which is a diminutive used to describe a beloved pet lap dog.

In Rev.22v15., God again mentions, "the sorcerers," as being "outside" the holy city, which is the same as Rev.21v8., where they are said to be, "in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, the second death." Jesus spoke of "the outer darkness" as the place where the lost are sent. Mt.8v12. 22v13. 25v30. Jesus three times states in the Majority Text of Mk.9v44,46,48., "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Jesus is informing us that the evil the wicked love, in Hell will turn upon them and attack their inner being, and becomes like a tormenting gnawing worm within them. Jesus states that wicked people will be in Hell because they still love the evil that caused them to be confined there, even though it is like a tormenting, gnawing worm inside them that never dies. Is.66v24. God again singles out, "every one that loves and makes a lie," as in Rev.21v8., when He said that "all liars" would be in the lake of fire, and Rev.21v27., which states that those who make an abomination or lie will not be allowed to enter and defile the New Jerusalem. Satan uses lies to corrupt the worldling. Jn.8v44. Rom.1v25. 2Th.2v9-12. Lies should have no place in a Christian's vocabulary. Eph.4v25.

Our Lord's personal testimony to the Revelation.

In Rev.22v16., Jesus gives a personal verification that the Revelation is from Himself. Christ speaks as, "The root and the offspring of David;" here "the offspring," is added to, "the root of David," of Rev.5v5.. This is a reference to the prophetic promise of Is.11v1,10., that "a root out of Jesse," will set up the Millennial kingdom,

and again restore Israel to their land. Is.11v1-12. Mt.22v42-46. In Rev10v4., God told John to seal the revelations of the seven thunders; but here in Rev.22v10., John is told not to seal the rest of the prophecies of the book, for they are open for all to read. Rev.1v3. 13v18. 17v9.

Jesus the bright and morning star.

In Rev.22v16., Jesus describes Himself as, "ho aster ho lampros ho proinos," "the bright, the morning star," which shall rise in the darkness of the night, to shed His light on the world. In 2Pet.1v19., Peter describes Jesus as "the day-star," "phosphoros," which is derived from "phos," light, and "phero," to bring; this is the same as the Hebrew "heylel" 1966, in Is.14v12., the "Day-star," or "Morning-star," (from hâlal, to shine), translated by the Latin "Lucifer" in the King James Bible. "Day-star" was the name that God gave to Satan before he fell. Is.14v12-17. Through deceit, and lust for power, the "Light-Bringer" became the Prince of Darkness. In Rev.2v28., Jesus promises to give "the morning star" to those who overcome, which appears to be Himself, Christ is the Light of the world. Jn.1v9. 8v12. Balaam prophesied that a star would come out of Jacob.Num.24v17. In Lk.1v78., the Majority Text informs us that Zechariah prophesied the amazing fact, that "the Dayspring from on high hath visited us," when God the Word was a three month foetus in Mary's womb. "Dayspring," is "anatole," which literally means, "rising from on high." See Mal.4v2.

God's open invitation to all thirsty souls.

The invitation is given to every thirsty person to come to drink. "Dipsao," is used for spiritual thirst in John 6v35. and 7v37. and for those thirsting for the water of life in Rev.21v6. and 22v1. See Isa.55v1.. The drinking of this heavenly water depends on the will, "He that will," "ho thelon," and the active taking of this living water, "let him take," "labeto," the aorist active imperative of "lambano." This water is freely offered to all in Rev.21v6.. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live. 2Pet.3v9. The invitation is open to all, the response is our personal responsibility.

The hearers personal choice of judgement or a benediction. Rev.22v18-21.

God warns all who read this book to take it seriously; those who trifle with its words will reap the most dreadful consequences. Rev.22v18,19. The Lord Jesus promises to come quickly to fulfil these prophecies. This could be looked at in the light of 2Pet.3v7-9., God's experience of time is not the same as ours, or it could mean that when the prophecies in this book come to pass, then the coming of the Lord will be near. Mt.24v33. However, whichever view we take, let us live in such a way that the prayer of John is ever upon our lips, and in our hearts, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In Rev.22v18,19., our Lord gives a solemn warning against perverting the prophecies of Revelation. Jesus addresses this warning to the hearers of this book, and not just to copyists or expositors of the Revelation. Commentators who distort the prophecies of Revelation do not accept our Lord's warnings in these verses, and state that Jesus did not say these words. However, it is our Lord Himself who testifies and bears solemn witness to this book, and gives the strong warning against perverting its truths and prophecies. Jesus is not referring to the New Testament, or to the Bible as a whole, though similar warnings are given elsewhere concerning rejection, corruption and perversion of the Scriptures. This warning has certainly been needed, and often little heeded, if we are to judge from the many wilful perversions that Revelation has received at the hands of both copyists and expositors. Our Lord warns that plagues and the loss of the tree of life and our heavenly inheritance are possible through perversion of this book. We need to tremble at this Word of the Lord. Is.66v2.

The Holy Spirit and the bride, cry ceaselessly, with intense personal desire for Jesus to return, "come," is "erchou", the present middle imperative of "erchomai", which Jesus had just promised twice to do. Jesus had warned the seven churches in Asia that He would come quickly to deal with the problems and wickedness in them. Rev.2v5,16. 3v11. This obviously had an almost immediate fulfilment. However, when Jesus promises in Rev.22v7,20., "and behold, I come quickly." the adverb "quickly," "tachu" 5035, can be interpreted to mean a much longer time period. It can be viewed in the light of eternity and the time scale of God, as Peter warns in 2Pet.3v7-9., and Moses states in Ps.90v4.. Jesus could also be simply saying, as He did in Mt.24v33., that when these prophecies start to come to pass, His coming will be "near, even at the doors." Mk.13v29. Lk.21v31. John expresses total confidence and joy in our Lord's promise to return quickly and prays, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." In 1Cor.16v22., "Maranatha," is the Aramaic equivalent of the prayer of John, "come, Lord Jesus." Paul loved, longed, and looked forward to our Lord's second coming, and so should we. 2Tim.4v8. Tit.2v13.

John follows Paul's example and finishes Revelation with a benediction of grace upon all who have listened to the reading of the book. "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints." Rev.22v20,21. Heb.13v25. The Received Text reads, "with you all," the Majority Text reads, "with all the saints." "The saints," "hoi hagioi," is John's usual description for believers in Revelation. Rev.8v3,4. 11v18. 13v7,10. 14v12. 16v6. 17v6. 18v20,24. 19v8. 20v9. All who read this book with an open seeking obedient heart will have a special benediction upon them. "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

WE ARE SAVED BY GOD'S GREAT GRACE, NOT BY THE LAW. Rev.22v14._

In Rev.22v14., "Blessed are those who do his commandments," is taken by some to mean a return to the rigors and bondage of the Law. However, there is good evidence that this verse should read, "Blessed are those who wash their robes."

The evidence that "blessed are those who wash their robes is the correct reading in Rev.22v14.

The Critical Texts, Aleph and Codex A; about 15 minuscules, including 1006, 2020, 2053, the Old Latin ar, c, dem, div, haf; the Vulgate; the Coptic Sahidic; the Ethiopic; Athanasius; Fulgentius; Aspringius; Ps-Ambrose, and Haymo, read, "Blessed are those who wash their robes;" "Makaríoi hoi plunontes tas stolas auton;" "plunontes is the present active participle of "pluno" "to wash;" the same verb that is used with "stolas" in Rev.7v14.. In Rev.3v4. the negative statement occurs and Jesus says that only few in Sardis had white garments, the rest had defiled garments, "defiled," is "emolunan," the first aorist active indicative of "moluno," "to smear over as with mud or filth, to make foul, to soil, to pollute." See 1Cor.8v7. Compare Rev.14v4.

The United Bible Societies Translator Handbook follows, "those who wash their robes," "hoi 3588, plunontes 4150, tas 3588, stolas 4749, auton" 846. "Plunontes" is the present active participle of "pluno" 4150, to "plunge," i.e. to wash: with reference to clothing, and figuratively here, of those who sins are regarded by God as washed away through Christ's atoning blood. **See Rev.7v14.**, for this same verb with "stolas" 4749. **See also 1Cor.6v11.**, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (NKJ)

In Rev. 22v14. "Blessed are those who wash their robes," is the translation followed by, The New American Standard, and Update. The New International Version. The Revised Standard Version. Today's English Version. Darby's Translation. And The New Living Translation. The American Standard Version, reads, "Blessed are they that wash their robes."

We read in Rev.7v14., "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This is a way of proclaiming the fact of our purification from sin through the atoning death and shed blood of Jesus. "And they washed, is "kai eplunan," the aorist active indicative of "pluno" 4150, to wash, it only occurs in the New Testament in Lk.5v2. Rev.7v14. and 22v14.. "Made them white," is "eleukanan," the aorist active indicative of "leukaino" 3021, to whiten. The aorist tenses looks back to the time on earth, when they were cleansed by faith in Jesus and His atoning shed blood.. See Heb.9v14., "**How much more shall the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (KJV). See also 1Jn.1v7. "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, **and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" (NKJ).

An examination of the Greek text of Revelation makes one feel that Satan has made a determined assault upon its Greek text through biased and conceited people, or people with a theological axe to grind, who thought that they knew better than God, what the text should be. There seems to be a definite attack on the washing in Christ's blood. This is seen in Rev.1v5., which reads, "From Jesus Christ, ---who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (NKJ). Here the majority of manuscripts read "**washed us from,**" "apo;" the Critical Texts read "loosed us out of," "ek." "Washed us from our sins in His own blood," makes much better sense and follows the language and theme of Revelation more accurately than, "loosed us out of our sins by His blood." The washing white of robes in the blood of the Lamb is referred to in Rev.7v14.; and in Rev.5v9.; we are purchased to God with the precious blood of Jesus. 1Pet.1v18,19. Rev.12v11.

Burgon was one of the greatest textual scholars of all time, and on page B-29 of "Unholy Hands On The Bible," a compilation of Burgon's works, the following comment is made on Rev.1v5., in favour of the A.V. reading "washed."

"The beautiful expression which has found its way into so many tender passages relating to Christian devotion, 'Who has **washed us** from our sins in His own blood' has been replaced in many critical editions by 'Who has **loosed us** from our sins by His blood.' In early times a purist scribe, who had a dislike of anything that savoured of provincial retention of Aeolian or Dorian pronunciations, wrote from unconscious bias 'u' for 'ou', thereby transcribing 'lusanti' instead of the correct 'lousanti' (unless he were not a Greek scholar enough to understand the difference). And he was followed by others, especially those who, whether from their own prejudices or due to sympathy with the scruples of other people, but in any case under the influence of a slavish literalism, hesitated about a passage in which they did not rise to the precious meaning really conveyed in it. So we find the three uncials which are nearest the point of corruption adopt it, and they are followed by nine cursives, the Harkleian Syriac, and the Armenian versions. On the other side are two uncials B/2 of the eighth century and P of the ninth, and the Vulgate, Bohairic, Ethiopic versions - and what is most important - all the other cursives." **End of quote.**

The textual evidence for "Blessed are they that do His commandments," in Rev.22v14.

In Rev.22v14. The Textus Receptus, Authorised Version, most minuscules, the Old Latin gig, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean, the Coptic Bohairic, Tertullian, and Hodges and Farstad, read, "Blessed are they that do His commandments;" "Makaríoi hoi poiountes tas entolas autou;" "poiountes," the nominative plural masculine present active participle of "poieo," "to do." So there is considerable evidence for the reading "do His commandments," However, The United Bible Societies, "A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament," edited by Bruce M. Metzger, states that the reading, in Rev.22v14., "Blessed are those who do His commandments," "**appears to be a scribal emendation,**" because "**the prepossessions of the scribes, would have caused them to favour this reading,**" for elsewhere the author uses the expression "**terein tas entolas**" (Rev.12v17; 14v12)."Quote ends. This means that the scribe's prejudiced mindsets

caused them to alter the text.

In Rev.12v17. "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring ("sperma" 4690, something sown, a seed, offspring; remnant), who keep ("tereo" 5083, to attend to carefully, to take care of, to guard, to observe) the commandments of God, and hold fast to ("echo" 2192, to have, to possess, to hold fast, to adhere or cling to) the testimony of Jesus." This text reveals to us Antichrist's ferocious warfare ("polemos" 4171) against godly Jews and Christians, who stand true to God, and who he tries to murder, but God protects many of His saints. Rev.12v6,14.

In Rev.14v12. "Here is the endurance of the saints; here are those who keep ("tereo" 5083, again) the commandments of God, and the faith in Jesus. Robertson says it should read, "The faith **in** Jesus" (objective genitive) as in Rev.2v13. Mk.11v22. James.2v1." "Endurance," is "hupomone" 5281, steadfastness, constancy, brave endurance, and perseverance, even in the greatest trials and sufferings. God reveals in advance the constancy and brave endurance that saintly Jews as well as Christians will manifest in their sufferings at the hands of Antichrist, in the Great Tribulation, and commends them for it.

These texts cannot mean that Christians should keep the Law to be saved, for the New Testament warns against the teaching of the Judaizers, who caused chaos in the Church. Some, who have missed the prophetic import of Rev.12v17. and 14v12., say that these texts could simply be stating that we must obey God's commandment to believe in Jesus, and love one another. This is not the primary meaning here, however, it is a valid New Testament truth, for Jesus said, in **Jn.6v29.**, "This is the work of God, **that you believe in Him** whom He sent." John also states in **1Jn.3v23.**, "And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment." John again writes in **1Jn.3v11.**, "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." **Jesus said in Jn.14v21,23,24.**, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, **and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.**" v23 --"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, **and We will come to him and make Our home with him.** v24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words." **Note also Jn.13v34.**, "**A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**" **Note Jn.15v12,17.**, "**This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. v17 These things I command you, that you love one another.**" Paul states in **Rom.13v8-10.**, "Owe no one anything except to love one another, **for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. v9** For the commandments ---are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." **v10 Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.**" See 1Thes.4v9., 1Pet.1v22. 2John.1v5.

See 1Jn.4v7-12., "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. v8 **The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.** v9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. v10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. v11 **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. v12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.**" Paul states in **Rom.3v31.** "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." Faith in Jesus establishes the moral Law of God. It negates circumcision and the ceremonial laws. **Col.2v14-17.** Paul states in **1Cor.7v18.**, "**Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.**"

The Judaizers caused havoc in the Early Church. We read in Acts15v1,5., "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. v5 ---there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This problem was brought to and discussed by the apostles and elders and all the Jerusalem Church. After much discussion, James, our Lord's brother, gave the counsel that settled the issue. We read, "Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law'-- to whom we gave no such commandment--v28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: v29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." Acts.15v24,28,29.

Paul states that Christians who go back and try to be justified by Law are under a curse, and are severed from Christ.

We read in Gal.1v8,9. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. v9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. **Paul affirms in Gal.5v4.**, **You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**" **Paul declares in Gal.2v16,20,21.**, "**Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**" v20 **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and**

the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. v21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

As Jesus said in **John.5v45.**, the Law of Moses will always accuse us when we fail, the Gospel forgives and liberates. The Scripture states that our "right" ("exousia" 1849, authority) to eat of the tree of life, and to enter the heavenly city, is not due to our keeping of the commandments, or our works, or merits, but through God's great grace, and the cleansing blood of Jesus.

APPENDIX 1. A BRIEF STUDY ON THE ISSUES OF DEATH AND ETERNAL JUDGEMENT.

I apologise to God and to the readers of my earlier studies on Revelation, for not previously examining the subject of eternal judgement in sufficient depth, and with the necessary clarity. I hope and pray that this study will rectify this in some measure. Those who desire to study eternal judgement at greater depth, can read my more detailed study under this same heading.

1. WHAT IS A SOUL? WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON DIES?

What is a person's soul?

The Scriptures often refer to a person as a "soul," however, they are not just a soul, for in 1Thes.5v23., they are said to be a tripartite being composed of body, soul and spirit. A person's soul is certainly differentiated from their body and spirit in many places in the Scriptures. Is.57v15,16. Eccles.12v7. Numb.16v30-33. Lk.12v5. Mt.10v28. 1Kings.17v21. 1Cor.2v10,11. The Hebrew word for "soul," "nephesh," means "a breathing creature, a living organism," it is used over 770 times in the Old Testament, but it is never said to be put into a "qeber," a grave. Its Greek equivalent, "psyche," occurs 105 times in the New Testament. Both words are used to speak of a person's essential personality, self and being, and also of the life of the lower animals. In Heb.4v12., we read that there is a division between soul and spirit. People are called "souls," because it describes their essential being and personality. When a farmer says that he has 200 head of sheep, we do not think that his sheep consist only of heads. When a captain says that he has 50 hands on board, we do not think that 50 hands float about his ship doing the work. In the same way, when we describe people as "souls," we do not mean that they have no body or spirit, we are just speaking of their essential being and personality. Our body enables us to contact earth; our spirit enables us to contact and communicate with God, Heaven, and spiritual realities; it is the organ of spiritual perception and spiritual activity. 1Cor.2v10,11. 14v1,2,14-16. Paul declares in Rom.1v9., that he served God with his spirit.

What happens when a person dies?

When a person dies their body goes to the grave, whether they are a Christian or an unbeliever. At death the soul of the unbeliever goes to Hades, and his spirit goes back to God who gave it. Eccles.12v7. Whereas, when a Christian dies they do not lose their spirit, their soul and spirit are not separated, and they go to God together. The Old Testament teaches that before Jesus died for us, the souls of all mankind went down to "Sheol," the Hebrew name for the New Testament "Hades." However, at the coming of Jesus things were greatly altered, Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, He said that those who believed in Him would never die, and the gates of Hades would not prevail against His Church. 2Tim.1v10. Mt.16v18. At death, believers in Jesus go right into the bliss of Heaven. Lk.23v43. Jn.6v39,40,44,54. with 8v50-52. 11v21-26. Acts.7v55-60. Heb.12v22-24. Rev.6v9-11. 14v13. 16v7. Paul writes in Phil.1v21-23., that he was joyfully anticipating being present with the Lord, which he said is far, far, far better {Lightfoot says it is a triple far in the Greek}. See 2Cor.5v6-8. So we can see the death and atonement of Christ, and His descent into Hades, completely transformed the function of Hades, from a place where both unbelievers and believers went to at death, to a place only for unbelievers.

The Old Testament speaks of people "giving up the spirit," at death. Gen.25v8,17. 35v29. 49v33. Job.14v10.

At death the spirit goes back to God who gave it. Eccl.12v7. Jesus gave His spirit back to the Father, His body went into the tomb, and His soul was made an offering for our sin, and endured the pains of Hades for us. Mt.27v50. Lk.23v46,50-53. Acts.2v23-31. Is.53v10. Jesus took the judgement of our sins upon Himself. Ananias and Sapphira, and Herod, in sharp contrast, gave up their spirits through an act of divine judgement. Acts.5v5,10.12v23. Eccles.3v21. 8v8. The Scriptures state that the spirit of the wicked is dead to God while they are still alive. Lk.15v32. 1Tim.5v6. Heb.6v1. 9v14. Rev.3v1.

The Old Testament also uses the phrase "he slept with his fathers," to speak of the death of the body.

See Deut.31v16. 2Sam.7v12. 1King.1v21. 2v10. 11v43. 14v20,31. 15v8,24. 16v6,28. 22v40,50. 2Kings.8v24. 10v35. 13v9,13. etc. The New Testament also speaks of people "falling asleep," though the expression is only used of believers, this sleeping is clearly seen to be referring to bodies and not souls. Jn.11v11-14. Acts.7v60. 13v36. 1Cor.11v30. 15v6,18,20,51. 1Thes.4v13-17. 2Pet.3v4. We read in Mt.27v50-52., that many bodies of the saints which slept arose and after Christ's resurrection and went into Jerusalem and appeared to many. In 1Thes.4v13-17., Paul informs us that the souls of Christians who die are with Christ when their bodies are asleep in the grave. The word "slept" clearly only applies to the body, this is why we still call burial grounds, "cemeteries," which means "sleeping places."

The Old Testament uses the phrase "gathered to his people" of the death of the righteous.

It is used of Abraham, Gen.25v8.; of Ishmael, Gen.25v17.; of Isaac, Gen.35v29.; of Jacob, Gen.49v29,33.; of Aaron, Numb.20v24,26.; of Moses, Numb.27v13. 31v2. Deut.32v50.. This shows that even under the old covenant the righteous dead were gathered to their godly relatives; a lovely and thoughtful divine decree from a loving God. His thoughts have always been kind to His children, even before our redemption was accomplished in Christ Jesus.

IS "SHEOL-HADES" THE GRAVE?

In the Old Testament all who died went to the place, which is called in the Hebrew, "Sheol," and in the Greek "Hades." However, now only unbelievers go to "Hades," its gates have no power over Christians, they are with their Lord in Heaven. Mt.16v18. Rev.1v18. 2Cor.5v1,6-8. Phil.1v21-23. That the dead consciously exist is seen in many of the Scriptures we have already quoted, and by the following Scriptures. Is.14v9-11. Ez.32v21. Ps.16v10. Lk.16v22-25.

"Hades" occurs more than 100 times in the Septuagint Greek Old Testament, nearly always to translate the Hebrew "Sheol." "Hades" occurs 11 times in the New Testament, Mt.11v23. 16v18. Lk.10v15. 16v23. Acts.2v27,31. Rev.1v18. 6v8. 20v13,14. In 1Cor.15v55., the Critical Texts read "thanatos," "death," instead of the Majority Text "Hades," which the Authorised Version wrongly translates as "grave." The English word "Hell," comes from the Saxon "helan," to cover; it originally meant, "a covered or invisible place." However, in many people's eyes, the word "Hell," has come to mean, "the place of the future eternal punishment of the wicked." It no longer conveys the idea of "Sheol" or "Hades." It is, therefore, unfortunate that "Sheol," "Hades," "Gehenna," and "Tartarus" are all translated by the word "Hell" in the Authorised Version of the Bible. {Tartarus," is the place in the Abyss where evil angels are confined. 2Pet.2v4.}.

That the Jews were confused and unscriptural in some of their theology about "Sheol," can be seen from the following comment on "Hades" in Edward Robinson's, "Greek and English Lexicon." "According to the notions of the Hebrews, 'Hades' was a vast subterranean receptacle, where the souls of the dead existed in a separate state until the resurrection of their bodies. The region of the blessed during this interval, or the inferior Paradise, they supposed to be in the upper part of this receptacle; while beneath was the Abyss or Gehenna, Tartarus, in which the souls of the wicked were subjected to punishment." End of quote.

If Robinson's synopsis of the beliefs of the Jews about Hades is correct, the Jews were certainly unscriptural in their ideas about life after death. It is certainly true to say that Hades is a vast subterranean receptacle, which was divided into two separate parts for the wicked and righteous. However, to say that Gehenna is part of Hades is definitely wrong; Gehenna is the lake of fire, the place of eternal punishment, into which Hades is cast after the millennium. Rev.20v14. No one is cast into the lake of fire until the return of Christ. Mt.25v41.

It is unscriptural to call Sheol-Hades, "the inferior Paradise," for "paradeisos," speaks of a park or garden, and of the ultimate in blessedness. The Septuagint translators use "paradeisos," when speaking of the Garden of Eden in Gen.2v8. and Ezek.31v8,9.. "Paradeisos," is used in 2Cor.12v1-4. and Rev.2v7., to speak of God's incredibly beautiful garden in Heaven. In Lk.16v23-25., Jesus tells us that the Old Testament saints did receive comfort from God, but they were anticipating anything but Paradise. Gesenius says "Sheol" is, "a subterranean place full of thick darkness. Job.10v21,22." Godly Job said that when he died, he was going to "a place where the light is as darkness." Job.10v20-22. Hades is certainly no paradise, it is a dark and awful place, and even godly saints were in bondage all their lives, at the thought of going to Hades at death. Heb.2v15.

The correct translation of Lk.23v43. should read, "I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Jesus told the thief that his faith had saved him THAT DAY, and that he need not wait until His kingdom was established to be assured of a place in it. Jesus did not go to Paradise that day, He went to "Hades," and to the bad side where the wicked were incarcerated, for He died in the sinners place. 2Cor.5v21. When Jesus told the parable of Lk.16v19-31., He knew that to redeem us He would have to go and be imprisoned in the bad part of Hades like the selfish, greedy and evil rich man in the parable.

"Hades" and "Sheol" are both speaking of the same place, and Ps.16v10. and Acts.2v27., confirm this.

They refer to the unseen subterranean place of departed souls and are quite distinct from the Hebrew "qeber," and the Greek "mnaymion," which are translated as grave, sepulchre, or tomb. The Authorised Version never translates "qeber" and "mnaymion" as "Hell," however, it incorrectly translates "Sheol" as "grave" 31 times out of the 65 which it occurs in the Old Testament, probably because the translators have avoided the use of "Hell" when the reference was to godly people, obviously feeling that there was some slight in using "Hell" in connection with them. Gen.37v35. 42v38. 44v29-31. 1Kings.2v6-9. 1Sam.2v6. Job.7v9. 14v13. 17v13. 21v13. 24v19. Ps.6v5. 30v3. 31v17. 49v14,15. 88v3. 141v7. Prov.1v12.30v16. Eccles.9v10. Song.8v6. Is.14v11. 38v10,18. Ezek.31v15. Hosea.13v14.

In the Authorised Version "Sheol" is translated as "pit" 3 times, in Num.16v30,33. Job.17v16.; and as "Hell" 32 times, in Deut.32v22. 2Sam.22v6. Job.11v8. 26v6. Ps.9v17. 16v10. 18v5. 55v15. 86v13. 116v3. 139v8. Prov.5v5. 7v27. 9v18. 15v11. 23v14. 27v20. Is.5v14. 14v9. 15v28. 15v18. 57v9. Ezek.31v16,17. 32v21,17. Amos.9v2. Jonah.2v2. Hab.2v5. "Abyss," "abussos," meaning unfathomable depth, is translated as "bottomless pit" and "deep" in the Authorised Version, it is the lowest part of "Hades" to which Christ went to pay the penalty of our sin. Rev.9v1,2,11. 11v7. 17v8. Lk.8v31. Rom.10v7-9.

"Sheol" and "Hades" are quite distinct from "qeber" and "mnyamion," a burying place, grave, tomb, or sepulchre.

This is clearly seen from the following facts. "Sheol" is never used in the plural, whereas both singular and plural are used with "qeber" and "mnyamion." The Hebrew "nephesh," soul, occurs over 770 times in the Old Testament, but is never said to be put into a "qeber," a grave. No corpse is ever taken to "Sheol," whereas many bodies are taken to "qebers." In Numb.16v30,33., the casting of people directly into "Sheol" was looked upon as "a new thing," and quite abnormal. Nobody is said to have seen or touched a "sheol" on earth, whereas many "qebers" have been seen and touched. No animal is ever said to go to "Sheol" at death, the comparison of Ps.49v14., is between men who are dying and going to "Sheol" as fast as sheep are slaughtered for eating, even though in their pride men think that it will never come; compare v15, the Psalmists hope. The Scriptures constantly affirm that men go down into "Sheol," and that "Sheol" is in the lower parts of the earth, and is so deep that it is below the mountains and seas, and it cannot be dug into. Num.16v30,33. Deut.32v22. Ps.63v9. 68v18. with Eph.4v8-10. Ez.31v14-18. 32v18-31. Jonah.2v2-6. Job.11v8. Amos.9v2. {The task of digging into "Sheol" is looked upon as being as impossible as climbing into Heaven.} Mt.12v40. Phil.2v10. On 5 occasions in the Scriptures, "Sheol" is used for comparison with the height of Heaven, being put as the extreme opposite in depth. Job.11v7,8. Ps.139v8. Jonah.2v2,6. Mt.11v23. All this in sharp contrast to a grave, sepulchre and tomb, which men dig, make, hew and are laid in. The Septuagint of "Sheol" is never called grave.

"Sheol" is certainly not a place where people are unconscious.

The wicked are in Hades "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day." Jude.v6,13. 2Pet.2v17. See Is.14v9-15. Ez.32v27-31. Ps.18v5. 116v3. Lk.16v19-31. Lk.20v38. Mk.12v26,27. As Jesus said, the rich man died, but in "Hades" he was tormented in soul, only wilful blindness can ignore such plain statements. Jesus was imprisoned in the Abyss to atone for our sins, while His body was in the grave, "qeber." Is.53v9. Ps.16v10. Acts.2v24,27. He preached to the dead who were imprisoned there. 1Pet3v18-22. 4v6. 2Pet.2v4. The Old Testament saints were among "the multitude of captives," that Jesus led out of Hades. Eph.4v8. Rev.1v18.

Hades has two parts between which a great gulf is fixed, which is impassable. Lk.16v26.

Before Jesus came all souls went to one side or the other, but the good side was not in God's presence, and though the Old Testament saints had the comfort of their faith in the resurrection, they lost their spirit at death, and none of them liked to die, they lived their lives in fear of death. Eccles.12v7. Is.38v1-3. Heb.2v15. Job.10v20-22. 19v25-27. Heb.2v15. All this is changed for the believer in Jesus, we do not lose our spirits at death, and go to Hades like the Old Testament believer, we go into the presence of God in Paradise in Heaven. Mt.16v18. Jn.8v35. 11v24-26. 2Cor.5v1,6-8. 12v2-4. with Rev.2v7. 21v10. 22v2. Phil.1v21-23. Heb.12v22-24.

GEHENNA AND THE LAKE OF FIRE.

The name "Gehenna" is derived from a place in the valley of Hinnom where refuse and the dead bodies of animals and criminals were burned. Jesus uses it to describe the place to which evil souls and spirits will be sent, who are too dangerous be allowed to live and roam free, because they are given over to unrestrained selfishness and evil. They see and hate God and righteousness, and are sadists who only find pleasure by causing suffering and pain. Jn.15v22-25. 1Pet.5v8. No one has, as yet, been cast into the lake of fire, Antichrist and his followers are the first people to be cast into Hell, and this occurs at Christ's second coming. In the New Testament "Gehenna" is used 12 times. Mt.5v22,29,30. 10v9. 23v15,33. Mk.9v43,45,47. Lk.12v5. James.3v6. It is the lake of fire. Rev.19v20. 20v10-15. 21v8. Fire is associated with judgement on the wicked in many places. Lk.16v24. Mt.7v19. 13v40,42,50. 18v8. 25v41. Mk.9v44,46,48. Is.30v33. Jn.15v6. 2Thes.1v8. Heb.10v27. Jude.v7. Rev.14v10. Deut.32v21,22. These Scriptures should be treated with the utmost gravity, it is no wonder that Paul said "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Phil.2v12. Hell was prepared for Satan and his angels, it destroys angelic as well as human bodies. Mt.25v41. It is called "the second death," because it destroys the bodies of wicked people for the second time. Rev.2v11. 20v14.

In Lk.16v14,19-31., Jesus warned the covetous Pharisees with two very striking metaphors, unquenchable flame and unquenchable thirst, that the consequences of their greed, would be confinement in Hades, and a fearful anticipation of judgement to come. Heb.10v27. There are flames in "Gehenna," "the Lake of fire," but no flames in Hades, the Bible states it is a dark prison, where the wicked are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day." Jude.v6,13. 2Pet.2v17. 1Sam.2v9. Christ's parable reveals how fearful and mentally painful confinement in Hades can be if you have lived a selfish evil life. All who are in "Hades" will come out for the Great White Throne judgement, but no one is said to come out of "Gehenna." Rev.20v11-15. "Hades" is the temporary abode of the dead, "Gehenna" is the God's prison for unrepentant evil people and unclean angels. We read in Rev.20v14., that "Hades" is cast into "Gehenna," the lake of fire, after the Great White Throne judgement.

The feet of Asaph nearly slipped when he was overwhelmed with numerous difficulties and trials, and he compared his situation with the prosperity of the wicked, they arrogantly rejected God, and mockingly cried, "How doth God know? Ps.73v11. And is there knowledge in the Most High?" Then Asaph saw their end. Psalm.73. The righteous have often cried out in great distress, "Yahweh, how long shall the wicked triumph?" Ps.94v3. Our Lord gives the answer, He said, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." Mt.16v27. When Jesus returns He

"will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1Cor.4v5. Eccles.12v13,14. In Rom.2v5,6., we again read of the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgement of God, "who will render to everyone according to their works." See Rom.1v18-22.

God longs to save people. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Ezek.18v,23,32. 33v11. Lk.15v20-32.

Jesus extolled the longsuffering kindness and mercy of God. He said in Luke. 6v35,36. "But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and evil. v36. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." Jesus repeats this thought in Mt.5v44,45., "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, v45. that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." In. Acts.14v15-17., Paul states how good God had been to Heathen idol worshippers.

Divine anger is mixed with grief. Mk.3v1-7. Mt.9v9-15.

Papias informs us that Mark's Gospel is Peter's recollections of Christ's ministry. In Mk.3v5., Peter vividly retells how Jesus "looked round about" on the hypocritical Pharisees, "with anger," "orge". See Lk.6v10. Mk.3v5,34. 5v38. 10v23. 11v11. Jesus was not angry because of the murder that was in their hearts towards Him, and it was truly there, for after this miracle they went out and plotted together with their hated enemies, the Herodians, how they might destroy, "apolesosin," that is, kill Jesus. Mt.12v14. Mk.3v6. Lk.6v11. Jesus was angry at their ruthless hardness of heart that denied mercy and healing for the sick and needy. However, our Lord's anger was mixed with grief at the Pharisees hardness of heart. "Grieved is "sullupoumenos," the present middle participle of "sulluideo," 4818, from "sun," with, and "luideo," to make sorrowful, to cause grief, in the passive voice, "to be grieved together with," or "to sorrow on account of someone." That the anger of Jesus was momentary is shown by the use of the aorist participle "orges," His continuous state of grief and heart-pain over the hardness of heart of the Pharisees is revealed by the use of the present participle "sullupoumenos." They seared their consciences and hardened their hearts and always resisted God and His truth. Acts.7v51-60. Their impurity, false traditions, pride, prejudice, and bigotry had imprisoned them in a fortress of lies, from which even God's mighty works and truth could not release them.

Just as in His broken-hearted weeping over Jerusalem in Lk.19v41-44., Jesus was grieved over the hardness of heart, self-injury and spiritual suicide of the Pharisees, who criticised His healing of the man with the withered arm on the Sabbath day. "Hardness," is the noun "porosis;" 4457, from "poros," a kind of marble, or a callus on hardened hands or feet, or the callus that forms to heal broken bones. "Porosis," speaks of a dulled spiritual perception, and hardening of the heart, it occurs in Mk.3v5. Rom.11v25. and Eph.4v18. The verb "poroo," 4455, to petrify, to make hard, to thicken the skin, to become dull of understanding, is used of the apostles in Mk.6v52. and 8v17., and the Israelites in Jn.12v40. Rom.11v7. and 2Cor.3v14.

The noun "sklerotes" 4643, speaks of the hardness of heart of the wicked in Rom.2v5. N.B. v1-16. The verb "skleruno" 4645, means "to make dry or hard;" it is used of Pharaoh's heart being hardened by God in Rom.9v17,18., after Pharaoh had implacably hardened his heart and rejected God's signs and wonders. God hardened Pharaoh's heart by allowing Satan to do the miraculous, and by God in His mercy repeatedly lifting the plagues. Ex.7v13,22. 8v19,32. 9v7,12. We read in Acts.19v8,9., that Gospel truth can harden people's hearts. In Heb.3v8,13,15. 4v7., Paul warns us not to harden our hearts.

There is coming a time in world history when God's amazing longsuffering and mercy are going to be replaced by "thumos" anger. However, we read in Is.28v21., that God's angry judgements at Christ's return, are God's strange {"zuwr," to be strange} work, and His strange {"nokriy," foreign, alien} act. Such judgements are difficult and foreign acts to a God of love. God longs to embrace sinners, not judge and condemn them, as Jesus made clear in Lk.15v20., "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." In 1Tim.2v3,4., Paul proclaims that, "God our Saviour, -- desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And again, in 2Pet.3v9., Peter declares, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

2. THE MAJOR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ABOUT ETERNAL JUDGEMENT.

Eternal judgement and Divine retribution is an undeniable fact of Scripture.

Almost all schools of thought on eternal punishment believe that there will be some retribution on the wicked, it is the extent of that retribution that is the main area of controversy. We are now in the age of grace so the principal theme of the Gospel is one of mercy and forgiveness, nevertheless, the Scriptures also give the revelation of the wrath and righteous judgement of God, "who will render to each one according to his deeds." Rom.2v6. The solemn warning of Peter in 1Pet.4.17-19., cannot be watered down, "For the time has come for judgement to begin at the house of God: and if it first begins with us, what shall the end be of those who do not obey the gospel of God? v18. And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? v19. Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Our God is a faithful Creator, He loves His creation with all His being, we can completely trust His love and judgements.

When Israel came under judgement from God, David chose to fall into the hands of God rather than the hands of men, we read in 2Sam.24v14., "And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man." Abraham knew that the Judge of the whole earth always executes merciful, true, and righteous judgement. Gen.18v25. Rev.6v10. 15v3. 19v2. Repentant souls will always find that God's mercies are great, even when judgement is deserved, and Calvary supremely confirms this fact. When 1Pet.4v18., states that, "it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved;" it is because the human will frustrates God's efforts to save, not from any failure in the Divine desire and will to save. Lk.19v41-44. 2Pet.3v9.

Jesus warns us of the reality of eternal judgement and Hell, and we need to treat His words on this subject very seriously, and not dismiss it as a theme just advocated by fanatics. Eleven of the twelve references to "Gehenna" in the New Testament are spoken by our Lord, Mt.5v22,29,30. 10v28 18v9. 23v15,33. Mk.9v43,45,47. Lk.12v5., the other is in James.3v6.. Eternal punishment is listed in Heb.6v1-3., among the foundation truths of the Church. Our feelings about God's character and justice are greatly affected by what we believe about eternal judgement, so it is vitally important to interpret this doctrine correctly.

All the viewpoints here stated on eternal punishment have been believed by godly and sincere Christians, even the extreme and dark views of Augustine and Calvin, however, there are other kinder and more thoughtful views about eternal punishment, {even amongst those who would consider themselves as followers of Augustine and Calvin}, which have received acceptance by godly reformers and Christian leaders in Church history. Peter wrote in 1Pet.1v18,19., that we need to be delivered from the false and empty traditions handed down from our fathers or ancestors, "patroparadotos." However, Church history has shown that many church leaders have been unwilling to let the clear bright light of Scripture shine on their cherished traditions and doctrines, and have even used the most horrific persecution and murder to enforce them. This contentious murderous spirit is from the Devil, it is certainly not following Paul's instruction in 2Tim.2v25., to instruct and correct in meekness, gentleness and humility those who oppose our views. Let us remember the words of our Lord, "they that are for us, are not against us;" Mk.9v38-41. Lk.9v49,50.; for we too can imitate the apostles, and mistakenly think that a contentious unloving party spirit, is zeal for truth, when we are in reality resisting and fighting God. Ex.16v8. Acts.5v39. 7v51-60. 23v9. However, God has directed us to oppose dangerous heresy, and He has even executed those who were a danger to His Church. Acts.5v1-12. 12v18-25. 1Tim.1v18-20. 2Tim.2v16-19. 2Pet.2v1-3. Nevertheless, God also commands us never to bite and devour good Christians. Gal.5v13-15. In his earlier years Spurgeon strongly opposed the view of Conditional Immortality, but in his later years, he took a more charitable view, for Spurgeon is quoted as saying, "I have no quarrel with the Conditional Immortality doctrine." Let us imitate his magnanimous spirit.

Christians would agree that no being can exist for ever without the help of God, and that the God who created us can, if He so desires, withhold His sustaining power and so bring about our extinction. All agree that God can also cause the wicked to exist forever, if He chooses to do so. The question is, do the Scriptures teach that God will, or will not, sustain the wicked in everlasting punishment and painful existence, and if so, why? The following viewpoints have been held by Christians from many diverse theological backgrounds and denominations.

1. The Traditional Western viewpoints.

There no such thing as a uniform Traditional orthodoxy, there is a wide divergence of view within the Traditional Western viewpoint of eternal punishment. Some followers of Augustine and Calvin have said that the atonement of Jesus extends to infants, others have taught the doctrines of their leaders, and have stated that all the heathen who have not even heard the Gospel, and all unbaptised babies will go to Hell for ever. Farrar and others state that such theology attacks the character of God, and has put a dark cloud over the Church, and has caused Christians to question in their minds, if not openly, the love and justice of God. Unbelievers also have attacked the double-minded inconsistency, that a God of love could descend to such levels of cruelty and injustice. It is certainly very difficult to understand, worship, and love a God who condemns all the heathen, and all unbaptised babies, to Hell forever without any opportunity of salvation. Thank God, this awful doctrine is not true, children are especially precious to our God of Love, Jesus stated that "of such is the kingdom of Heaven," and any doctrine that denies this is to be rejected as unscriptural and untrue. Mt.18v1-10. 19v13-15. Mk.10v13,14. Lk.18v15-17.

Some who believe in many of the doctrines preached by Augustine and Calvin have rejected their extreme views on eternal punishment, that all unbaptised babies, and the heathen will go to Hell for ever, and "that doom passes irreversibly at the moment of death on all who die in a state of sin." Like E. B. Pusey, in his work, "What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?" (1880), they believe in "endless conscious existence for a relatively small number of the lost," and state that the atonement of Jesus extends to infants. They also say that the pain of Hell is not physical, but "a bare minimum of pain, caused perhaps only from being deprived of all good rather than by being inflicted from an external source." Other Traditionalists also support the viewpoint that eternal punishment does not necessarily consist of physical sufferings, or is not necessarily due to inflictions from God, but that their suffering may be due to a person's sense of loss, or accusing conscience. This is a far more compassionate and thoughtful view on eternal punishment than the dark theology of Augustine; however, those who believe in Conditional Immortality believe that this does not go far enough.

Some Traditionalists have stated that because we are made in the image of God our souls must be immortal,

but this cannot be correct for our bodies die, and these are made in God's image too. Historians have stated, and it appears correctly, that the doctrine of immortality of the soul is a product of the Greek thought of Plato and Aristotle, who taught that the soul did not have a beginning because it was part of a pantheistic god. Some early Church fathers thought that some ideas of Plato on immortality of the soul would help to clarify Scripture truth, however, they rejected the idea that the soul was pre-existent, and said that it only came into existence at birth. Most of the expositors from the Reformation onwards, including Calvin, have said that immortality is a continual gift of God, and that God chooses to sustain for ever the existence of all beings, not only the righteous, but also the lost. T. F. Torrance writes on page 26f, of his book "Calvin's Doctrine of man," that Calvin taught that the "soul survives the death of the body only at the mercy of God, and has no durability in itself."

2. The Annihilationist viewpoint of Conditional Immortality states the wicked will be destroyed.

The Annihilationist school of thought is also known as the name of Conditional Immortality. These believe that God will not eternally punish the wicked, but will instead destroy them. The distinguished evangelical biblical scholar John Stott wrote in 1988, on pages 320f, in the book "Essentials," {which he co-authored with D. Edwards}, that the ultimate annihilation of the wicked should at least be accepted as a legitimate, biblically founded alternative to their eternal conscious torment." Other notable evangelical scholars have also supported this viewpoint. John W. Wenham in, "The Goodness of God," published in 1974, and in "Universalism and the doctrine of Hell," published in 1993, also states that he believes that Conditional Immortality is a biblical doctrine. Isaac Watts the famous hymn writer, wrote a book, which strongly supported the viewpoint that the wicked would endure conscious eternal torment, then later wrote another book, which stated why he had become an Annihilationist. Harold Ernest Guillebaud, who went as a missionary to Africa in 1925, took for granted that the Traditional viewpoint of eternal punishment was correct. When the Inter Varsity Fellowship asked Guillebaud to write a book on "Moral Difficulties of the Bible," a chapter on everlasting punishment was omitted from the book when it was published in 1941, because he felt he had not answered the problems to his own satisfaction. However after intensive study he changed his viewpoint and wrote a book called "The Righteous Judge," which was published in 1964 after his death, in this he set out the arguments for Conditional Immortality. He wrote that every soul survives the death of the body, but that both the bodies and souls of the wicked will finally perish at the second death.

In 2Thes.1v9., Paul writes that the wicked, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. In Luke.12v4,5., Jesus said, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. v5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which **after** {"meta"} he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." **In Matt.10v28., Jesus gives a similar very strong warning, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here Jesus speaks of the soul being destroyed in Hell by God. What does He mean?** Traditionalists say it means ruin of prospects rather than the annihilation and destruction of the soul, Conditionalists say it means destruction and annihilation of soul. If this destruction of soul does occur, and we know that it does not immediately take place when the wicked are cast into Hell, for we read in Rev.20v10., that Antichrist and the False Prophet are still in the lake of fire 1,000 years after being cast in there. This definitely proves that they exist, and are conscious, after they are put in the lake of fire. That some do suffer conscious confinement in Hell for a period of time is also confirmed by Rev.14v9,10., here we read that Jesus and the holy angels examine the souls of the followers of Antichrist after they have been cast into the lake of fire. Conditionalists would say that the soul would cease to exist after a period of time.

All the facts about Hell have not been revealed, as Paul, even with his unique apostolic revelation of New Testament truth, acknowledges in 1Cor.13v12., "Now we see but a dim and blurred reflection in a mirror, as in a riddle or enigma ("en ainigmata"), but then face to face ("prosopon pros prosopon"). Now my knowledge is partial and incomplete, but then I shall fully know, even as I am fully known." We will not have full knowledge about eternal punishment until God's kingdom comes, so we need humility of mind, not dogmatism.

N. B. The soul sleep viewpoint.

These teach that those who die are not conscious and do not exist until the resurrection, and if this were true, depriving a person of their body would be in fact annihilation. However, the dead are certainly not unconscious, they all live to God, as Jesus pointed out to the Sadducees, who believed in soul-sleep, and also in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Mk.12v26,27. Lk.16v19-31. 20v38. The doctrine of soul sleep is believed by Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, however, great Christian reformers and leaders like William Tyndale and Martin Luther, have believed this doctrine, as well as other good orthodox Christians. When Luther's teaching of soul sleep was attacked by Sir Thomas More, William Tyndale defended Luther's theology, he wrote, "The true faith putteth the resurrection, which we be warned to look for every hour. The heathen philosophers, denying that, did put that the souls did ever live. And the Pope joineth the spiritual doctrine of the Christ and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers together, things so contrary that they cannot agree, no more than the Spirit and the flesh do in a Christian man. And because the fleshly minded Pope consenteth unto heathen doctrine, therefore he corrupteth the Scripture to establish it."

Some Conditionalists have stated that Conditional Immortality was believed and preached by Clement of Rome, died 100 A.D.; Ignatius, died 110-115 A.D.; Polycarp, died 156 A.D. {or 166 A.D. Eusebius}; and Irenaeus, died 202 A.D. However, others dispute this and say that Conditionalists have overstated their case by claiming

that these early Christian writers support them. Dean Plumptre feels that Irenaeus agrees with the Conditional Immortality viewpoint, on page 133 and 134 of his book, "The Spirits In Prison, he quotes Irenaeus, "And he who shall reject life and prove himself ungrateful to his Maker deprives himself of continuance for ever." 2. 34. 3. And again in 5. 27. 2. " Good things are eternal, and without end in God, and therefore the loss of them is eternal and never ending." End of quote. Whichever view we take, all would agree that the loss here revealed is totally tragic, disastrous, catastrophic, and dreadful.

The Liberal or Modernistic, "No after life," Viewpoint.

Many of these, like the Sadducees, do not believe in an after life or resurrection, they believe death is annihilation. Like the unbeliever, which they really are, they believe the eternal realities of Heaven and Hell do not exist, and that death is the end.

3. The universal ultimate reconciliation viewpoint.

These, like Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Eusebius, and other Eastern early Church leaders, and some in more modern times, state that God would finally reconcile all the lost and allow them into the kingdom. Some, like Maurice, in his "Theological Essays," and Farrar, in his books, "Eternal Hope," and "Mercy and Judgement," look upon ultimate reconciliation, not as a theological certainty, but only as a "hope," and admit that human beings may continue to resist God's efforts for ever. Some use the phrase, "the restoration of all things," to justify the doctrine of ultimate reconciliation. However, it must be noted that in Mt.19v28., Jesus states that "the restoration of all things," "palingenesia," will occur at His second coming, in the context of this verse He also points out that it is extremely difficult for rich men to enter the kingdom of God. At this "restoration," our Lord is forced to send the goats of Mt.25v31-46., into everlasting punishment in order to preserve the happiness of the new earth, so "restoration" here, certainly does not mean ultimate reconciliation. When Peter speaks in Acts.3v21., of "the restitution of all things," he uses "apokatastasis," which means "reconstitution," this "reconstitution" is the remaking of a new Heaven and earth that takes place at the second coming of Christ. Is.65v17-25. The last judgement , which decides the eternal destinies of all created beings, does not occur until a thousand years after our Lord's second coming. We read in Revelation 21 and 22, that another "reconstitution" of Heaven and earth occurs after the last judgement.

4. The second probation viewpoint.

These believe in a second probation after death, at which God gives the full light of the truth to all mankind, and that only those who are irreconcilable will go to Hell. They state that the Scriptures teach that Jesus has already preached to all the dead. The refusal of the wicked to repent of their evil ways makes eternal judgement inevitable. This second probation viewpoint is certainly not ultimate reconciliation, it recognises that the God of love is forced to send some of His creatures into eternal punishment, because their determination to commit eternal sin would forever ruin the happiness of His creation, if they were at liberty to put their desires into action. We read in Is.32v1,17., that righteousness is the means of producing and preserving eternal happiness. God takes away the bodies of angels and men so that they cannot injure anyone any more. Mankind's first death occurs primarily because of the loss of the tree of life, the second death occurs because of Divine judgement. Gen.3v22. Rev.22v2. 21v8. We will consider this at greater length later on.

5. There are those who say we cannot definitely know the final outcome of eternal judgement.

Some outstanding theologians have not committed themselves to any definite conclusion on the subject of eternal punishment. **Professor F.F. Bruce**, in his introduction to E. W. Fudge's book, "The Fire That Consumes," has written concerning the choice between the viewpoints of eternal conscious torment, or annihilation after a period of suffering, that he would not be regarded as a Traditionalist nor a Conditionalist, and that his thoughts on these issues, would be very much in line with that of C. S. Lewis; for just as Lewis did not systematise his thoughts on the subject, he had not done so either. F. F. Bruce probably has some definite opinions on eternal judgement, but has possibly refused to disclose them because he does not want to give ammunition to unloving, critical and judgmental theologians, who use truth to shoot people down and divide up the body of Christ, rather than build it up in love and faith. **Billy Graham**, is quoted as saying in Time 74, November 15th. 1993, "The only thing I could say for sure is that hell means separation from God....When it comes to a literal fire, I don't preach it because I'm not sure about it." End of quote. I believe the fire is real, but the nature of that fire is not fully revealed to us, for it is a fire that consumes the bodies of angels as well as the bodies of men, and acts as a prison.

It is certainly true that we do not know all the details about eternal punishment. Paul states in 1Cor.13v12., "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know even as I am fully known." Our knowledge of eternal realities is only partial, and we should acknowledge it; there are facts about eternal punishment, "which are secret and belong to the Lord." Deut.29v29. We should avoid aggressive dogmatism for we do not know all the facts. 2Tim.2v25.

God often speaks in ambiguous puzzles, and even the finest prophets were at times extremely troubled, because they had great difficulty in understanding and interpreting WHAT God had told to them, and WHEN the events they prophesied about would take place, and they had to spend a considerable time in intense prolonged prayer and earnest waiting upon God to obtain the correct interpretation of their revelations, it was not a purely intellectual exercise. See Numb.12v6-8. Dan.7v15,28. 8v15-27. 9v21-0-27. 10v21. 1Pet.1v10-12. Even the peerless prophet Daniel had to be instructed by angels to understand God's purposes and revelation to him, and at times even he did not understand what was told to him. Some prophecies have been sealed until

an appointed time. Dan.12v4. Rev.10v4. God's prophetic words have puzzled and tested the greatest of the prophets, and God's revelations about eternal punishment certainly sift, test, and expose our characters, love, and theology. We can be quite sure that eternal punishment should never be confused with eternal punishing, for God certainly does not eternally inflict pain on the wicked, our God of love is definitely not a sadist. We read in Hos.11v8., "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboim? My heart churns and is turned over within Me; all My repentings and compassions are kindled together."

World history has abundantly demonstrated the misery and carnage that is produced in the world by power hungry worldly and religious leaders who have acted out Satan's cruel, evil and selfish plans, and soon the world will experience the greatest blood-bath it has ever known through following Satan's evil plans. The choice is either war and misery without end, or a Divine judgement on evil, and the rule of love and righteousness that produces peace. Is.32v12,17. After the judgement of the Great White Throne, God will make sure that there will be no more sorrow through sin, or any kind of sorrow at all, God will sadly and reluctantly commit to eternal judgement those whose desire to sin forever makes them a positive menace to the peace and happiness of His kingdom. Then He will place before His children those treasures which will forever satisfy and rejoice our hearts; endless variation, expansion, "creations beyond imagination", and above all the revelation and all-pervading presence of God our Father and our Saviour. Our eternal joy and delight will be in our God and Saviour. Will you be in that kingdom of light and love? Repent of your sins and accept Jesus as your Saviour, and enjoy life forever more.

CONCLUSION.

As we have stated before, all the facts and evidence about God's truth have not been revealed, as Paul, even with his unique apostolic revelation of New Testament truth, acknowledges. He states in 1Cor.13v12., "Now we see but a dim and blurred reflection in a mirror, as in a riddle or enigma, but then face to face. Now my knowledge is partial and incomplete, but then I shall fully know, even as I am fully known." Our present knowledge of eternal realities is only partial, and we should acknowledge it; there are facts about eternal punishment, "which are secret and belong to the Lord." Deut.29v29. So we should be gentle and avoid aggressive dogmatism. 2Tim.2v25. ("prauetes.") We shall only "fully know" all the facts when God's kingdom comes, and we too are "fully known." The Conditional Immortality view that in the end God will refuse to sustain the souls of the wicked, and so they will cease to exist, could be true; for it is certainly a better reflection of the character of God than the traditional viewpoint of Augustine and Calvin. However, both Traditionalists and Conditionalists may have failed to realise that by embracing evil, the wicked may have committed a spiritual "hara-kiri," and that the evil they have embraced, will in the end devour and destroy their own beings. Mk.9v44,46,48. It could be that Rev.14v9-11., is telling us that Jesus and the holy angels examine the wicked in Hell until the evil within the wicked destroys their being and personality. When we get to the Heaven, our heavenly Father will reveal the whole truth to us. Until that wonderful day there is one thing that both Traditionalists and Conditionalists can full agree upon, and proclaim with total confidence, that God's love is perfect, and His judgements are always true and righteous. **In the light of the Cross of Jesus, we are even more convinced than Abraham, that the Judge of the whole earth will do right. Gen.18v25.**

God's prophetic words have puzzled and tested the greatest of the prophets. God often speaks in ambiguous puzzles, and even the finest prophets were at times greatly troubled, because they found it difficult to understand and interpret WHAT God had told them, and WHEN the events they prophesied would take place, and they had to earnestly seek God for the interpretation of their revelations, it was not a purely intellectual exercise. Numb.12v6-8. 1Pet.1v10-12. Even the great prophet Daniel had to be instructed by angels to understand the revelations that God gave to him, and even he could not understand some of his prophecies, for they were sealed until an appointed time. Dan.7v15,28. 8v15-27. 9v21-0-27. 10v21. 12v4. Rev.10v4. God's revelations about eternal punishment also sift, test, and expose our prayerfulness, love, and theology. Eternal punishment should never be confused with eternal punishing, for God will certainly not eternally inflict pain on the wicked, both Traditionalists and Conditionalists would heartily agree that our God of love is definitely not a sadist. We read in Hos.11v8., "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboim? My heart churns and is turned over within Me; all My repentings and compassions are kindled together." Doctrines on eternal punishment that deny this longsuffering mercy, amazing love, and righteous justice of God, must be rejected.

The righteous know that the wicked must go to Hell because of their determined impenitence, because if they were free happiness would be impossible. In Rev.19v1-6., God's children rejoice that the pain caused by evil is finished. If the wicked were put in a kingdom of their own, it would be a repeat of the great tribulation, and the suffering that the wicked would inflict on each other would be even be worse than the isolation of Hell. So we see that life of any kind, never mind a happy life, in the end becomes impossible to the wicked.

The Great White Throne Judgement will disclose the wonderful grace of God, His innumerable strivings and pleadings with the souls of men and angels, for God does not want any souls to perish. 2Pet.3v9. There is nothing strange about eternal judgement, it is common sense, Hell safeguards and preserves the happiness of Heaven from the malice of the wicked. The Law of God is given to preserve the happiness of society, and just as human societies have prisons to preserve society from criminals, God is forced to have His prison for those who will not repent and are determined to be eternally wicked.

Most people do not realise that habitual sin can harden and eternally set the will in evil, and many think that the doctrine of confinement in Hell is strange, evil and cruel, and cannot be true of a God of love. However, if you asked these same people if it was strange, evil and cruel to imprison unrepentant hardened criminals and murderers, they would say, "Certainly not, it is the only way to preserve society." Hell is the only possible end for those who have determined to sin eternally. Hell is not an act of cruelty by God, it is a place where cruel, hate-filled, evil people are confined to preserve the happiness of others. For a time God has allowed the wicked to make the world a misery, and this has made it obvious to all that the wicked must be put in Hell before there can be any hope of security and happiness.

Jesus said that those who reject Him, and see and hate both Him and His Father, have decided to sin forever, and would be eternally selfish and wicked if they had the opportunity. Mk.3v28-30. Jn.15v22-27. If an earthly judge were to let off unrepentant hardened criminals and murderers, because he said that he loved them, society would be enraged and they would say that the judge was unjust and wicked; yet how many think that a God of love must let off those who have rejected His salvation and are determined to sin for ever, regardless of how it would effect society. People forget that love is a desire for the well being and happiness of others, therefore, a just God of love must preserve the happiness of His subjects by removing from society those who would forever destroy any hope of happiness.

The Cross of Jesus emphasises both the justice and love of God, and the nature and end of sin.

Jesus not only died to obtain forgiveness for us, and reveal to us His wonderful love, He also died to show that God is absolutely just and will uphold the law, and that only by Jesus paying the penalty of our sin could there be any hope of forgiveness. The Cross of Christ establishes the Law, and enables God to be just and yet forgive the repentant sinner. Rom.3v26,31., However, it warns us that God cannot forgive the unrepentant sinner. God sends people to Hell because they are determined to sin forever. God is perfect in His love, meekness, and gentleness, He is a perfect gentleman, but He is also the perfect judge and custodian of the happiness of His creation.

Mankind has already seen the effects of Satan's cruel and evil plans, and soon the world will experience the worst blood-bath it has ever known, as a result of following Satan, and rejecting God's way of love. The choice is either war without end, or a Divine judgement on evil, which is then followed by God's rule of love and righteousness, which produces peace. Is.32v1,2,17. v1. Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. v2. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. v17. "The work of righteousness will be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." After the judgement of the Great White Throne, God will make sure that there will be no more sorrow through sin, or any kind of sorrow at all, God will reluctantly commit to Hell, those whose desire to sin forever makes them a positive menace to the peace and happiness of His kingdom. Then He will place before His children those treasures which will forever satisfy and rejoice our hearts, endless variation, expansion, "creations beyond imagination", and above all the glorious revelation and presence of God our Father and our Saviour, who will be our eternal joy and delight.

Most people do not realise that habitual sin can harden and eternally set the will in evil, and many think that the doctrine of confinement in Hell is strange, evil and cruel, and cannot be true of a God of love. However, if you asked these same people if it was strange, evil and cruel to imprison unrepentant hardened criminals and murderers, they would say, "Certainly not, it is the only way to preserve society." Hell is the only possible end for those who have determined to sin eternally. Hell is not an act of cruelty by God, it is a place where cruel, hate-filled, evil people are confined to preserve the happiness of others. For a time God has allowed the wicked to make the world a misery, and this has made it obvious to all that the wicked must be put in Hell before there can be any hope of security and happiness.

Jesus said that those who reject Him, and see and hate both Him and His Father, have decided to sin forever, and would be eternally selfish and wicked if they had the opportunity. Mk.3v28-30. Jn.15v22-27. If an earthly judge were to let off unrepentant hardened criminals and murderers, because he said that he loved them, society would be enraged and they would say that the judge was unjust and wicked; yet how many think that a God of love must let off those who have rejected His salvation and are determined to sin for ever, regardless of how it would effect society. People forget that love is a desire for the well-being and happiness of others, therefore, a just God of love must preserve the happiness of His subjects by removing from society those who would forever destroy any hope of happiness.

Jesus not only died to obtain forgiveness for us, and reveal to us His wonderful love, He also died to show that God is absolutely just and will uphold the law, and that only by Jesus paying the penalty of our sin could there be any hope of forgiveness. The Cross of Christ establishes the Law, and enables God to be just and yet forgive the repentant sinner. Rom.3v26,31., However, it warns us that God cannot forgive the unrepentant sinner. God sends people to Hell because they are determined to sin forever. God is perfect in His love, meekness, and gentleness, He is a perfect gentleman, but He is also the perfect judge and custodian of the happiness of His creation.

Mankind has already seen the effects of Satan's cruel and evil plans, and soon the world will experience the worst blood-bath it has ever known, as a result of following Satan, and rejecting God's way of love. The choice is either war without end, or a Divine judgement on evil, which is then followed by God's rule of love and

righteousness, which produces peace. Is.32v1,2,17. v1. Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. v2. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, and a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. v17. "The work of righteousness will be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." After the judgement of the Great White Throne, God will make sure that there will be no more sorrow through sin, or any kind of sorrow at all, God will reluctantly commit to Hell, those whose desire to sin forever makes them a positive menace to the peace and happiness of His kingdom. Then He will place before His children those treasures which will forever satisfy and rejoice our hearts, endless variation, expansion, "creations beyond imagination", and above all the glorious revelation and presence of God our Father and our Saviour, who will be our eternal joy and delight.

APPENDIX 2. THE GREEK TEXT OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF MY COMMENTS ON THE GREEK TEXT OF THE APOCALYPSE.

In my textual comments I have omitted the minor textual variations, which do not effect the meaning of the text or prophecies; but have considered in greater detail the major textual variations that effect or alter the meaning of the text and prophecies. The Authorised Version text is referred to as A.V., and it is based on Stephens 1550 Greek text, known as the Received Text or Textus Receptus, or T.R. in our evidence. In the Apocalypse the Textus Receptus often does not follow the Majority Text. Where it is necessary, I have referred to the evidence of the major early translations from the Greek into other languages, and quotations from the "Church Fathers."

"The Critical Texts," are the 26th. edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek Testament, and the Third Edition of the Greek Testament by the United Bible Societies, called the NU-Text in some Bibles. These Critical Texts, unfortunately, rely too much on the evidence from a small number of manuscripts, which are mainly from an Egyptian source, in the New Testament these vary from the Majority Text in three percent or more of their readings. Aland says 90% of the minuscules have the Majority Text, that is about 2,480 out of about 2770; and at least half of the most significant uncials have the Majority Text. Many authorities are now saying that it is wrong to rely largely upon a small number of ancient manuscripts from one part of the world, particularly when they differ from almost all of the rest of the Textual evidence from all over the world. It is a fact that the Egyptian manuscripts variant readings often disagree with the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts from many parts of the world, and from the major early Versions in other languages, and also from the majority of the early Church fathers. Having said this, the Critical Texts have great value, because of the information they contain in their critical notes. **We must thank God for all those who have preserved the Scriptures, and laboured in the field of textual criticism, we owe them an incalculable debt of gratitude for giving to us in our own language, the Word of God as spoken through His prophets and apostles.**

Hodges and Farstad base their Majority Greek Text on the broad mass of manuscript evidence; their manuscript stemma (family tree) of the apocalypse is very helpful, and is based on the work done by H. C. Hoskier and Joseph Schmid, we owe a great deal to the work of all of these textual scholars. The Mabcde readings are adapted from the work of Hodges and Farstad. In the Apocalypse the Majority Text of Hodges and Farstad often agrees with the Critical Texts against the readings of the Authorised Version and Received Text. In the rest of the New Testament the Majority Text of Hodges and Farstad usually agrees with the Authorised Version and Received Text readings against the Egyptian readings of the Critical Texts. There are one or two places in the Apocalypse where I feel that the Majority Text is not the best reading, like "emas," "us," in Rev.5v9., which is unacceptable on the grounds of prophetic facts, and on the evidence of the "them" and "they" in v10, and so "emas," is quite rightly omitted by Codex A, and the Critical Texts.

The Authorised Version Text of Revelation is not as accurate as in the rest of the Scriptures.

The Authorised Version of the New Testament faithfully follows the majority of the Greek manuscripts except in The Book of Revelation; as Bishop C. Wordsworth states; "The English Version of the Apocalypse does not rest upon the same sound basis of manuscript authority as the Authorised Translation of the other books of the New Testament. It stands in a place by itself, and ought to be regarded accordingly."

Erasmus published the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, but in the Apocalypse he had only a single incomplete late cursive manuscript of the twelfth or thirteenth century; all except v20 of the last six verses were missing, so Erasmus supplied them by translating the Latin Vulgate into the Greek. The first edition of Erasmus is dedicated to Pope Leo the 10th., and is dated Feb. 1st. 1516. Scrivener said in respect of typographical errors it was the most faulty book he knew. A large number of these misprints, and some readings, were corrected in four later editions, the fourth and fifth editions came out in 1527 and 1535. Erasmus died in 1536.

The Complutensian Polyglott was finished on Jan. 10th 1514, two years before the first edition of Erasmus, but was not given licence to print by Pope Leo until March 22nd. 1520. Wetstein says it was based on only one document in the Apocalypse.

Robert Stephens published four editions of the Greek New Testament, which were highly regarded for their "exquisite beauty;" these were published in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551. Wetstein stated that Stephens only had two Greek manuscripts on the Apocalypse and that these were not accurately collated. The 1550 edition is looked upon by many as the Received or Standard Text, and it formed the basis of the four editions of

Theodore Beza at Geneva in 1565, 1576, 1589, and 1598, and the Elzevir editions of 1624 and 1633. Beza's 1598 edition formed the basis of the text behind the English Authorised Version of the New Testament, which was published in 1611.

THE GREEK MANUSCRIPTS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

THE POPYRI. Made from the papyrus reed. It is not known if the earliest documents were made of scroll or codex book type manuscripts. Of these P47 is the earliest, most of the popyri contain only very small fragments. P18, 3rd. to 4th. century, only has Rev.1v4-7.. P24, 4th. century, only has Rev.5v5-8. and 6v5-8.. P43, 6th. or 7th. century, only has Rev.2v12,13. and 15v8 to 16v2.. P47, 3rd. century only contains Rev.9v10 to 11v3., 11v5 to 16v15., and 16v17 to 17v2.. P85, 4th. to 5th. century, only has Rev.9v19 to 10v2. and 10v5-9..

THE UNCIALS. These manuscripts approximately correspond to our English printed capital letters. The New Testament translators from the 2nd. century onwards used the very durable parchment manuscripts made from the skins of animals in preference to the more fragile papyrus manuscripts. The oldest manuscripts of the New Testament are in codex book form.

Aleph. 01. Sinaiticus. From the 4th. century. The manuscript brought from Mount Sinai by Tischendorf in 1846, it is now in London. It contains all the Apocalypse.

A. 02. Alexandrinus. The Alexandrine manuscript from the 4th. or 5th. century, now in the British Museum in London. It contains all of the Apocalypse. In the Apocalypse A and C are considered by many authorities, including Nestle and Aland and Schmid, to be far superior in textual value than P47 and Aleph.

C. 04. Ephraemi Rescriptus. The most valuable of the palimpsest manuscripts, which had certain works of Ephraim the Syrian written over a Greek New Testament from the 4th. century; the original text has been restored by a chemical process so that almost every letter is now discernible. It omits; Rev.1v1,2. 3v20-5v14. 7v14-17. 8v9-9v16. 10v10-11v3. 16v13-18v2. 19v5 to 22v21. The manuscript is now in Paris. (About 50 palimpsest erased uncial New Testament manuscripts are known.)

P. 025. A ninth century palimpsest, which is now in Leningrad. It follows Andreas.

B2. The Basilian. Vatican manuscript 2066. 6th. to 8th. century. It often confirms Aleph, A, C, but less than Codex P, it often follows the later cursives. Manuscript B2 must NOT be confused with Vaticanus, Codex B, 03, which ends at Heb.9v13. and omits all the Apocalypse.

Codex Kosinitsanus. Written in the tenth century by Sabbas, a monk.

046. A tenth century manuscript, which contains all of the Apocalypse.

THE MINUSCULES. These were developed from about the 9th. century from the earlier cursive long hand style, they produced attractive documents, which could be written much quicker than the uncial style capital manuscripts, and by the end of the 10th. century it had completely displaced the uncial writing. The earliest minuscule is dated A.D. 835. Farstad says of the 256 minuscules that Hoskier lists, 204 are valuable, and uses 149 in his stemma of the Apocalypse, see the next page.

N.B. Like Codex B. 03 Vaticanus, (which ends at Heb.9v13.), the Lectionaries, dated tenth to fifteenth centuries; the Peshitta, dated by Scrivener at 170 A.D.; and the Gothic Bible of Ulfilas, dated 310 A.D., do not contain the Apocalypse.

SOME AUTHORITIES QUOTED IN THE TEXTUAL APPARATUS OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Name	Died Approx	Name	Died Approx
Ambrose	A.D. 397	Haymo	A.D. 841
Ambrosiaster	4th. Century	Hilary	A.D. 367
Andrew of Ceasarea	A.D. 614	Hyppolytus	A.D. 235
Ansbert	8th. Century	Ignatius	A.D. 110
Anthony	8th. or 12th. Century	Irenaeus	A.D. 202
Aphraates	A.D. 367	Jerome	A.D. 420
Apostolic Canons	4th. Century	Maternus	A.D. 348
Apostolic Constitution	A.D. 380	Methodius	3rd. Century
Apringius	A.D. 551	Oecumenius	6th. Century
Arethas	A.D. 914	Origen	A.D. 254
Arius	A.D. 336	Papias	2nd. Century
Athanasius	A.D. 373	Polycarp	A.D. 156
Augustine	A.D. 430	Primasius	5th. Century
Basil the Great	A.D. 379	Promissionibus	A.D. 453
Beatus	A.D. 786	Priscillian	A.D. 385
Bede	A.D. 735	Ps-Ambrose	6th. Century
Cassiodorus	A.D. 580	Ps-Athanasius	6th. Century
Clement of Alexandria	A.D. 215	Ps-Cyprian	?
Crysostom	A.D. 407	Tertullian	A.D. 220
Cyprian	A.D. 258	Theodore-Studita	A.D. 826
Epiphanius	A.D. 403	Theodoret	A.D. 466
Eusebius of Ceasarea	A.D. 339	Tyconius	A.D. 380
Fulgentius	A.D. 533	Victorinus Pettau	A.D. 304
Gregory-Elvira	A.D. 392	Vigilius	A.D. 484

SOME OF THE ANCIENT COMMENTATORS ON THE APOCALYPSE.

Victorinus. Bishop of Petabium, or Petavium, Pettau in Pannonia, he was martyred in A.D. 303, in the Diocletian persecution. He wrote his commentary about A.D. 270; it was revised and modified by Jerome.

Auctor Anonymus. Some think Tichonius, the Donatist Expositor, a contemporary of Augustine, wrote this in about A.D. 390.

Primasius. Bishop of Adrumetum in Africa, "flourished A.D. 550."

Cassiodorus Aurelius Magnus. Wrote a commentary about A.D. 556. He speaks of Primasius being contemporary with him.

Andreas, or Andrew. Archbishop of Crete, and later Bishop of Ceasarea. Probably in the sixth or seventh centuries. Arethas and Oecumenius derived their materials mainly from Andreas.

Arethas. Bishop of Ceasarea, in Cappodicia, he died about A.D. 914. A Latin translation of his work has survived.

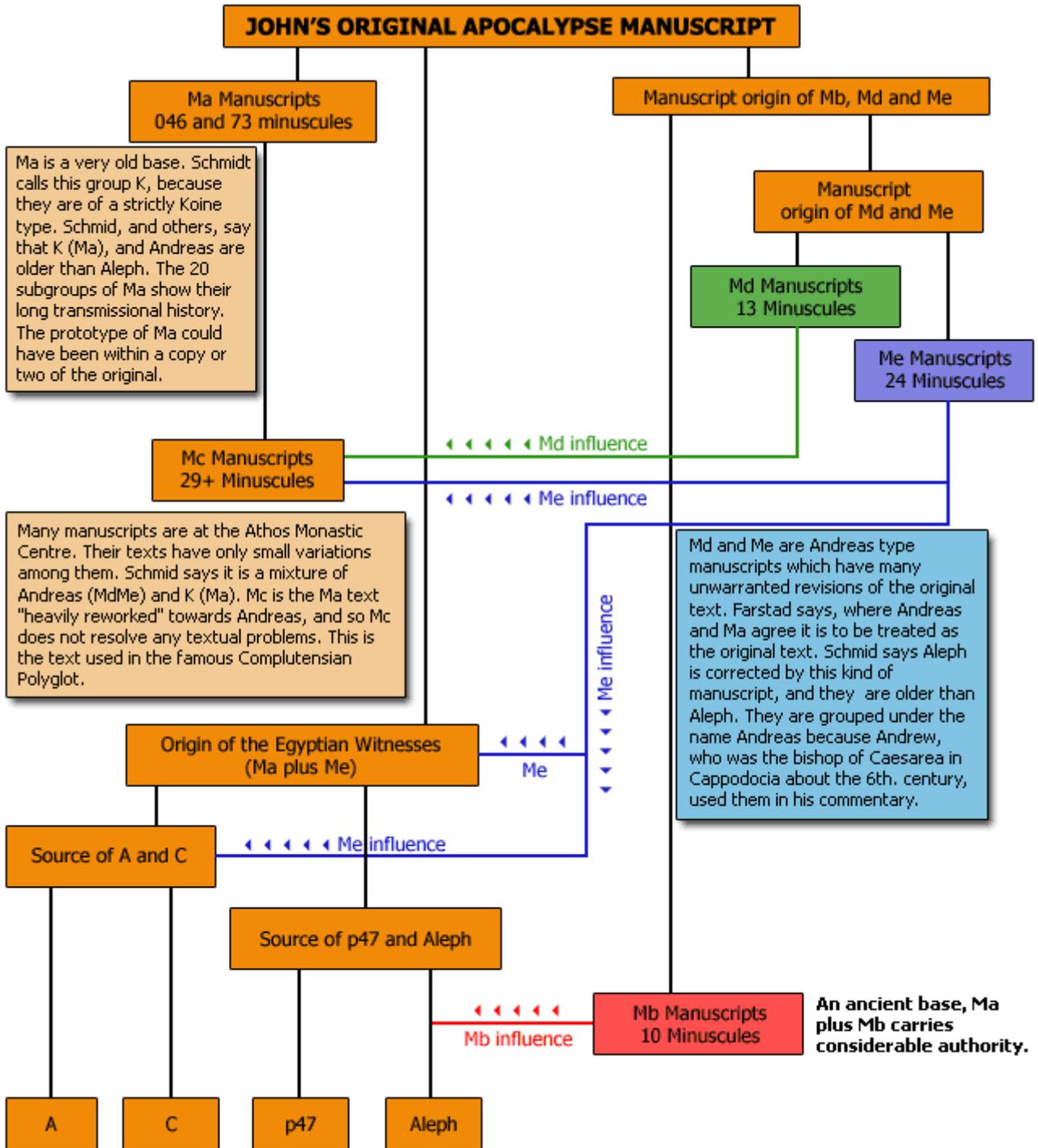
Oecumenius. Bishop of Tricca in Thessaly. Opinions vary from 6th. to 10th. century.

Bede. Born in the county of Durham in A.D. 672, and died A.D. 735.

Haymo. Had a reputation of being a good expositor; he died A.D. 841.

THE STEMMA OF THE GREEK TEXTS OF THE APOCALYPSE WITH THE PRINCIPAL ROUTES OF MIXTURE.

Adapted from H. C. Hoskier, J. Schmid, and the Majority Text Greek Testament by Zane Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad.



The above stemma of manuscripts shows how necessary it is to consider and weigh the manuscript evidence concerning the book of Revelation. It is a fact that some copyists took the liberty of adding to and changing the text of the Revelation, in spite of God's strong warnings to the contrary. Some copyists arrogantly felt that the Greek style needed to be improved, or a reverential adornment needed to be added, as in Rev.1v11., where the Andreas manuscripts, in order to extol our Lord's majesty, added from Rev.22v13., etc., "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last." The corrections and additions of some copyists has, in places, altered the theology of Revelation; a serious addition in Rev.11v17., is "kai ho erchomenos," "and who is coming," from Rev.1v8., which is erroneous, because Rev.11v15-19., states that Jesus has already returned.

IMPORTANT TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GREEK.

The Old Latin manuscripts, contain sources which date from the 2nd. to 4th. centuries; they have some important manuscripts which contain the apocalypse; like Ardmachanus, (manu. 61 ar) a 9th. century manuscript in Trinity College Dublin; and Gigas, in Stockholm. Some manuscripts of the Vulgate, Jerome's Latin translation from the Greek, contain the Apocalypse, as do the Syrian Philoxenian and Harclean (6th. and 7th. century). The Coptic versions: the Sahidic, Bohairic and Fayyumic, of the 3rd. and 4th. centuries; and the Armenian 5th. century, and the Ethiopic 6th. century versions also contain the Apocalypse.

THE OLD LATIN MANUSCRIPTS. These were written between the second and fourth centuries.

NAME.	CODE.	MANUSCRIPT.	DATE.
Ardmachanus.	ar.	61.	9th. century.
Colbertinus.	c.	6.	12th./13th. centuries.
Demidovianus.	dem.	59.	13th. century.
Divionensis.	div.	--	13th. century.
Sangermanensis.	g.	7.	9th. century.
Gigas Holmiensis.	gig.	51.	13th. century.
Floriacensis.	h.	55.	5th./6th. centuries.
Hafnianus.	haf.	--	10th. century.
Perpinianensis.	p.	54.	13th. century.
Liber Comicus Toletanus.	t.	56.	11th. century.
Harleianus Londiniesis.	z.	65.	8th. century.

The above manuscripts are regarded as being derived from the original Old Latin manuscripts. Some of these are fragmentary, and some have the Vulgate in parts, like Codex Colbertinus, which is Old Latin in the Gospels, but Jerome's Vulgate elsewhere. Codex Sangermanensis is only Old Latin in Matthew's Gospel; in the rest of the New Testament it has "a Vulgate text with a strong admixture of Old Latin elements." Codex Gigas Holmiensis has the Old Latin in the Acts and the Apocalypse, and the Vulgate in the rest of the New Testament. The palimpsest Floriacensis contains only fragments of the Apocalypse.

THE VULGATE, THE REVISED LATIN VERSION.

Many variations exist between different copies of the Old Latin version, and some copies had blatant corruptions in them. In 382 A.D., Damascus, the Bishop of Rome, thought it was time to correct this situation and he gave the work of revising the Old Latin versions to Jerome. Jerome was born about A.D. 345, at Stridon on the borders of Dalmatia and Pannonia. He was educated in Rome, and just after his return to Rome from his hermitage at Bethlehem, was given the work of revising the Old Latin manuscripts, a work for which he was well qualified. Jerome made as few changes as possible when he corrected the Latin New Testament text by means of ancient Greek manuscripts. He even avoided making changes which were really necessary for the sake of accuracy and the best grammar; it was a revision and not a re-translation. Jerome completed the Vulgate New Testament about A.D. 385. It was at this time that Jerome also finished a revision of the Psalter, under the same constraint, of making as few changes as possible from the Old Latin. In his commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon, in A.D. 386, Jerome felt more free to make a more accurate translation of the Greek manuscripts, than he had when he revised the Old Latin manuscripts. When Jerome translated the Old Testament he did not base it on the Old Latin, which was a translation from the Greek Septuagint, he translated it directly from the Hebrew, except for the Psalter, which he had done earlier at the same time the New Testament. Jerome finished the Old Testament Vulgate in about A.D. 405. The first edition of a critical textual nature was done by Robert Stephens in 1528 A.D.. In A.D. 1538-40, Stephens produced an even more important edition, founded on 17 manuscripts, which was reprinted in A.D. 1546. This was a major foundation of the modern Vulgate.

In A.D. 1590, Pope Sixtus 5th. brought about the completion of the revision started by Pope Pius 4th., this three volumes edition was similar to that of Robert Stephens. Five Popes later, in 1592 A.D., Pope Clement 8th. called in the Sixtus versions, and had the Vulgate revised to another text, which closely followed the edition of John Hentenius, published in 1547 A.D., rather than that of Robert Stephens. This is called the Clementine Bible, or Vulgate cl. A more modern edition of the Vulgate is that of Bishop Wordsworth and White, it is referred to as ww. Where Vulgate cl and ww agree, it is just referred to as the Vulgate.

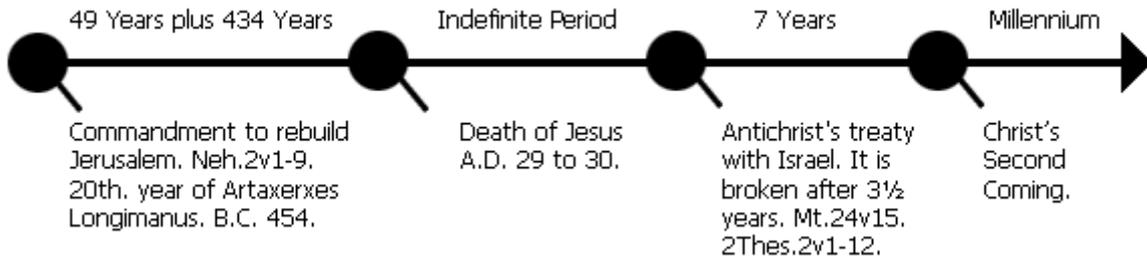
MAJOR MANUSCRIPTS OF THE VULGATE.

Codex Amiatinus. This magnificent codex is regarded by many as the best manuscript of the Vulgate; it contains the whole Bible, it was commissioned by order of Ceolfrid, the Abbot of Jarrow and Wearmouth; and he sent it as a gift to Pope Gregory in A.D. 716. It is now in the Laurentian Library in Florence.

Codex Dublinensis. This was written in the eighth or ninth century, and has the insertions and additions which are characteristic of an Irish type of Vulgate text. This contains the whole New Testament, and the apocryphal Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans. It is now in Trinity college in Dublin.

Codex Fuldensis. This was written between A.D. 541 and 546 by order of Victor, the Bishop of Capua, who corrected the work himself. It contains the whole of the New Testament plus the apocryphal epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans. The Gospels are arranged as a single narrative, like Tatian's Diatessaron. The Text is good and similar to Codex Amiatinus.

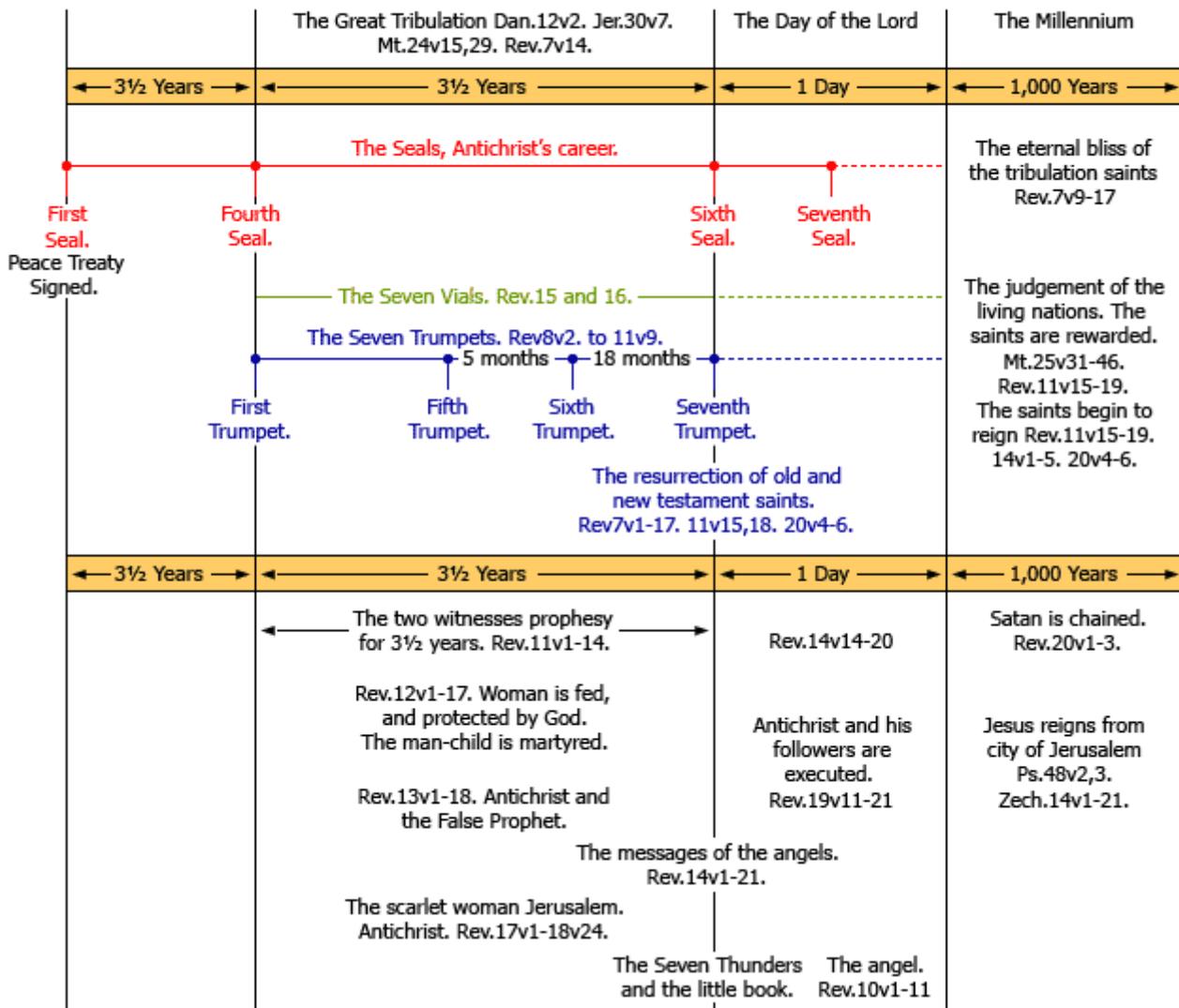
APPENDIX 3. CHART OF DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS OF YEARS. Dan.9v20-27.



The first six heads of the Beast of Rev.17v3,8-11., are six kingdoms that have conquered, ruled and tyrannised Israel and Jerusalem, during the 483 years of the prophecy of Dan.9v20-27. The first six kingdoms were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and the sixth one was Rome; the 7th. head, the kingdom of Antichrist, is still to come.

THE LAST SEVEN YEARS OF THE PROPHECY OF Dan.9v20-27.

This chart looks at the 7 years of Daniel's prophecy from the information given in the book of Revelation.



NOTE:

This and other studies can be found at:

www.truthforthelastdays.com

www.prophetbillturner.com

www.clparker.com